



2023 Asia Mental Health Index

A collaborative research report by Aon and
TELUS Health to explore how employees are
feeling and the status of their mental health.



Contents

1	Introduction	3	5	Mental Health by Location	44
	About Mental Health in Asia	4		China	45
	A Word From our Executive Sponsors	5		Hong Kong	46
	Key Findings	6		India	47
2	Understanding Mental Health Conditions	7		Indonesia	48
	Defining Mental Health Conditions	9		Japan	49
3	The Asia Mental Health Index	10		Malaysia	50
	Methodology	11		Philippines	51
	Asia Mental Health Index Result	12		Singapore	52
	Asia Mental Health Risk Profile	13		South Korea	53
	Asia Mental Health Index Sub-scores	17		Taiwan	54
	• Work Productivity	18		Thailand	55
	• Anxiety	20		Vietnam	56
	• Depression	21	6	Conclusion	57
	• Financial Risk	23			
4	Key Aspects of Mental Health	25			
	Stress	26			
	Burnout	29			
	Stigma	33			
	Mental Health Support	39			

1

Introduction



About Mental Health in Asia

Recognising the need to understand and improve organisational approaches to mental health risk in the region, Aon and TELUS Health collaborated on a comprehensive, ground-breaking study which has resulted in this 2023 Asia Mental Health Index Report.

Insights shared throughout this report reflect data gathered by surveying 13,000 workers living in 12 locations - China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. They are the result of carefully crafted questions exploring employees' attitudes and mental health status.

Highlighting the growing prevalence of mental health issues and risk in Asia, this report outlines the importance of openly acknowledging and discussing the problem, which can be especially challenging in locations where mental health stigma and cultural sensitivities are high.

Asia's Working Population is Under Strain

Overall, the study reveals that the mental health of Asia's working population is strained. Work-related exhaustion, burnout and financial insecurity are among the likely causes. Other factors may include cost-of-living challenges, rising healthcare costs, climate change impacts, geopolitical instability, and the increasingly complex and ambiguous nature of today's workplace, which has been changing rapidly since COVID-19.

The data and insights in this report can help employers reduce workforce mental health risk and avoid the significant costs that mental health issues can create.

The cost of prevalent mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety, will rise to **US\$6 trillion** by 2030.

Mental Health Matters 2020

For example, as well as higher costs from rising insurance claims and premiums, mental health issues can result in lost productivity due to low employee engagement, absenteeism and presenteeism, and increased turnover.

The most prevalent mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety, are estimated to cost the global economy US\$ 1 trillion per year in reduced productivity¹, and before the pandemic those costs were predicted to rise to US\$6 trillion by 2030². This year, it was estimated that the total economic burden of lost productivity due to anxiety and depression in Singapore is S\$15.7 billion (US\$11.72 billion) annually³.

More recently, Aon's [2022-2023 Global Wellbeing Survey](#) showed that organisations in the Asia Pacific region rate employee wellbeing among their top two concerns and identify mental health and burnout as the top two wellbeing issues that need addressing. Since 2020, investment in wellbeing has risen by 27% on average among Asia Pacific employers, reflecting a worldwide trend that has seen wellbeing rise in importance for 63% of global organisations.

The results are clear:

- Mental health issues are negatively impacting workplaces
- Current interventions are not adequately mitigating mental health risk
- Doing nothing will significantly increase the financial cost to organisations

Good mental health is essential for individuals to thrive, and supporting employees' mental wellbeing within organisations is necessary for maintaining workforce resilience, high levels of engagement, and successful and expected productivity outcomes. Business performance and innovation also depend on resilient workforces⁴, as good mental health is fundamental for solving problems.

¹ [Atlas 2020 Report](#) by the World Health Organisation

² [Mental Health Matters 2020 in The Lancet Global Health report](#)

³ [Cost of Anxiety and Depression in Singapore Runs-into-the Billions](#), a 2023 study by Duke-NUS Medical School and the Institute of Mental Health

⁴ [Aon's The Rising Resilient, 2021](#)

A Word From our Executive Sponsors



Tim Dwyer

CEO Health Solutions Asia Pacific,
Aon

We are pleased to introduce the Asia Mental Health Index by Aon and TELUS Health, which brings our expertise and insights together in this timely and important report.

Company leaders are becoming increasingly concerned about employee wellbeing and mental health risk in the workplace.

Employees are facing post-pandemic fatigue, cost-of-living pressure, geopolitical uncertainty, climate change impacts and a rapidly changing workplace. Meanwhile, stigma prevents many from discussing mental health challenges, let alone seeking help.

Whilst the high and often devastating cost of poor mental health on individuals and communities remains our key priority, we know that unless they take steps to actively mitigate workforce mental health risk, organisations are more likely to experience lost productivity from burnout or absenteeism, high turnover and poor employee engagement.

Aon is focused on solving these challenges by helping clients develop and deliver appropriate strategies based on data-driven insights and analytics.



Jamie MacLennan

Senior Vice-President and Managing
Director Asia-Pacific, TELUS Health

TELUS Health is delighted to collaborate with Aon to undertake this study on mental health and the issues impacting employees across Asia.

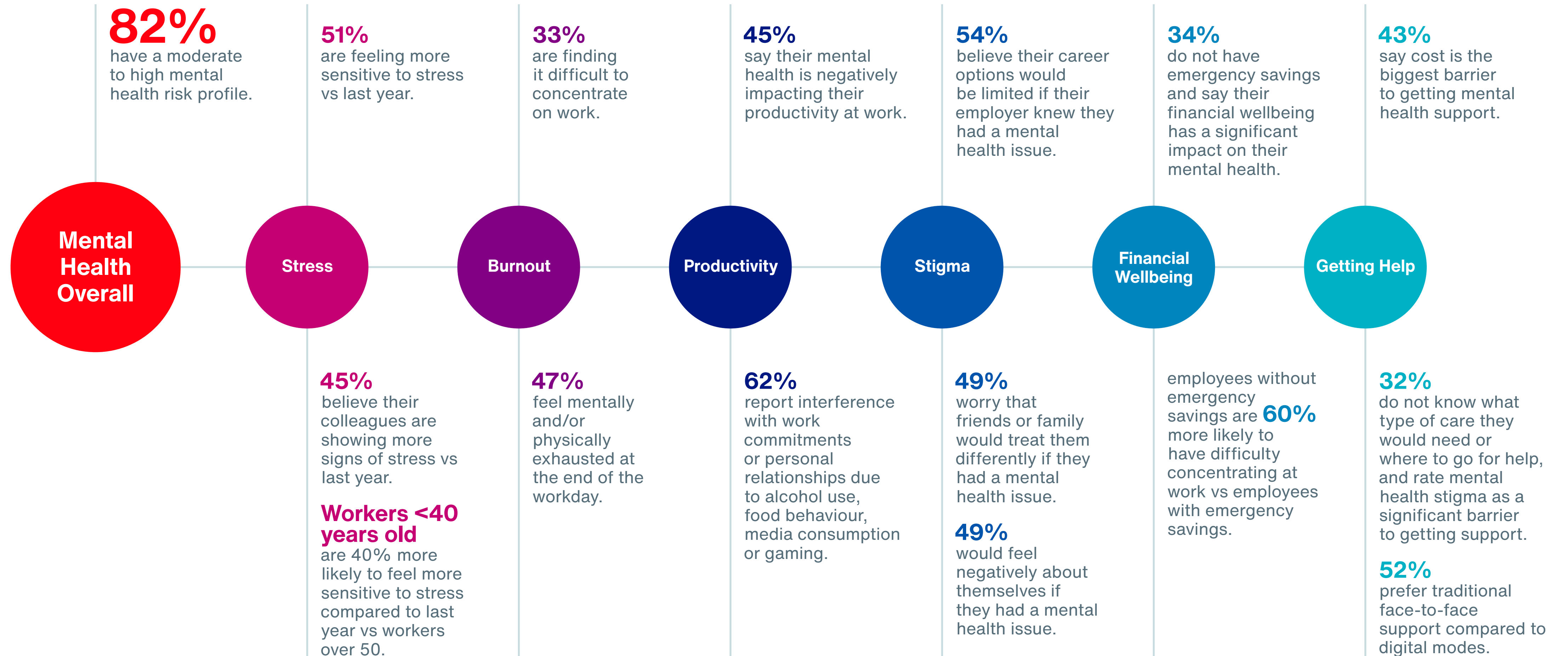
Our global analysis shows that the mental health impact of the pandemic remains significant, despite the roll-out of vaccinations and the removal of restrictions. This is evident in Asia, where the awareness of mental health issues and its impact was raised significantly through the pandemic period.

For employers, addressing the mental health and wellbeing of their staff is no longer a 'nice to have' – rather, it is a commercial imperative. There is direct correlation between mental health and wellbeing and absenteeism, presenteeism and productivity.

However, lack of empirical data in relation to employee mental health is often a source of frustration for employers – without data, it is hard to determine actions or measure outcomes.

TELUS Health launched its Mental Health Index reports in early 2020, starting with four countries. The positive reaction these received has resulted in an expansion of the number of countries covered. Applying that research methodology, and working with Aon, this report gives an unprecedented insight into the mental health state of the workforce across Asia.

Key Findings



2

Understanding Mental Health Conditions



Mental health is inextricably linked to overall health, as reflected by the World Health Organisation's (WHO) official motto, "There IS no health without mental health".

The WHO defines mental health as "a state of wellbeing that enables people to cope with stress, realise their abilities, learn well and work well and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and wellbeing that underpins people's individual and collective ability to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world. Mental health is a basic human right. It is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development¹."

More than just the absence of mental disorders, mental health exists on a continuum. It is experienced differently from one person to the next with varying degrees of difficulty and distress, and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes.

Mental illness and/or mental health conditions include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities, as well as other mental states associated with significant distress, impaired functioning or risk of self-harm.

People with mental health conditions are more likely to experience lower levels of mental wellbeing, but this is not always or necessarily the case.

There IS No Health Without Mental Health.

World Health Organisation



¹The World Health Organisation, [Atlas 2020 Report](#)

Defining Mental Health Conditions

Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotion characterised by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes, including increased blood pressure. People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations due to worry. They may also have physical symptoms, such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat.

[American Psychiatric Association](#)

Depression

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in things and activities that the person once enjoyed. Depression can cause difficulty with thinking, memory, eating and sleeping. It's normal to feel sad or grieve over difficult life situations, such as losing your job or a divorce. However, depression is different in that it persists practically every day for at least two weeks and involves other symptoms in addition to sadness.

[Cleveland Clinic](#)

Stress

Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree.

[World Health Organisation](#)

Burnout

Burnout is a special type of work-related stress, a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity. Burnout isn't a medical diagnosis. Researchers point out that individual factors, such as personality traits and family life influence who experiences burnout. Whatever the cause, burnout can affect physical and mental health.

[Mayo Clinic](#)

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Asia Mental Health
Index 2023

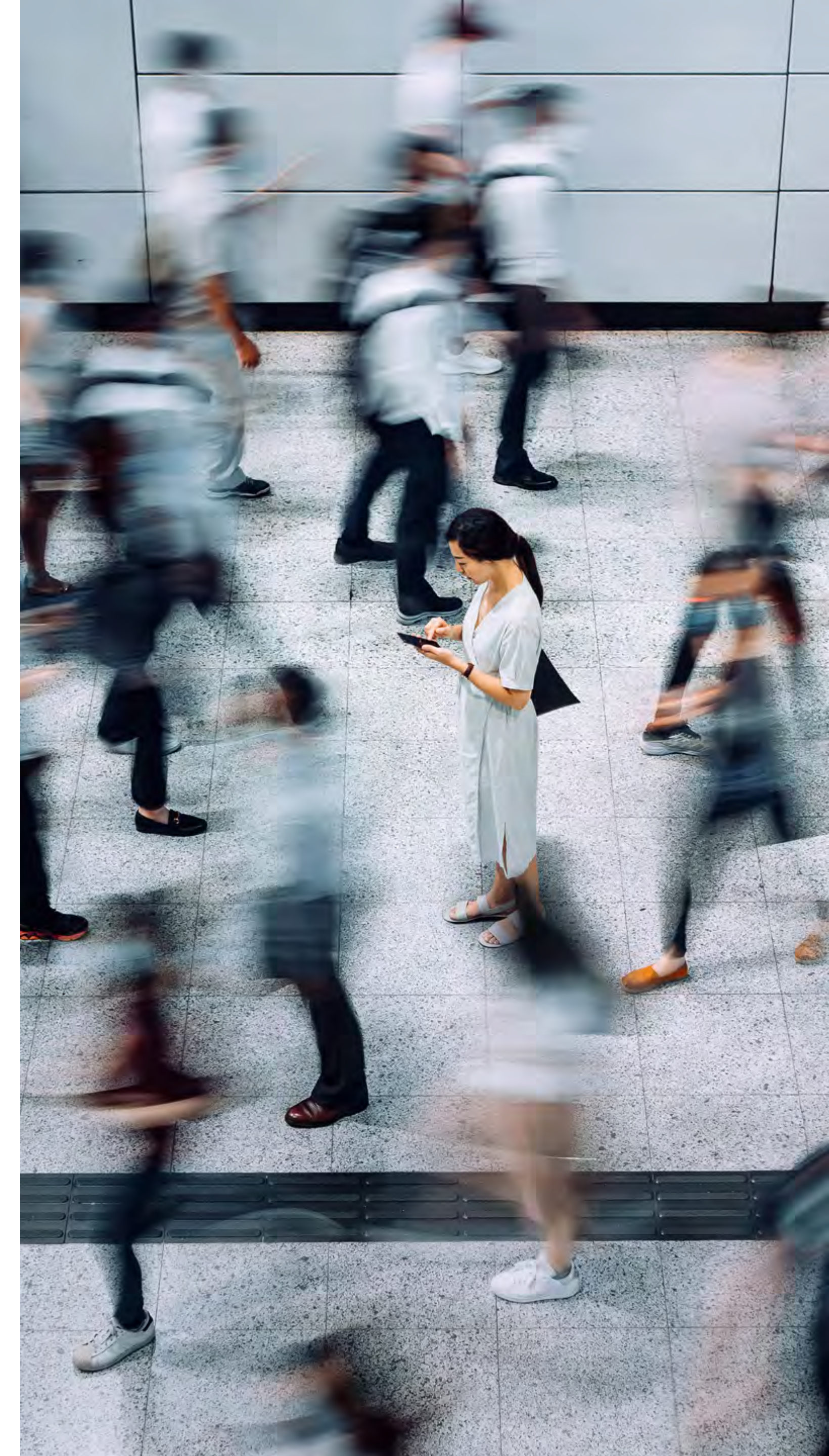


Data for this report was collected in November 2022 via an online survey of 13,000 people living across China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. At least 1,000 people responded to the survey in each location. All respondents were employed at the time of the survey or were employed within the prior six months. Participants represent a range of ages, genders and industries, and were asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering the questions.

To create the Asia Mental Health Index, a scoring system was applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and lower mental health risk. An overall Mental Health Index score (MHI) out of 100 is generated by dividing the sum of scores by the total number of possible points, with scores between 80 and 100 indicating optimal mental health and mental health risk, and scores below 80 representing 'strained' or 'distressed' mental health and higher mental health risk, according to the key below.

Mental Health Index Score	Status	Risk Profile
0 - 49	Distressed	High
50-79	Strained	Moderate
80 - 100	Optimal	Low

● High risk ● Moderate risk ● Low risk

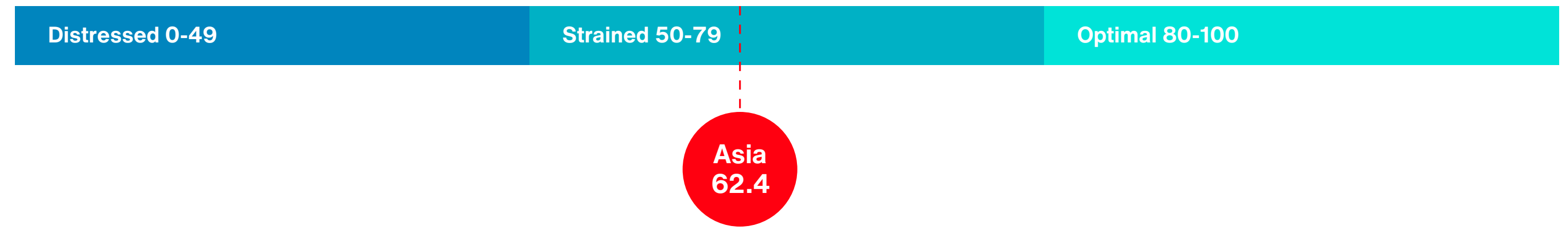


Asia Mental Health Index Result

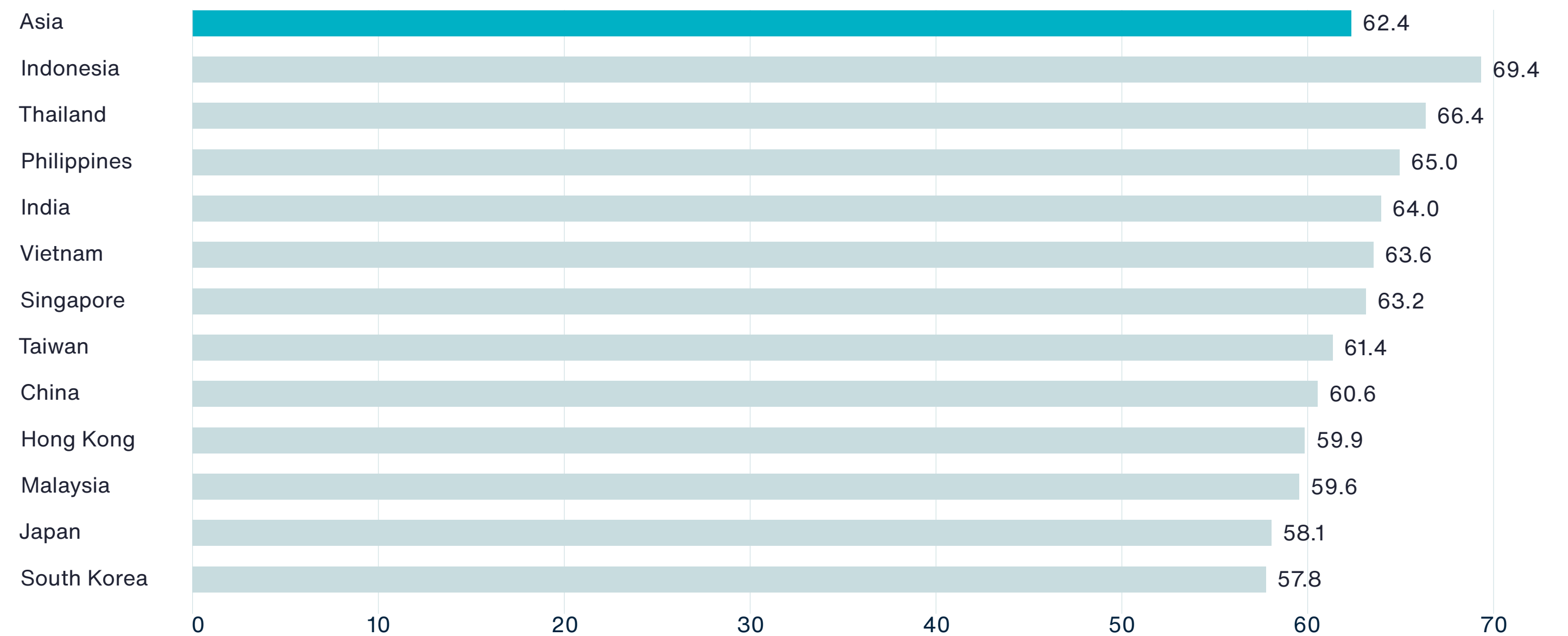
No matter where an organisation operates, the Asia Mental Health Index provides senior leaders and HR professionals with meaningful insight into the mental health status and mental health risk profile of Asia’s working population, including variations between key demographic and geographic groups.

With a score of 62.4, the Asia Mental Health Index reveals employees in Asia are under significant mental health strain in every location involved in the study.

Employees in Asia are under significant mental health strain.



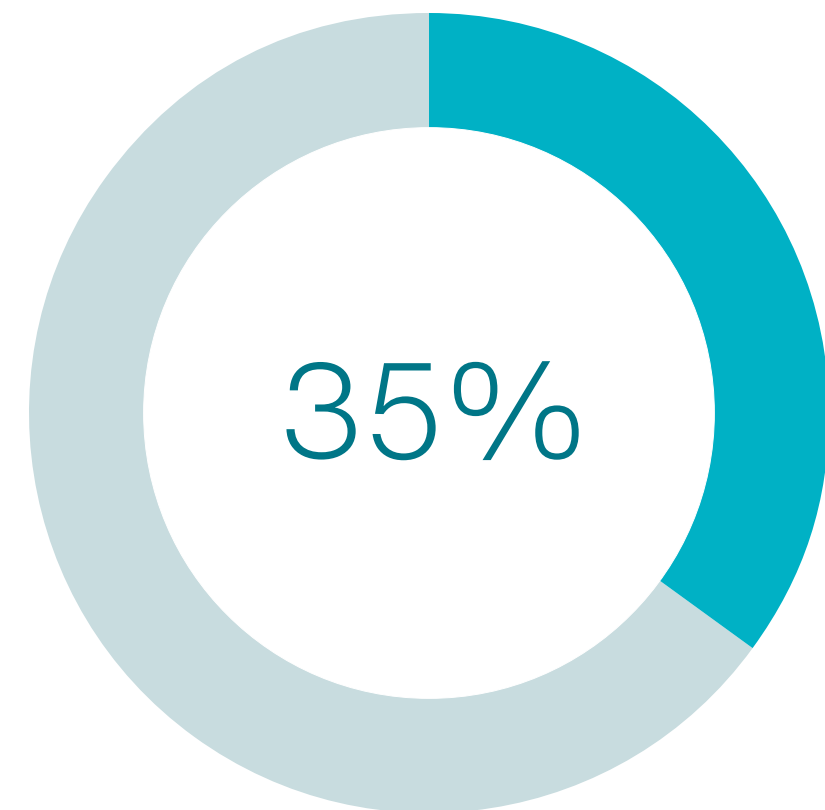
Asia mental health index scores by location



3 Asia Mental Health Risk Profile

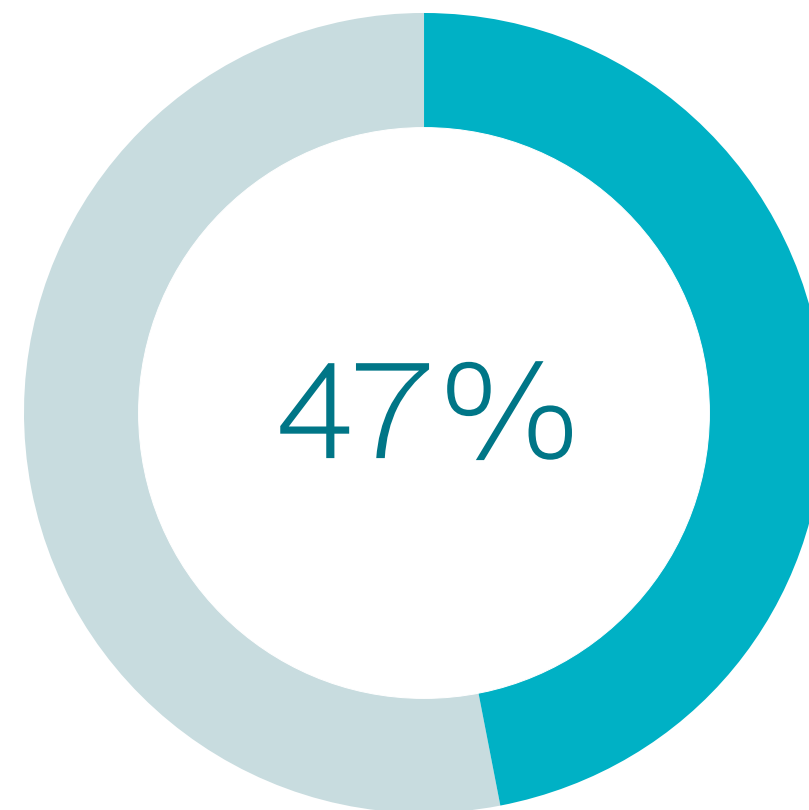
82% of workers in Asia have a moderate to high risk of experiencing mental health issues.

2023 Asia Mental Health Index



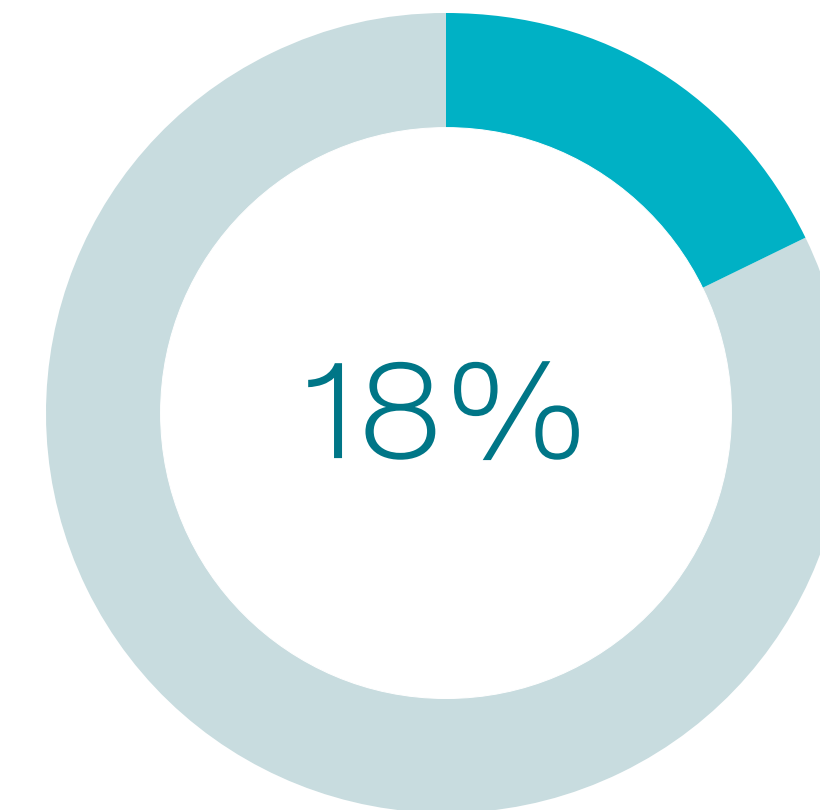
have a high risk of experiencing a mental health issue

Among those, 30% are highly likely to develop a mental health issue



have a moderate risk of experiencing a mental health issue

Among those, 7% are highly likely to develop a mental health issue



have a low risk of experiencing a mental health issue

Among those, 1% are highly likely to develop a mental health issue

Asia Mental Health Risk Profile

Locations with the highest proportion of employees with a high mental health risk profile:

- South Korea 44%
- Malaysia 42%
- Japan 41%

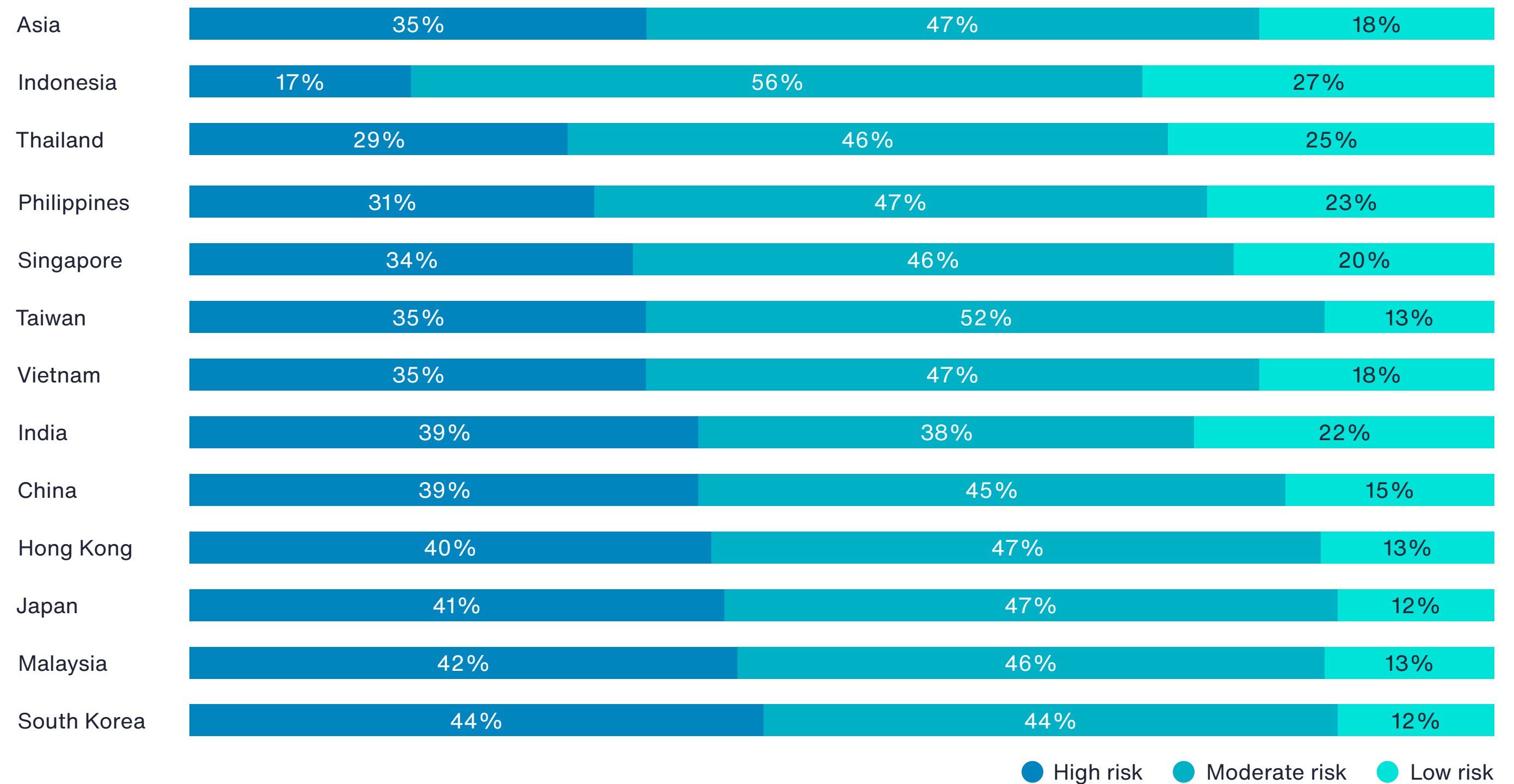
Actionable Insight

Mental or emotional difficulties, including depression and anxiety, are prevalent among employees at all levels and in every surveyed industry and location throughout Asia. Therefore, it's important for employers to adopt measures that target these risks specifically, while also paying attention to the groups that may have a moderate and high risk.

The high prevalence of mental health risk and issues among employees in Asia underscores the importance of having ongoing initiatives that can support individuals as they enter or emerge from periods of distressed or strained mental health and higher mental health risk at different times, rather than ad-hoc approaches that address problems at a single point in time.

For example, employers can consider using Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to provide support for a range of personal challenges, allowing for multiple consultations throughout the year.

Mental health risk profiles



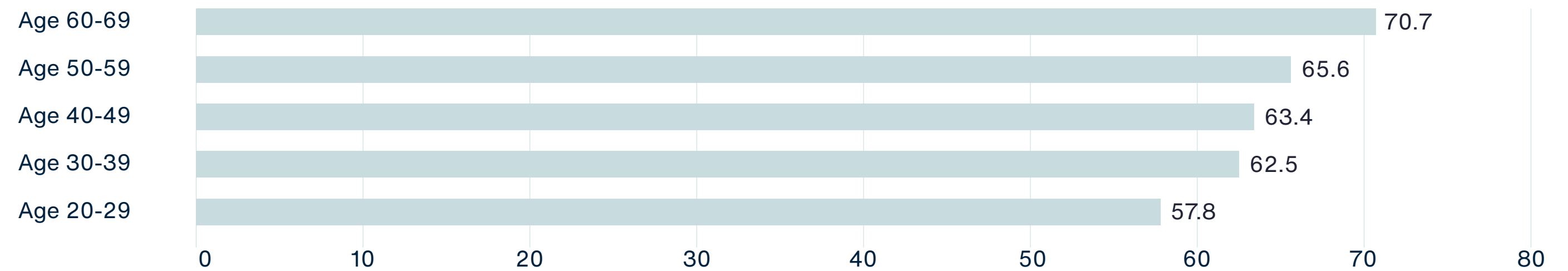
Asia Mental Health Risk Profile

In Asia, women are more likely to have or develop a mental health issue than men, with their respective scores being 60.7 and 64.1.

Mental health by gender, age and job role



Overall, the study shows that employees under 40 are particularly feeling the strain of poor mental health, whilst those between 20 to 29 years old are significantly worse off, with a Mental Health Index score of 57.8, representing the most strain and the highest mental health risk of any age group by a significant margin.



Managers have higher scores than non-managerial employees at 63.8.



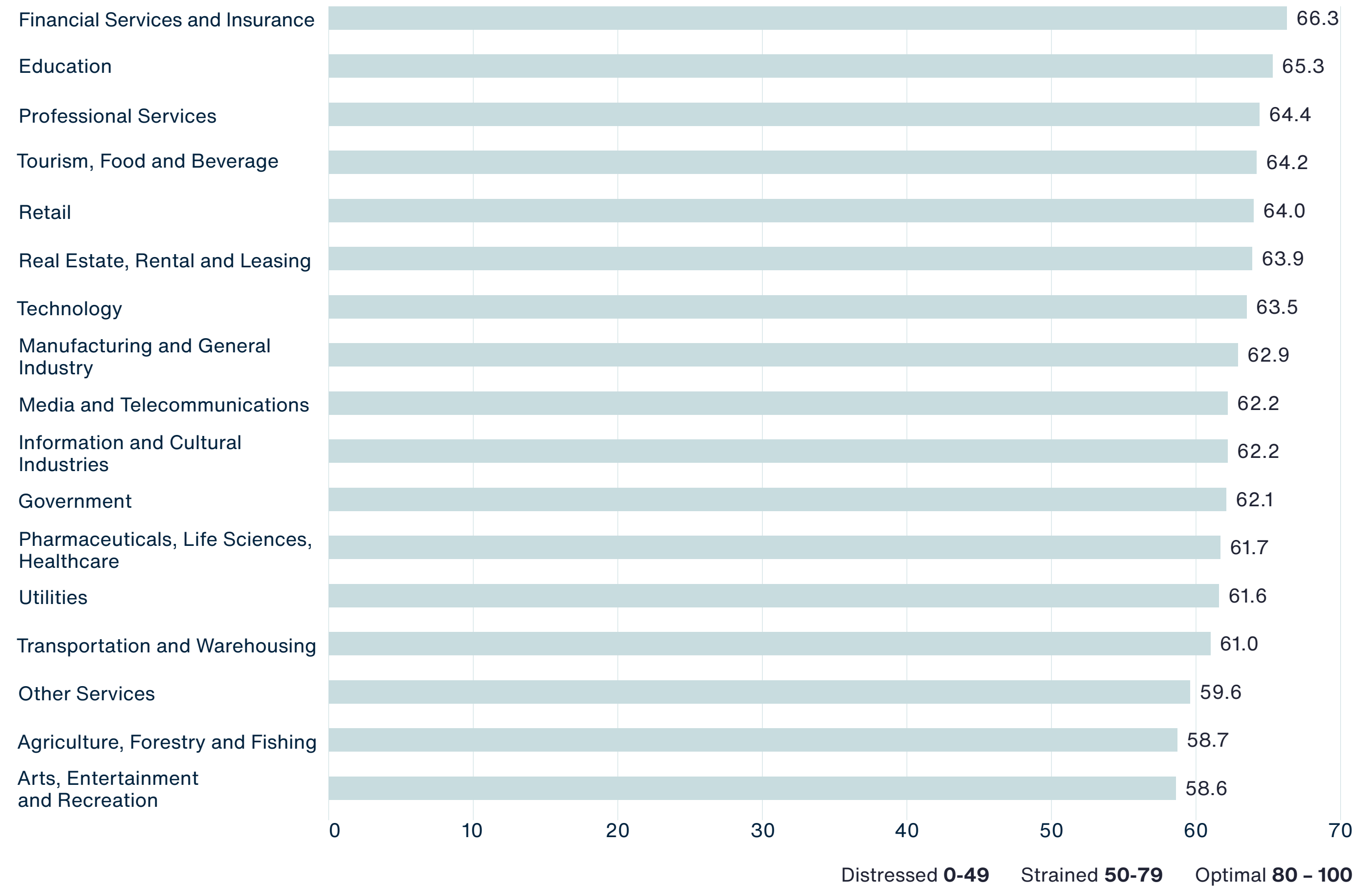
Distressed 0-49 Strained 50-79 Optimal 80 - 100

Asia Mental Health Risk Profile

Workers in financial services and insurance, education and professional services are showing lower levels of mental health strain compared to other sectors. Whilst their mental health remains in the 'strained' category, it is higher than average across all industries in Asia, which are at or below average.



Mental health by industry



Asia Mental Health Index Sub-scores

The Asia Mental Health Index looks at several measures known as 'sub-scores' to reveal a more nuanced picture of mental health and mental health risk in the workplace, and potential impacts. Like the overall Asia Mental Health Index score, sub-scores represent the average of all individual scores.

Indicator	Asia Sub-score	Mental Health Status	Global Sub-score (Includes Canada, USA, UK, Europe & Australia)
Work productivity	47.2	Distressed	63.1
Anxiety	51.7	Strained	56.7
Depression	54.5	Strained	62.5
Financial risk	63.3	Strained	69.5

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

In Asia the lowest sub-score is for work productivity, representing a significant financial risk to organisations.



Work Productivity

Strained mental health and moderate to high mental health risk have a significant negative effect on workplace productivity, which is far lower in Asia, with a Mental Health Index sub-score of 47.2, compared with the global average sub-score of 63.1 as per page 17.

Forty-five percent of employees say their mental health is having an impact on productivity, with 7 locations reporting higher than average productivity losses for Asia. Locations where the highest proportion of employees say their mental health is impacting work productivity are:

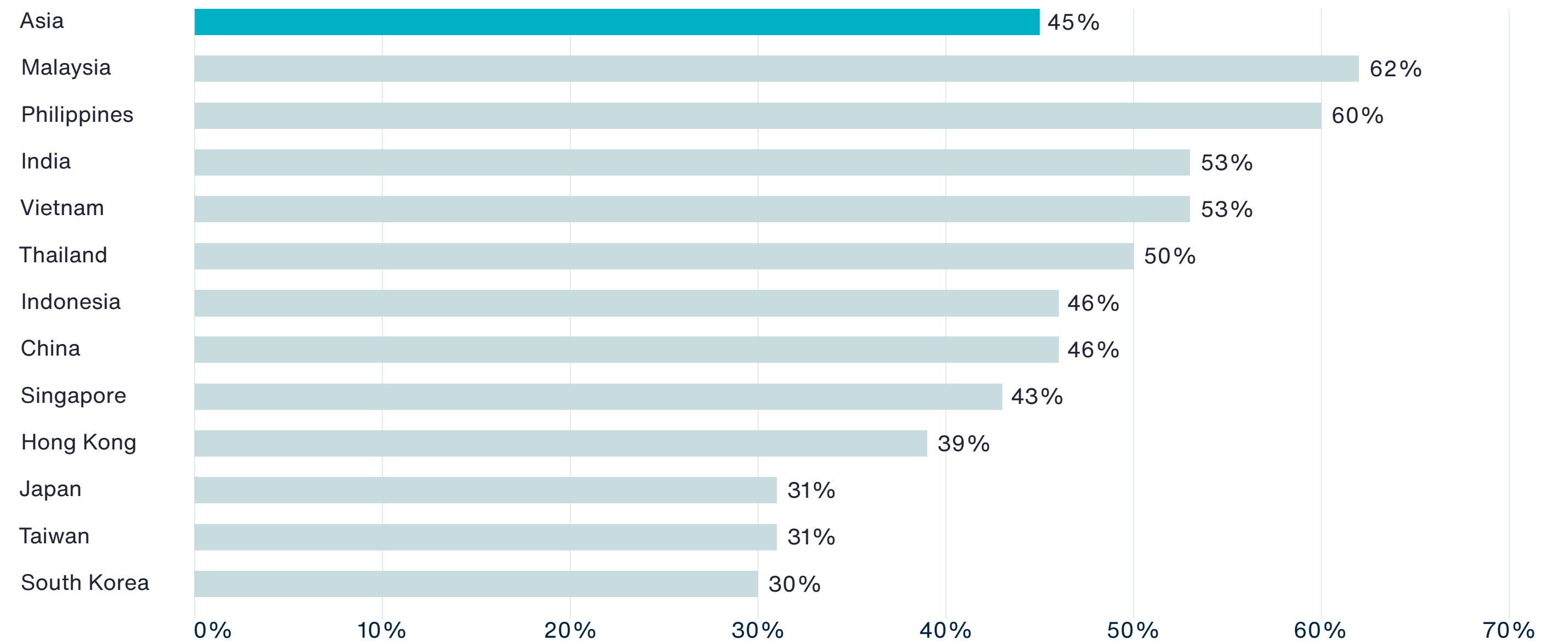
- Malaysia 62%
- Philippines 60%
- India 53%
- Vietnam 53%
- Thailand 50%

45% of employees say their mental health is having an impact on productivity.

Globally, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety at a cost of **US\$ 1 trillion** per year in lost productivity.

World Health Organisation

Percentage reporting that their mental health is negatively affecting their work productivity



Work Productivity

Productivity sub-scores by region

Region	Productivity
Asia	47.2
United States	66.7
United Kingdom	64.0
Australia	62.8
Canada	62.1
Europe	60.1

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

Rising Business Costs from Mental Health Issues

- Medical claims
- Insurance premiums
- Medical leave
- Long-term disability
- Presenteeism
- Employee turnover

Actionable Insight

Good engagement helps to mitigate the impact of strained mental health on workforce productivity, so organisations need to consider pairing mental health and wellbeing initiatives with strategies that foster engagement. This might include reviewing your company culture to ensure your employee value proposition is relevant and meaningful, or adopting benefits and interventions that make it easier to support employees and address diverse needs.

Asian businesses are at significantly higher risk than other regions.

Initiatives that support good mental health and reduce risk:

- Social or sporting activities, which can help colleagues connect emotionally and aid general psychological health,
- Those that demonstrate alignment between employee and company values. For example, letting employees spend company time supporting their chosen community cause, or by sponsoring a charity that your employees care about,
- Fostering a caring culture and creating a psychologically safe environment where employees can be themselves and innovate without being punished for mistakes,
- Ensuring employee benefit programs are inclusive and offer choice and flexibility to support employees' diverse needs,
- Create a sense of belonging with activities that demonstrate long-term commitment to employees. For example, skills assessment, investment in education and training, career path creation and mentoring to demonstrate a commitment to delivering a sustainable working life for employees: these contribute to general psychological health and, indirectly, to productivity.

Overall, **36%** of employees in Asia say they feel unsettled and nervous.

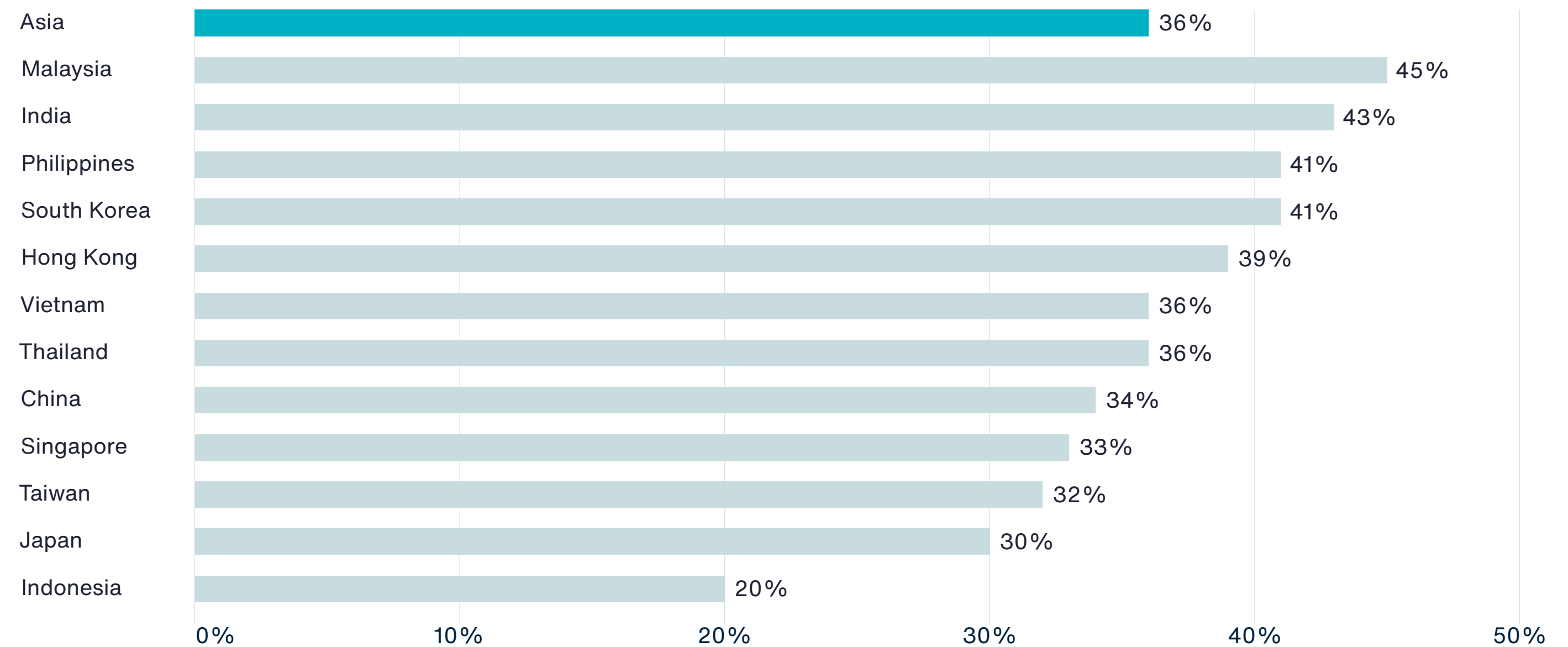
Data from this study suggests a very high risk of anxiety, depression and burnout among Asia's working population. Overall, 36% of employees in Asia say they feel unsettled and nervous.

Among the locations surveyed, anxiety levels are highest in:

- Malaysia 45%
- India 43%
- Philippines 41%
- South Korea 41%

Anxiety is typically experienced in bouts, deteriorating or improving based on how it is managed and environmental factors. This means that, at any point in time, at least some employees in your workplace are likely to be experiencing anxiety. However, a common misconception is that anxiety negatively impacts performance, but this is not necessarily the case. Individuals with anxiety or poor mental health can still be high performers.

Percentage feeling anxious



Actionable Insight

Organisations can help individuals learn skills and coping mechanisms to manage their anxiety, which can minimise the impact on work. Initiatives that can make a difference include meditation and mindfulness coaching, health screenings, counselling, and education on topics such as sleep, parenting, relationships, nutrition, managing finances and other wellbeing topics.

Individuals with anxiety can still be high performers.

Depression

Overall, 33% of employees in Asia say they often feel a sense of helplessness. Locations where workers are experiencing higher levels of helplessness include:

- South Korea 46%
- Malaysia 44%
- India 43%

Actionable Insight

As the signs of depression can be hard to recognise, employers should consider training managers and employees how to identify the signs of mental and emotional distress among others, how to start a conversation about mental health, and where to send colleagues for professional support.

1 in 3 workers often feel a sense of helplessness.

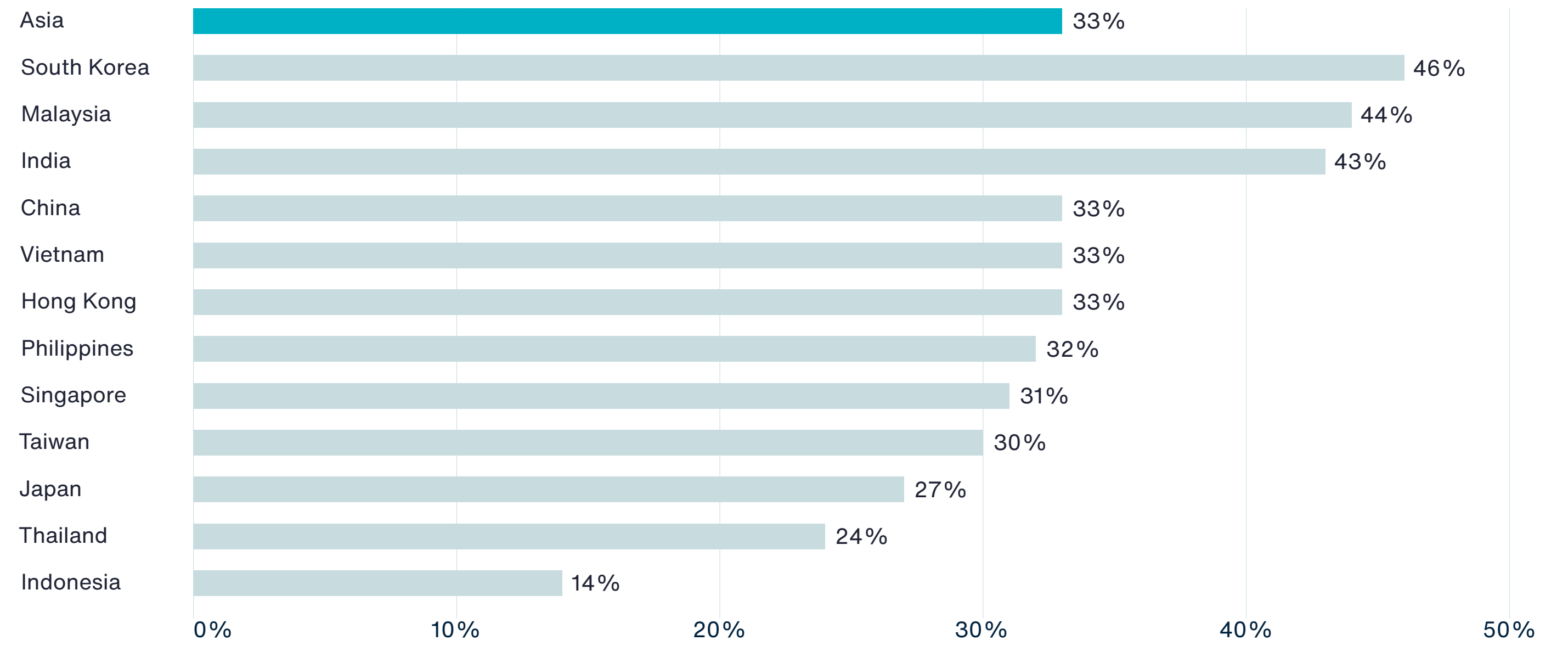
What Depression Feels Like	How Depression Looks to a Co-Worker
Deep feelings of sadness	Withdrawal from team, isolates oneself
Loss of interest in work or social activities	Indifference
Difficulty concentrating, slowed thoughts	Putting things off, missed deadlines, accidents
Forgetfulness and trouble remembering	Seems “scattered” or absentminded
Trouble making decisions	Procrastination, indecisiveness, slowed productivity
Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much	Late to work, afternoon fatigue
Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt	Unsure of abilities, lack of confidence
Energy loss or increased fatigue	Low motivation, detached
Irritability, anger or tearfulness	Inappropriate reactions, strained relationships
Weight or appetite changes	Change in appearance



Depression



Percentage feeling depressed



Financial Risk

Financial wellbeing refers to how people feel about the control they have over their financial future and their relationship with money. Financial wellbeing is closely linked to things that make life enjoyable and meaningful, both in the present and along the journey to retirement. 'Emergency savings' typically means having a minimum of three months salary set aside for unexpected expenses.

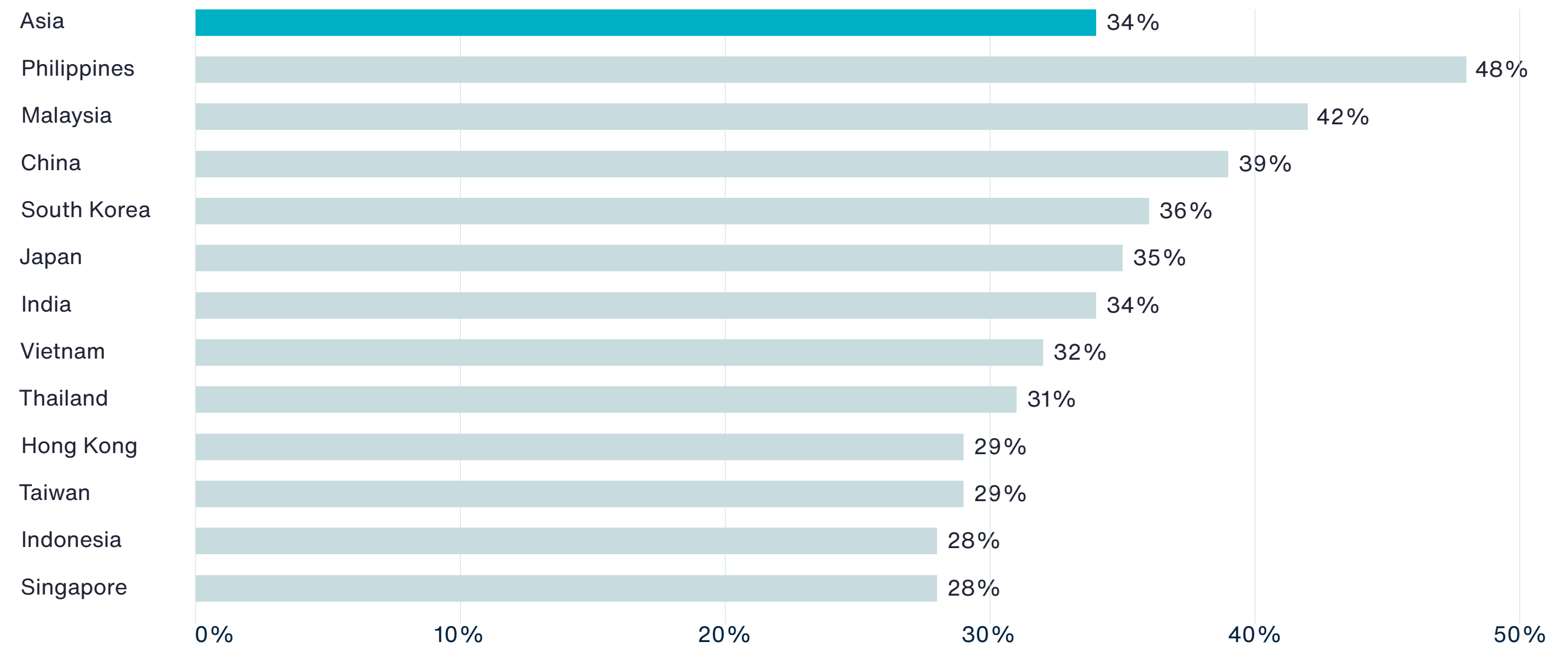
Thirty-four percent of employees in Asia say they do not have emergency savings. Locations where employees have the highest levels of financial risk are:

- Philippines 48%
- Malaysia 42%
- China 39%

Financial stress and financial insecurity go hand-in-hand with high mental health risk.

1 in 3 do not have emergency savings.

Percentage without emergency savings



The table below shows how survey participants responded when asked about their personal savings.

Do You Have the Equivalent of 3 Months Salary Available in Emergency Savings?

	Not a priority. I will use credit to cover emergency expenses.	I plan to start one this year.	I have an emergency fund covering <2 months of essential expenses.	I have an emergency fund to cover >3 months of essential expenses.
China	8%	31%	29%	32%
Hong Kong	8%	21%	32%	39%
India	13%	21%	33%	33%
Indonesia	4%	24%	26%	46%
Japan	16%	18%	25%	40%
Malaysia	10%	31%	34%	25%
Philippines	12%	37%	28%	24%
Singapore	8%	20%	27%	45%
South Korea	12%	24%	32%	33%
Taiwan	9%	20%	38%	33%
Thailand	8%	23%	28%	41%
Vietnam	13%	20%	49%	19%
Asia	10%	24%	32%	34%

Actionable Insight

As financial stress and financial insecurity go hand-in-hand with high mental health risk, efforts to improve employee wellbeing and mental health should also address employees' level of financial risk. In today's economic environment, companies and employees are struggling with rising costs but few employers can afford to offer generous wage increases or financial incentives.

Educational programs can help employees:

- Understand their emotional relationship with money
- Explore how behaviour impacts financial security and overall wellbeing
- Build healthier money habits
- Set and work toward achieving financial goals
- Navigate money-related conversations with family members.

Regular internal communication programs should clearly and regularly promote the financial literacy tools and resources available to employees through their employer and highlight the link between sound financial management and positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

Access to confidential, evidence-based counselling and practical support services should be made available for any employee who is experiencing financial difficulties. EAP providers, for example, can help individuals take immediate steps to alleviate financial stress, then guide employees on how to improve their future financial wellbeing.

4

Key Aspects of Mental Health



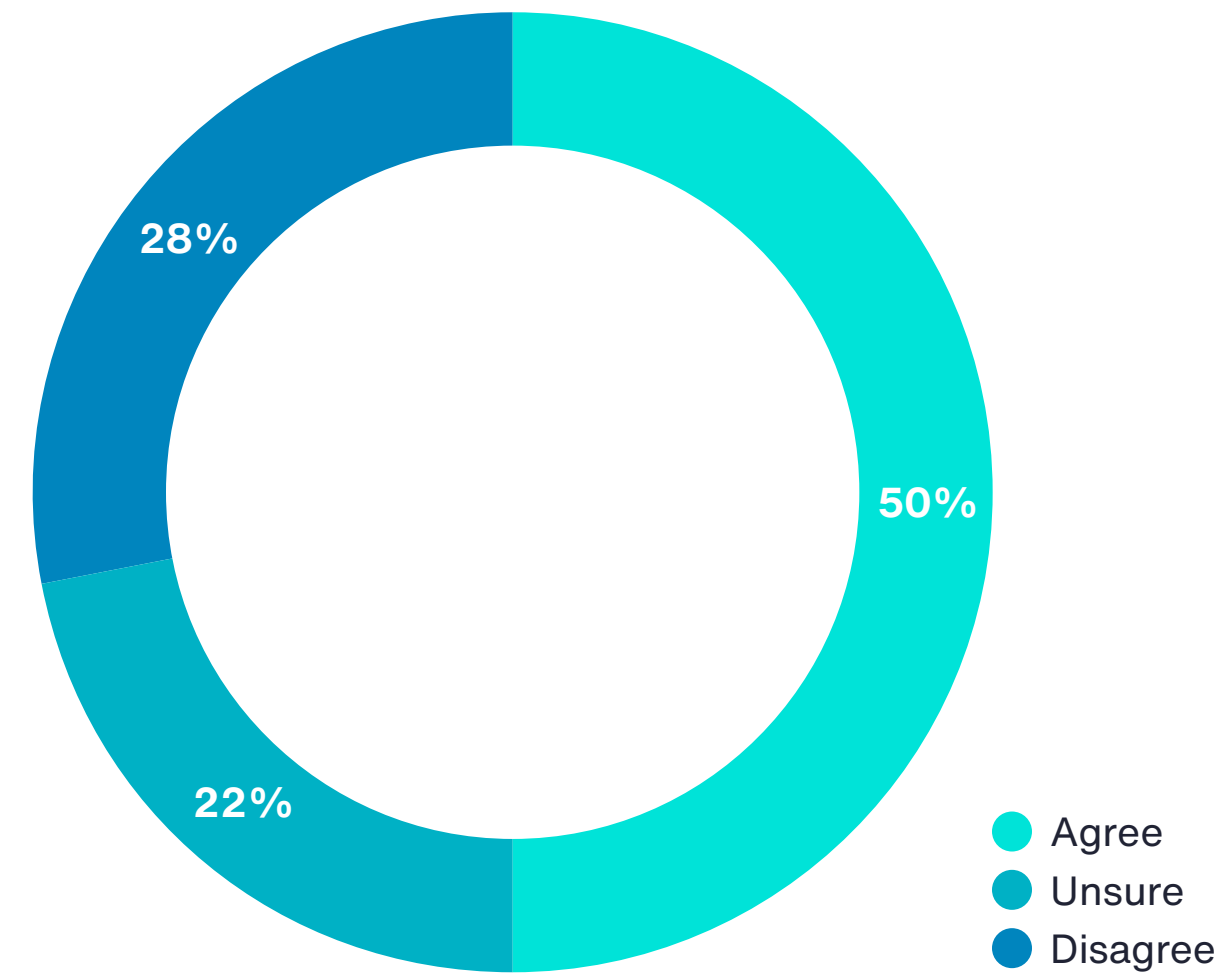
More than half of the survey respondents say they feel more sensitive to stress compared to last year. This group also has the poorest mental health and the highest mental health risk with a Mental Health Index score of 53.9. This indicates that their mental health is significantly strained and below average for Asia.

Compared to employees older than 50, those below 40 are 40% more likely to feel more sensitive to stress than they did last year.

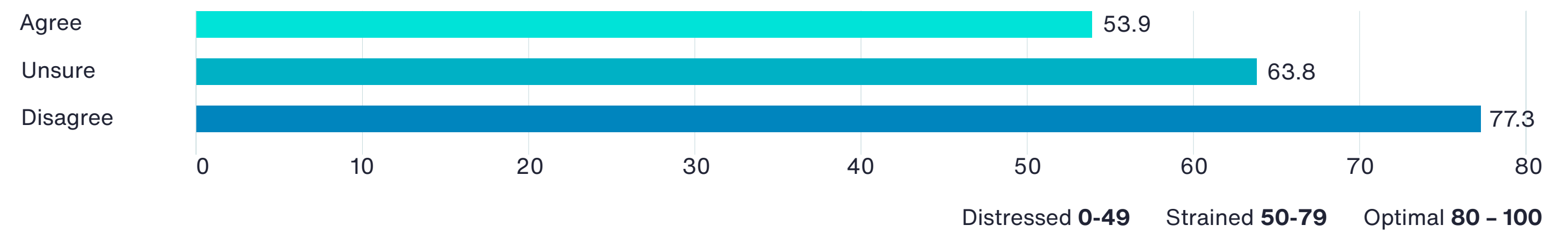
Nine of the twelve countries report that more than half the workforce is feeling more sensitive to stress than last year. Employees most likely to report feeling more sensitive to stress are in:

- Malaysia 57%
- Taiwan 54%
- Thailand 54%

I am feeling more sensitive to stress compared to last year.



MHI score by “I am feeling more sensitive to stress compared to last year.”



Stress by Location and Role Seniority

Almost half say they notice colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to last year.

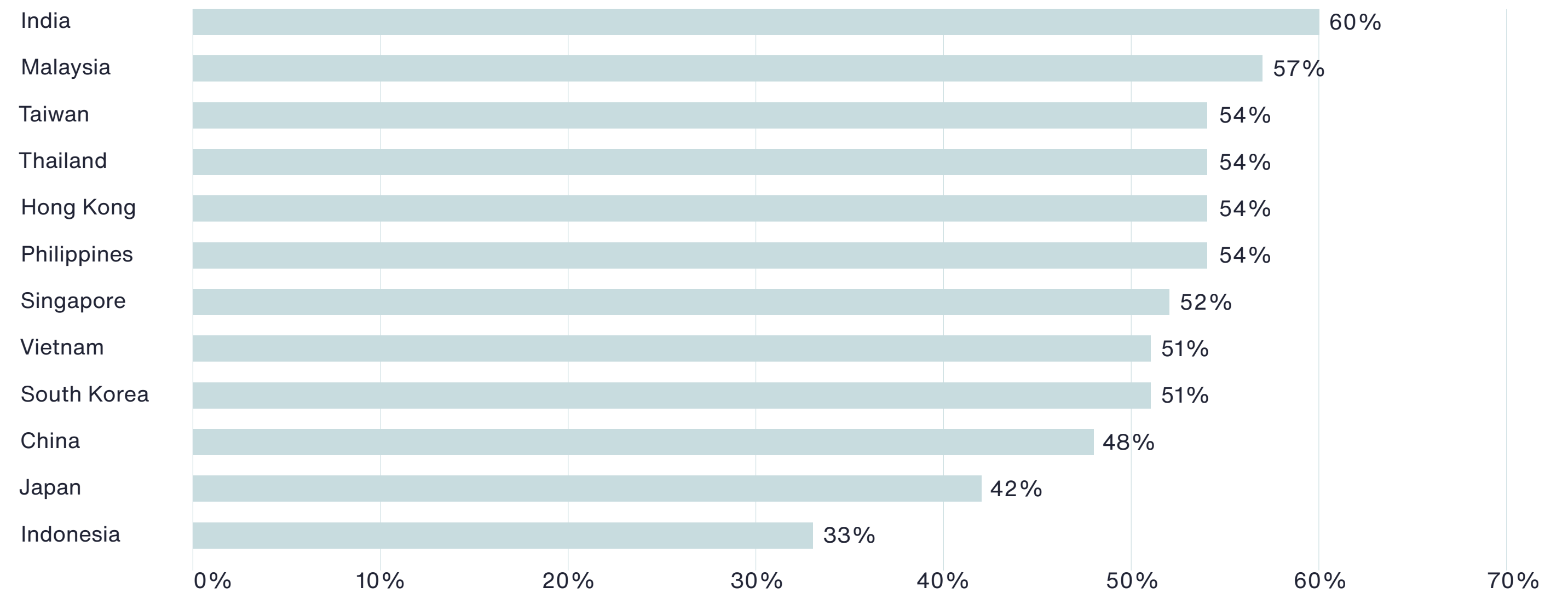
The locations where employees are most likely to report noticing that colleagues are feeling more stressed compared to last year are:

- India 62%
- Thailand 56%
- Malaysia 53%
- Philippines 53%

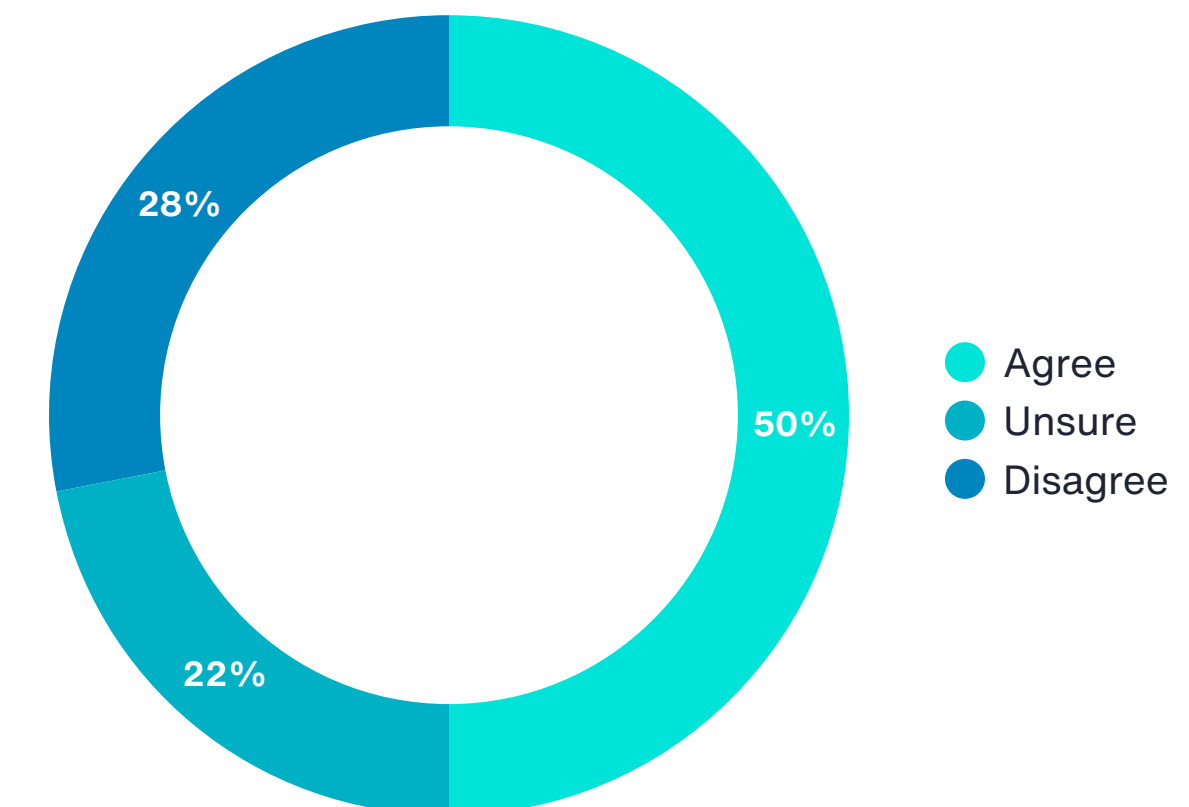
Managers are 40% more likely than non-managers to report that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to last year.

Managers are **40%** more likely than non-managers to report that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to last year.

I am feeling more sensitive to stress compared to last year.



I notice my colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to last year.

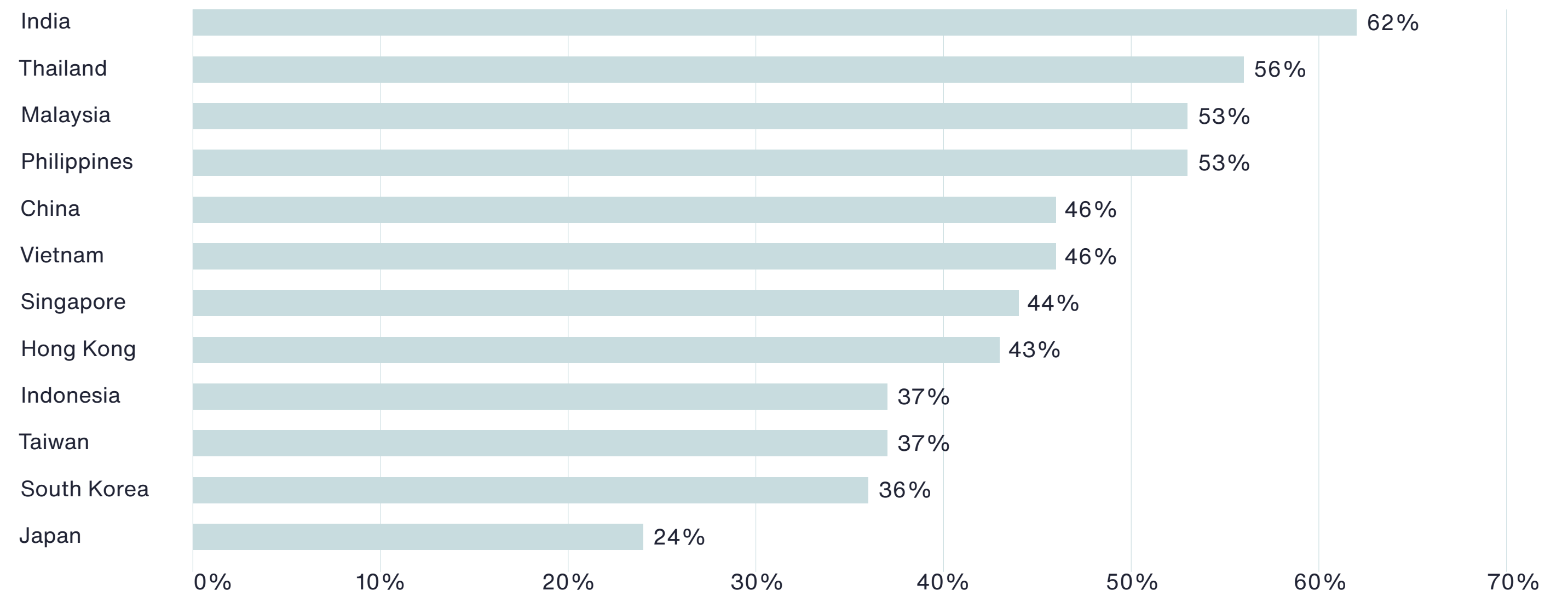


Actionable Insight

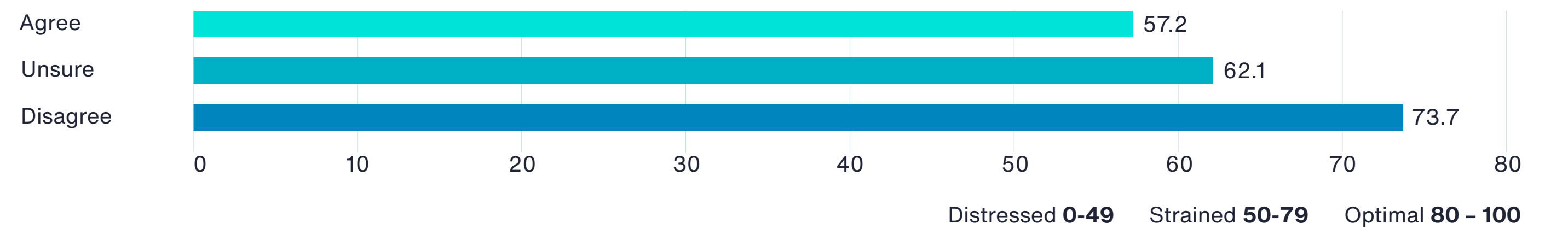
There is a need to encourage self-care among employees to support the prevention and management of stress. Employers can also empower individuals with policies, tools, resources and benefits to raise awareness of proven approaches to stress management. In turn, this can reduce stress crossover, which occurs when one person's experience of stress impacts stress levels among the people around them.



I notice that my colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to last year.



MHI score by “I notice that my colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to last year.”



Burnout

Burnout is work related and materialises during periods of sustained stress, driven by excessive workloads, lack of rewards, perceived lack of support, unreasonable expectations and toxic work environments.

Thirty-three percent of employees say they are finding it more difficult to concentrate on their work compared to last year. The Mental Health Index score of this group is 49.7, significantly below the Asia average of 62.4

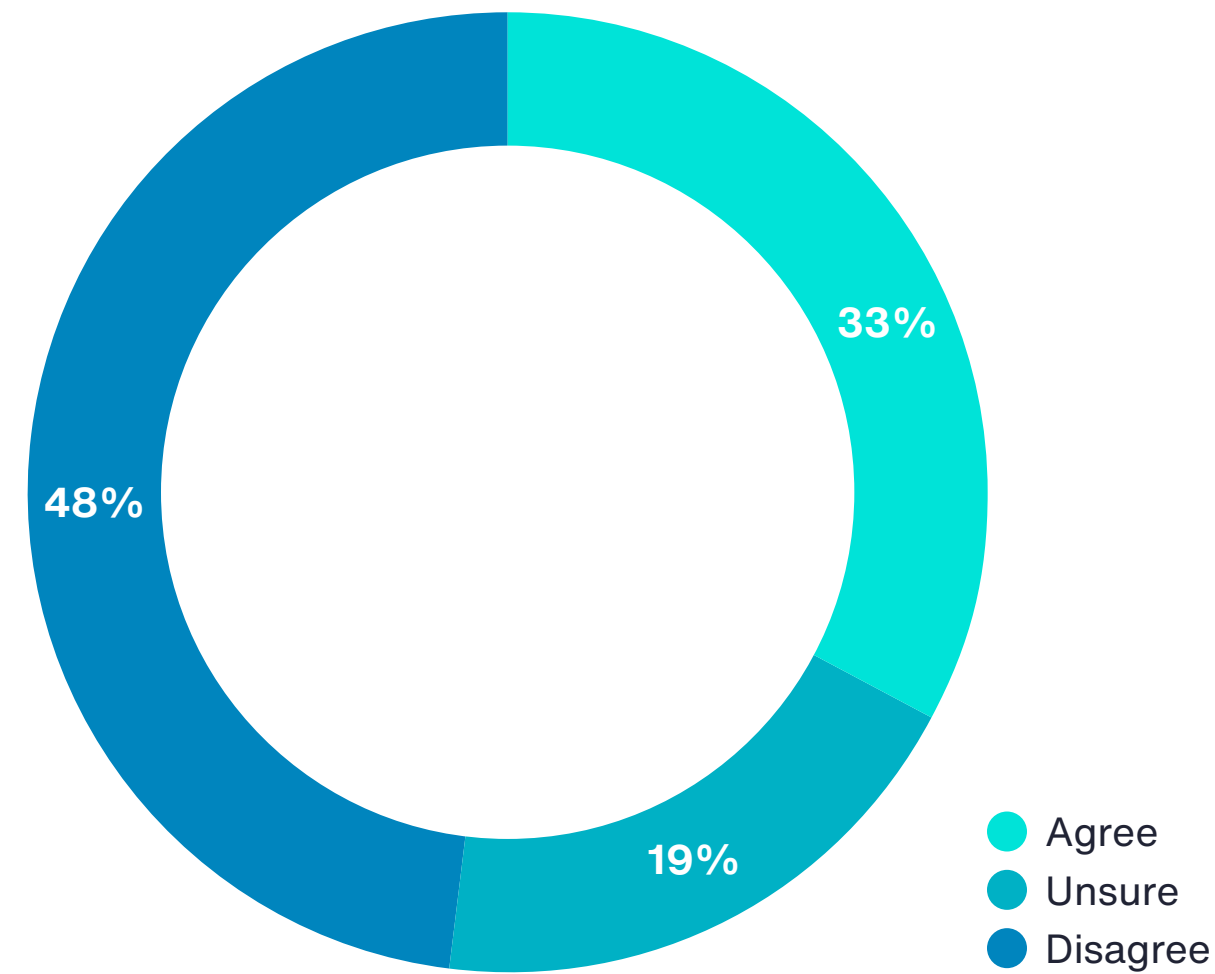
Locations most likely to have employees report difficulty concentrating on their work versus last year:

- India 45%
- Malaysia 40%
- Thailand 39%
- Vietnam 39%

Employees under 40 are 60% more likely than employees older than 50 to find it more difficult to concentrate on their work compared to last year.

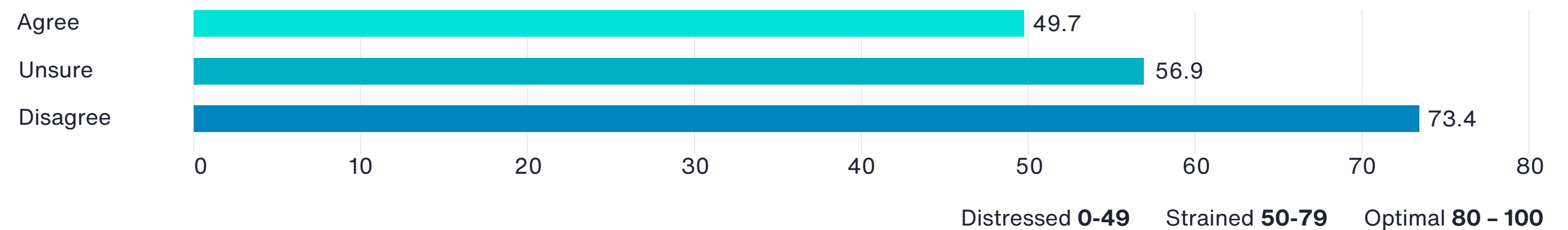
Employees without emergency savings are 60% more likely to find it more difficult to concentrate on their work compared to last year versus employees with emergency savings.

I am finding it more difficult to concentrate on my work.



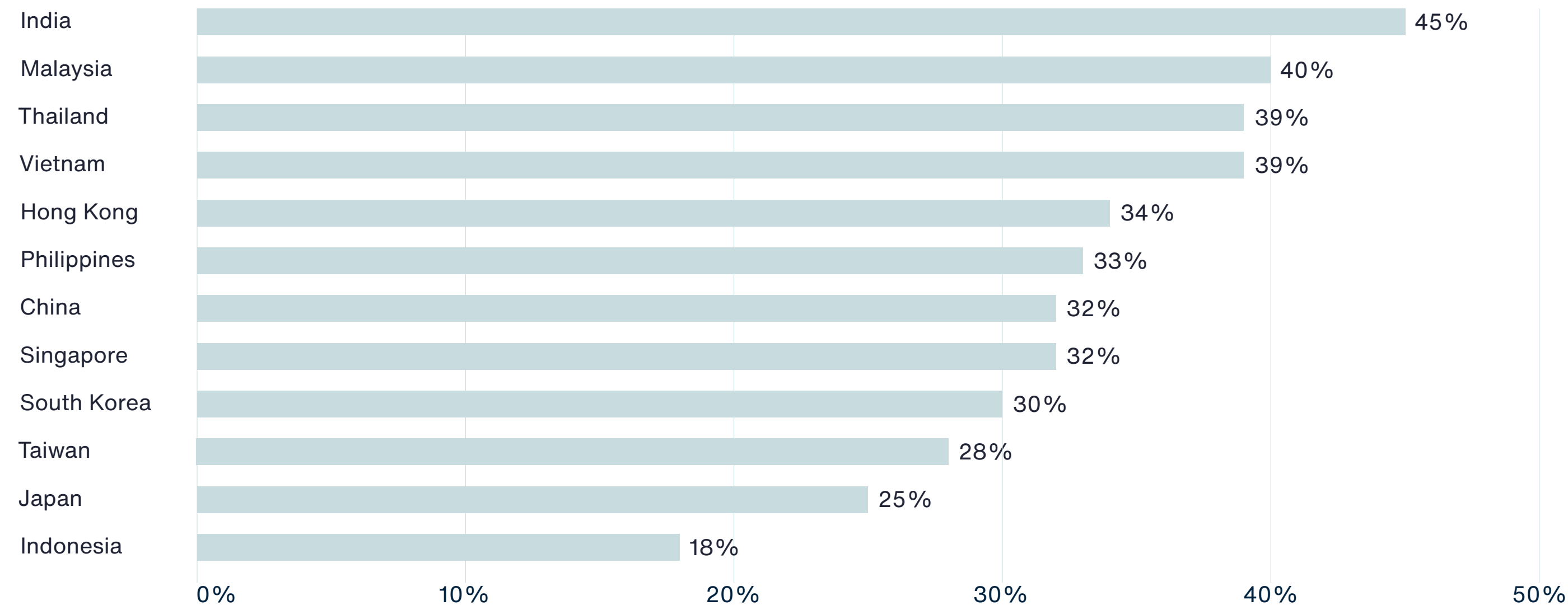
Employees younger than 40 are **60%** more likely to find it more difficult to concentrate on their work compared to last year versus those older than 50.

MHI score by "I am finding it more difficult to concentrate on my work."



Burnout

I am finding it more difficult to concentrate on my work.



Burnout

Employees Feel Mentally and/or Physically Exhausted at the end of the Workday

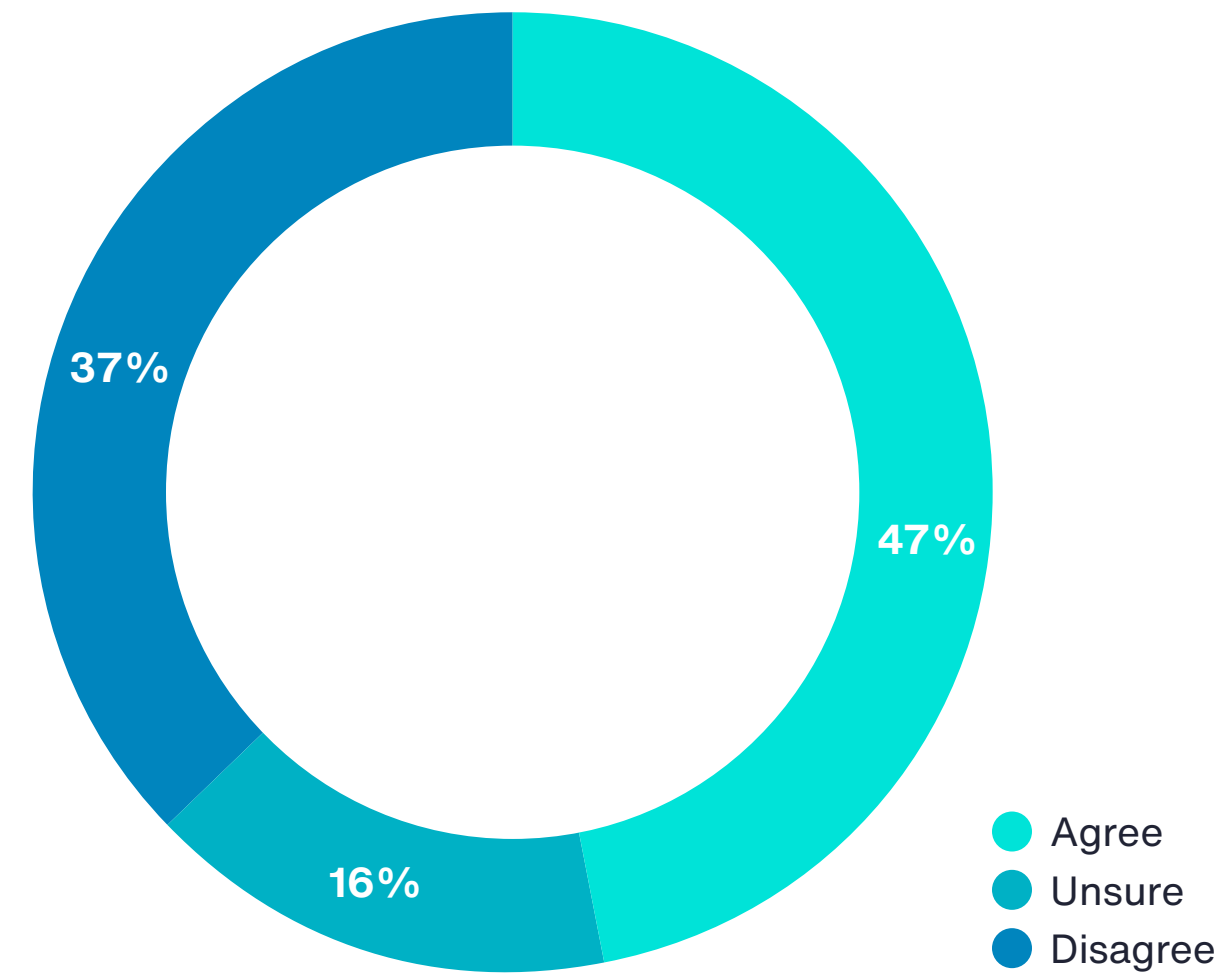
Forty-seven percent say they end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted, and this group has the lowest Mental Health Index score at 52.9, which is below average for Asia.

Locations where employees are most likely to end the workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted are:

- Hong Kong 54%
- Taiwan 53%
- Malaysia 53%
- India 52%

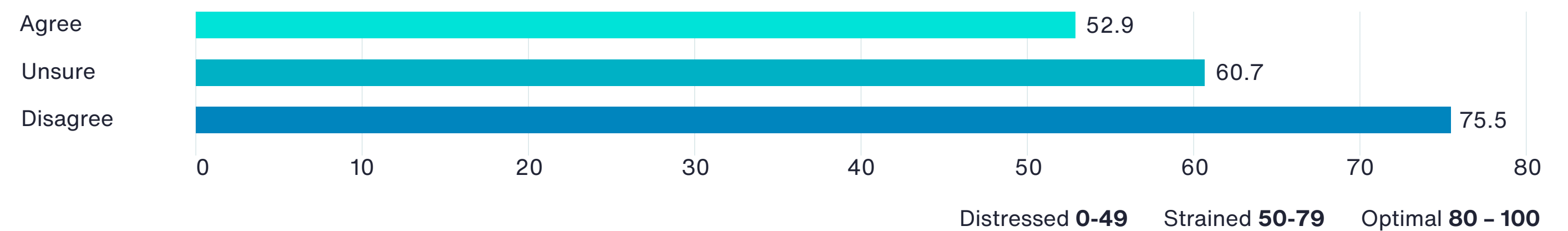
Employees under 40 years of age are nearly 50% more likely than employees older than 50 to feel mentally and/or physically exhausted at the end of their workday.

I more often end my workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted.



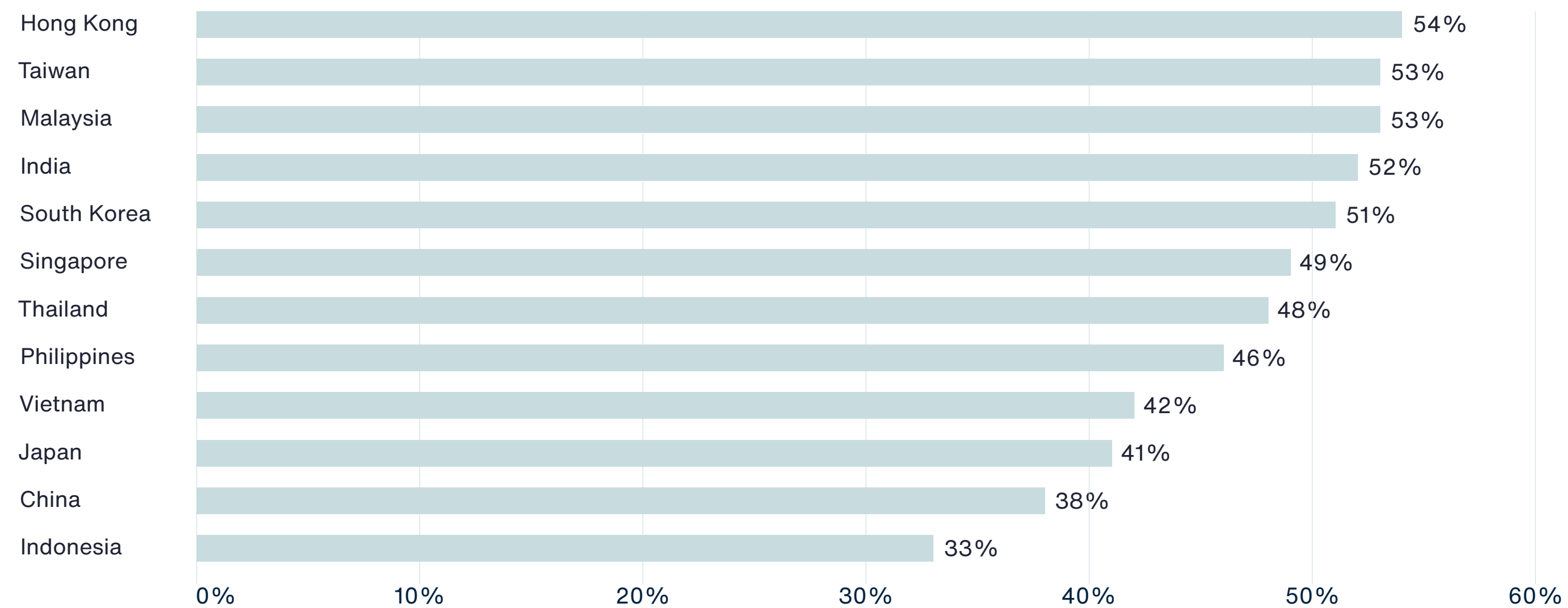
Almost **50%** of workers end the workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted.

MHI score by “I more often end my workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted.”



Employees younger than 40 are **50%** more likely to feel mentally and/or physically exhausted at the end of the workday vs employees older than 50.

I more often end my workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted.



Actionable Insight

To support employees with burnout, employers need to take steps to build a culture of care. Organisations also need to consider the financial impact of reduced productivity at work.

It's also important for employers and managers to be aware of the contributing factors to burnout and have the skills to identify the signs of burnout in employees. While preventing burnout is key, it's important for an employee experiencing burnout to know that they are supported in taking care of themselves and their recovery.

How Employers can Support Employees with Burnout

- Give employees peace of mind that sick leave may be used to access respite
- Encourage employees to take adequate time off for their recovery
- Develop a suitable return-to-work protocol
- Keep the barriers to care seeking in mind. For example, this study shows employees who report having no energy to seek care have the poorest mental health and carry the highest mental health risk. So, it is critical for employers to build support systems and signposts to make it fast and easy for employees to access helpful resources.

Stigma

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, stigma refers to negative feelings people have about circumstances or characteristics that somebody may have.

People with poor mental health often internalise the social stigma they experience into negative self stigma.

As there are three dimensions to mental health stigma: public, institutional and self-stigma, we explored all aspects by asking workers to comment on three statements:

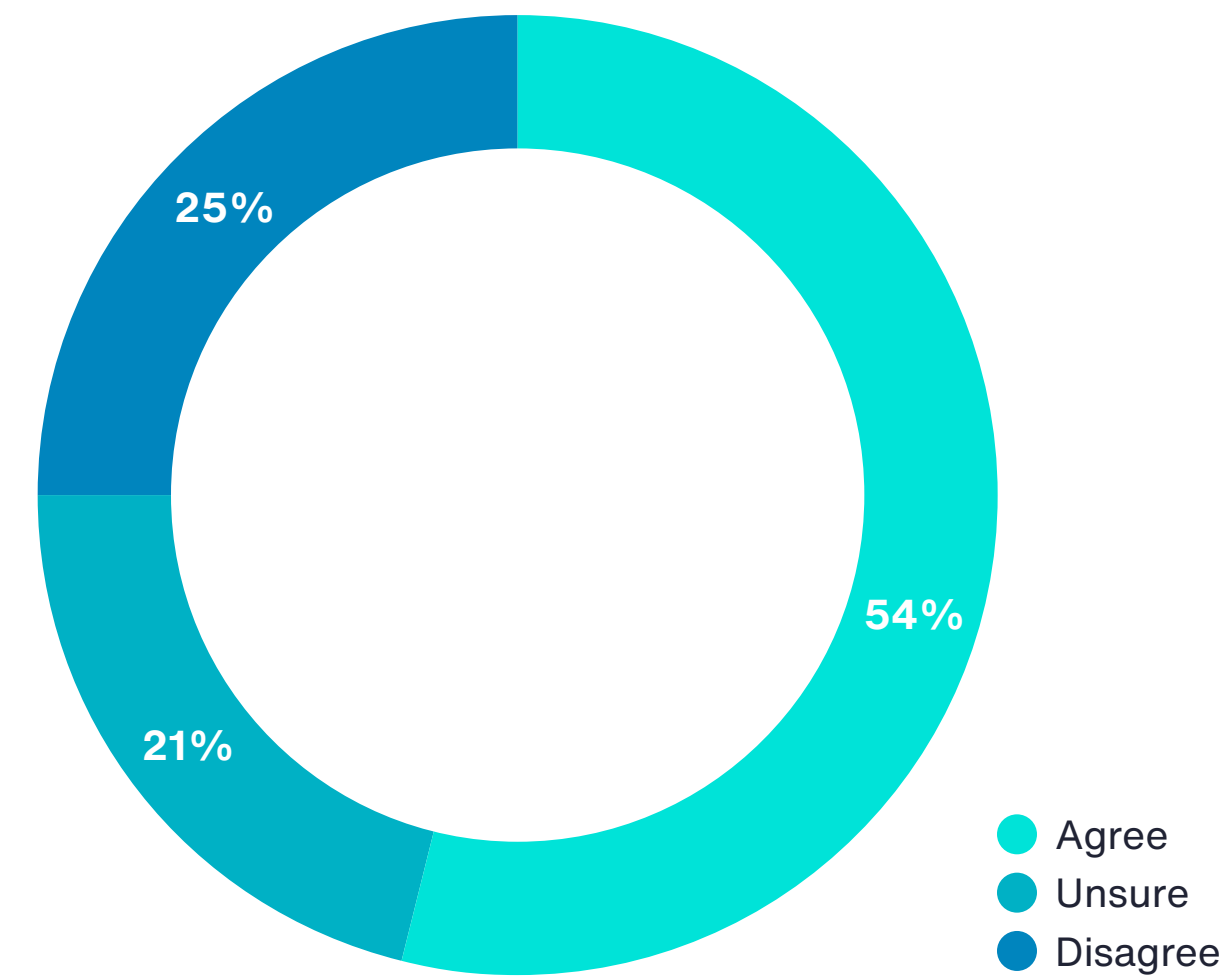
1. I would be concerned that career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue and my employer was aware
2. I would be concerned that my friends or family would treat me differently if I had a mental health issue
3. I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue

More than half of survey respondents say they would be concerned about career options being limited if they had a mental health issue that their employer was aware of. The Mental Health Index score for this group is lowest at 57.5, which is below the average score of 62.4 for Asia

Locations where employees would be most concerned about the potential for career limiting impacts due to having a mental health issue that their employer knew about are:

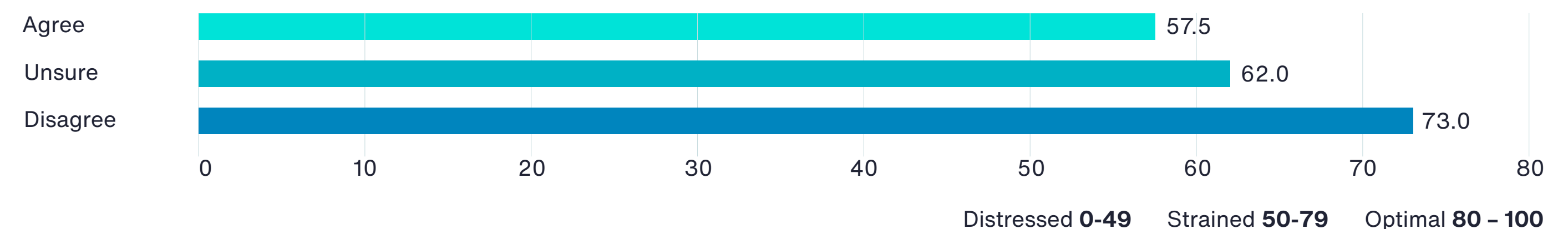
- Philippines 75%
- Malaysia 71%
- India 66%

I would be concerned that career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue and my employer was aware.

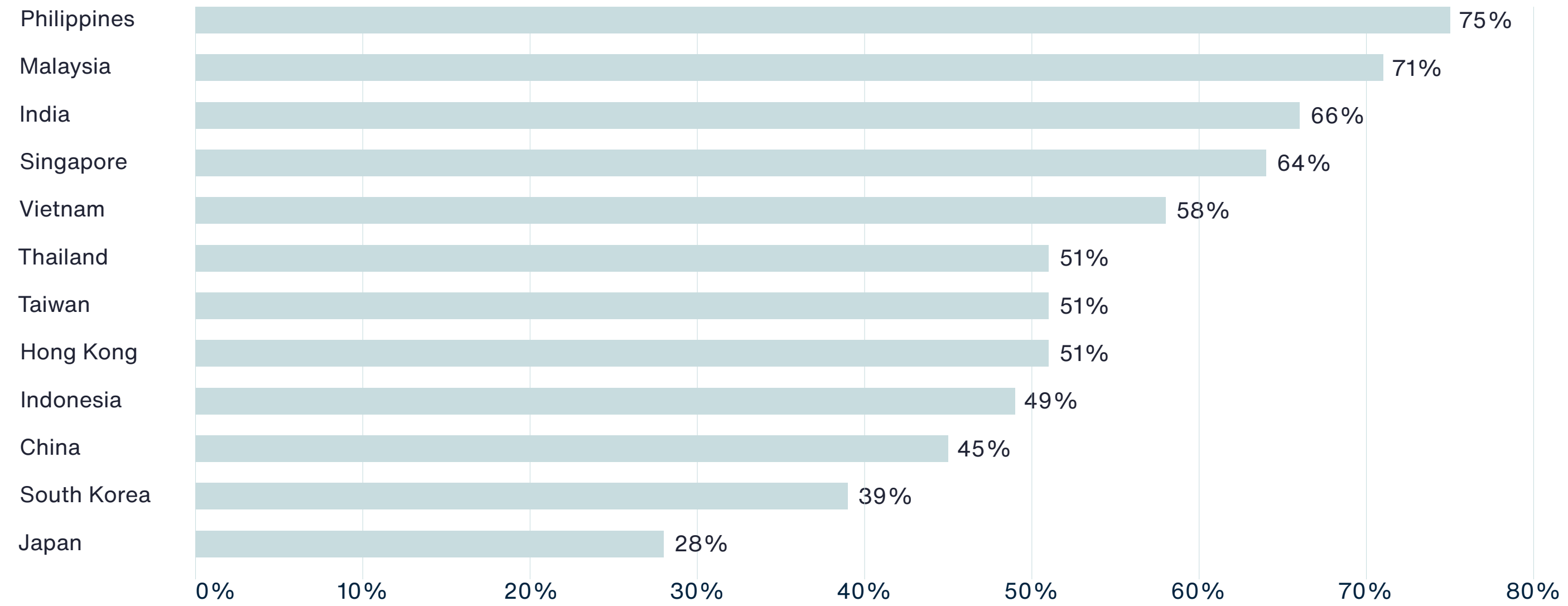


54% would be concerned about career options being limited if they had a mental health issue that their employer knew about.

MHI score by “I would be concerned that career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue, and my employer was aware.”



I would be concerned that my career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue and my workplace was aware.



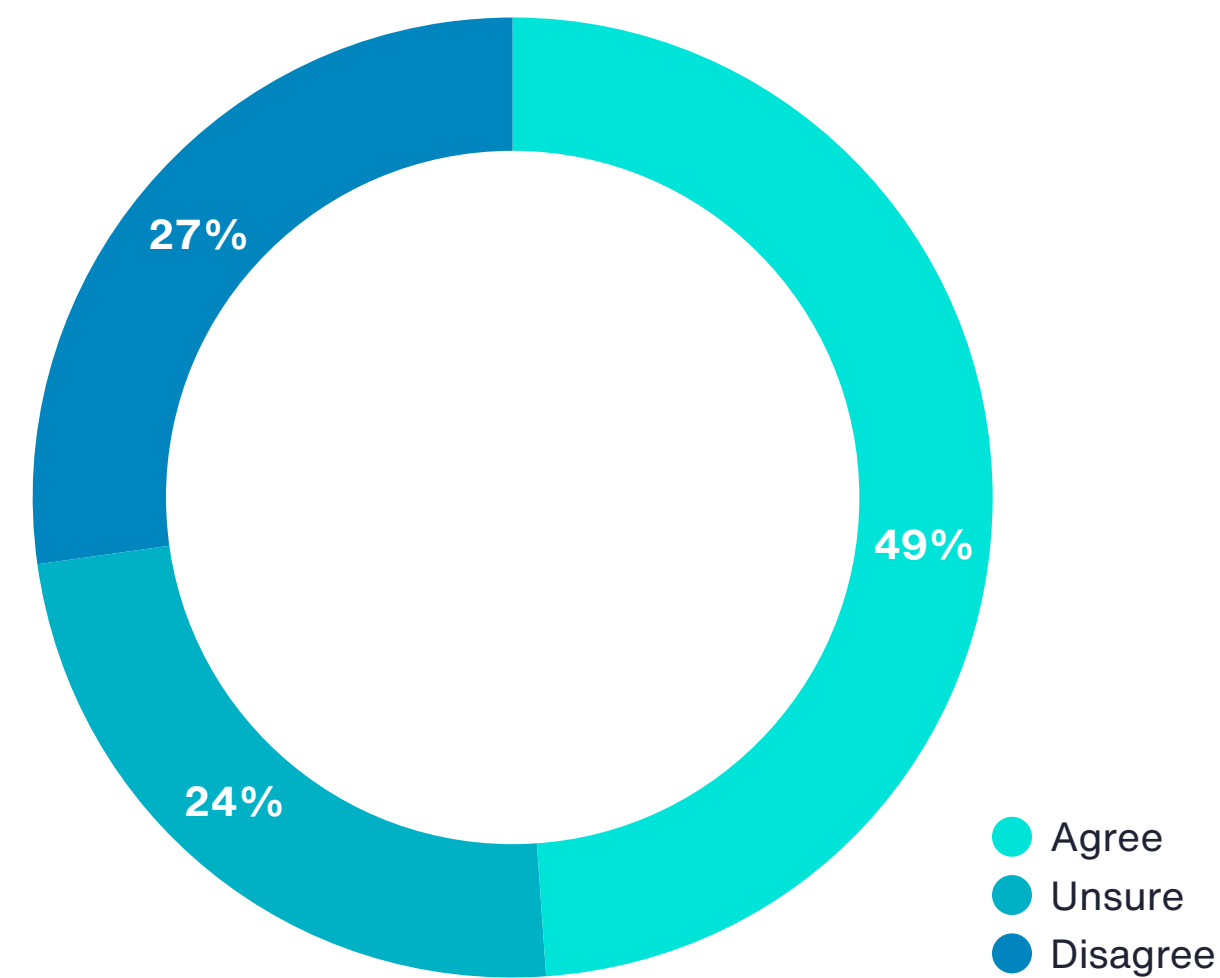
Employees are Concerned about Stigma from Family and Friends

Forty-nine percent say they would be concerned that friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue, and this group has the lowest Mental Health Index score at 57, which is below the 62.4 average score for Asia.

Locations where employees are most concerned that friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue are:

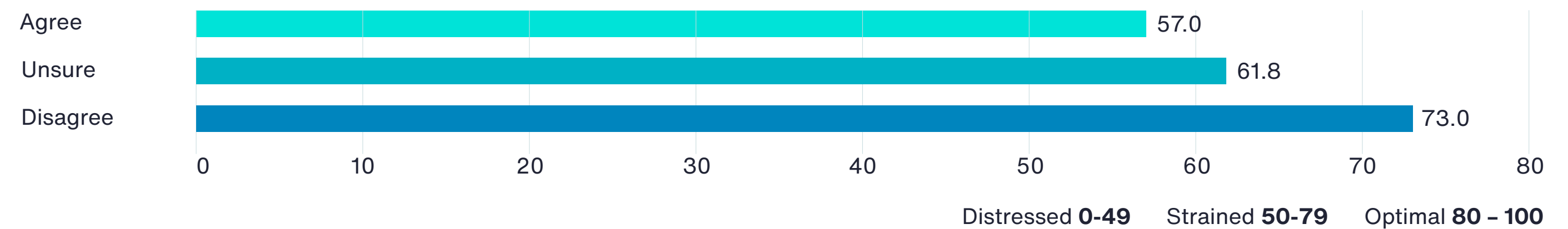
- Malaysia 66%
- Philippines 63%
- India 62%
- Singapore 60%

I would be concerned that my friends or family would treat me differently if I had a mental health issue.

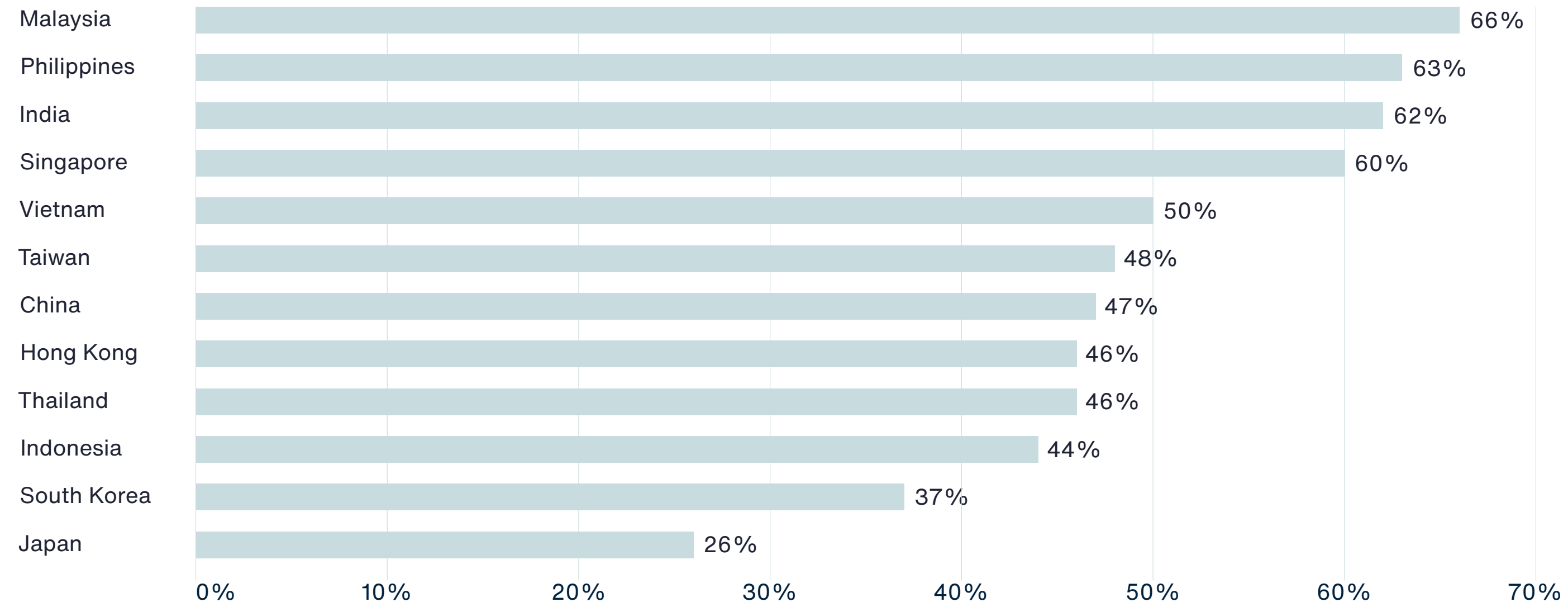


49% would be concerned that friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue.

MHI score by “I would be concerned that my friends or family would treat me differently if I had a mental health issue.”



I would be concerned that my friends or family would treat me differently if I had a mental health issue.



Stigma

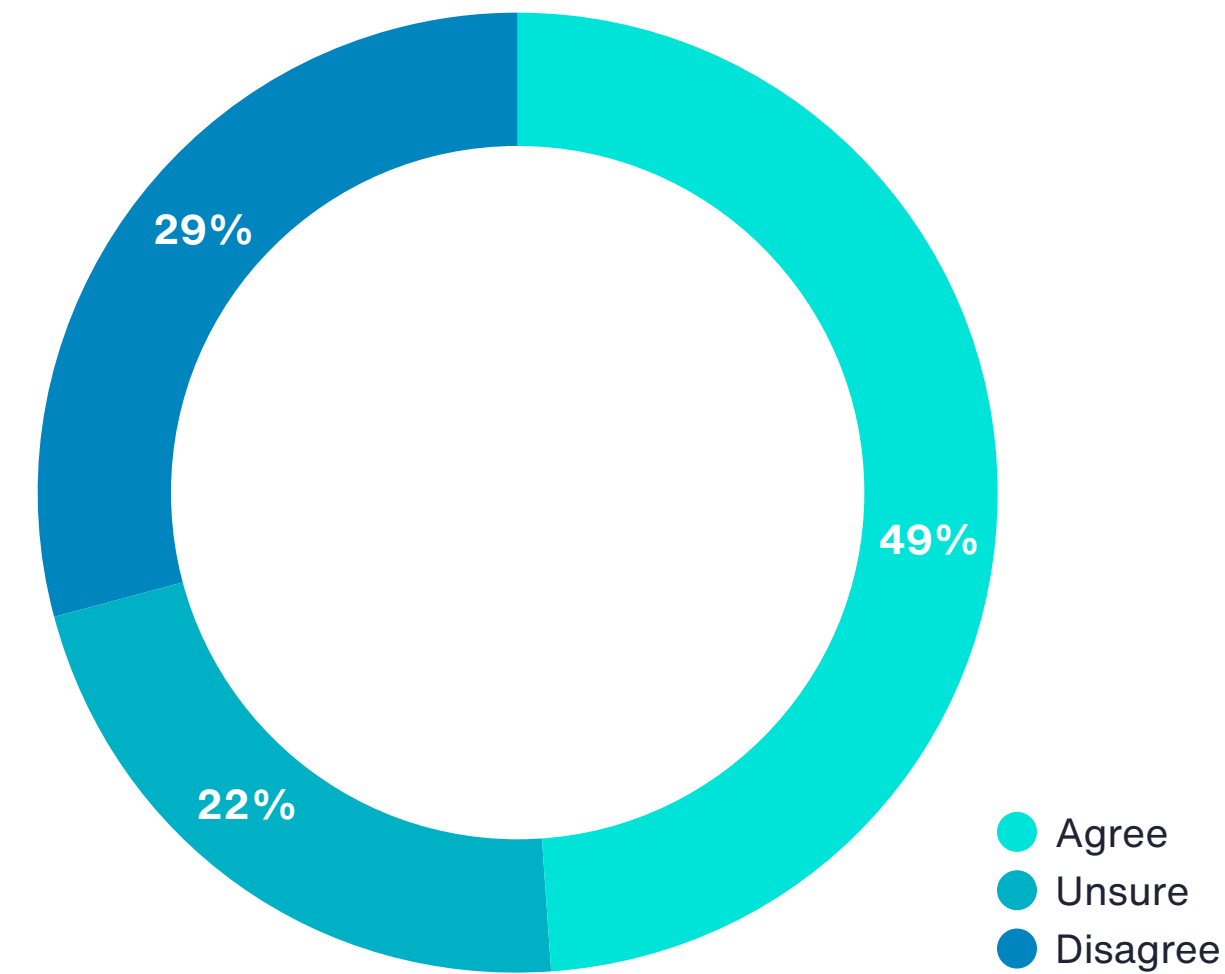
Nearly Half Would Feel Negatively About Themselves if They Had a Mental Health Issue

To test for negative self-stigma, we asked employees, “Would you feel negatively about yourself if you had a mental health issue?” Forty-nine percent of respondents say they would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue, and this group also has the lowest Mental Health Index score, at 55.2.

Across Asia, employees in these locations are most likely to experience negative self stigma due to mental illness:

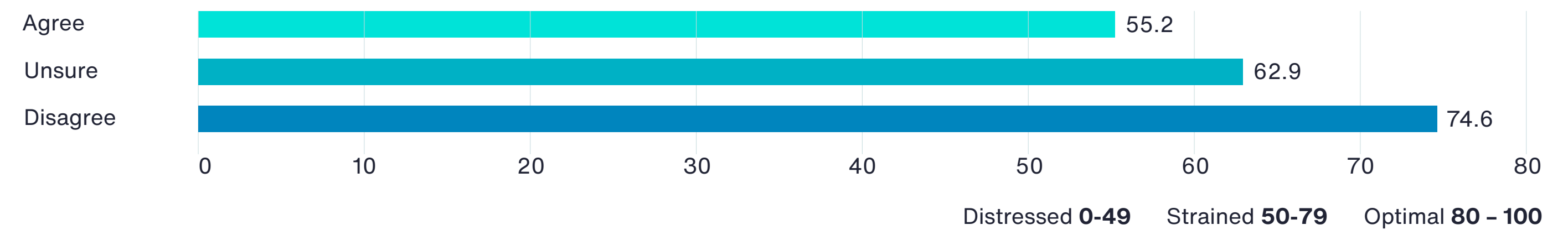
- Hong Kong 62%
- Philippines 57%
- Thailand 57%

I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue.

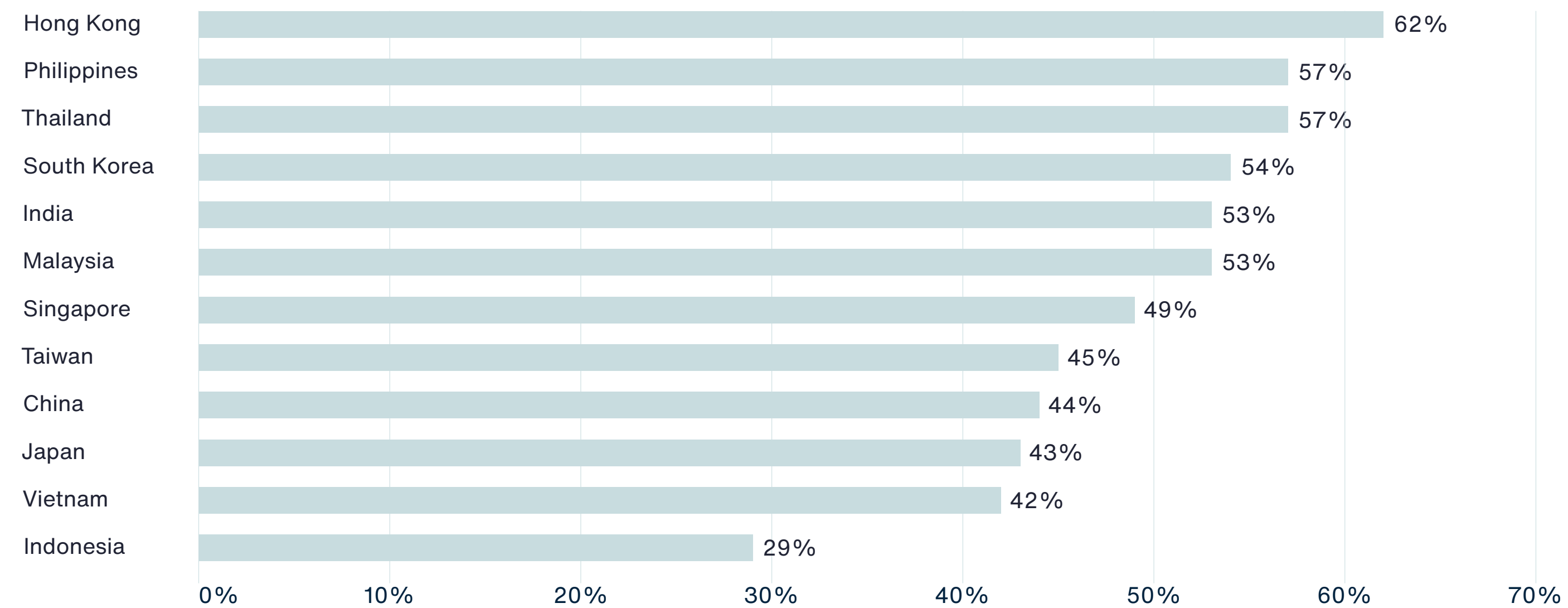


49% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue.

MHI score by “I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue.”



I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue.



Actionable Insight

The survey data demonstrates that stigma is a significant barrier preventing workers from seeking appropriate help for mental health issues. To address this, employers can normalise the spectrum of mental health experiences and mitigate stigma through storytelling and use of inclusive language when communicating about their wellbeing programs.

By appointing mental health champions and wellbeing ambassadors as touchpoints for employees, employers can help communicate that everyone experiences mental health issues of some sort and that there is nothing inherently wrong with a person going through a mental health crisis – things can and will get better. Leaders can also have a positive impact by openly discussing mental health.

The international symbol for mental health awareness is a green ribbon. By wearing a green ribbon or including the green ribbon symbol on communication material, employees and their employers can demonstrate awareness of mental health and a commitment to fighting associated stigma. It is a simple and non-threatening way to communicate empathy for those who are experiencing poor mental health using the colour green, which evokes a feeling of abundance and is associated with refreshment, peace, rest, and security.



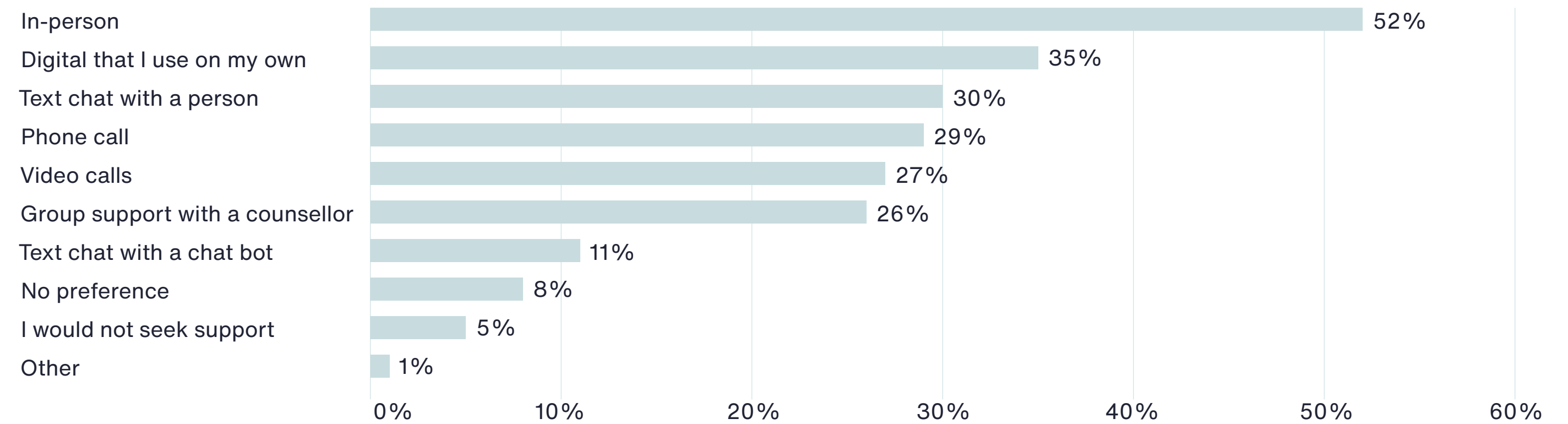
Mental Health Support

Asked about their preference for accessing mental health support, 52% say they would prefer to access in-person mental health support, which is the most preferred type of mental health support across all the locations.

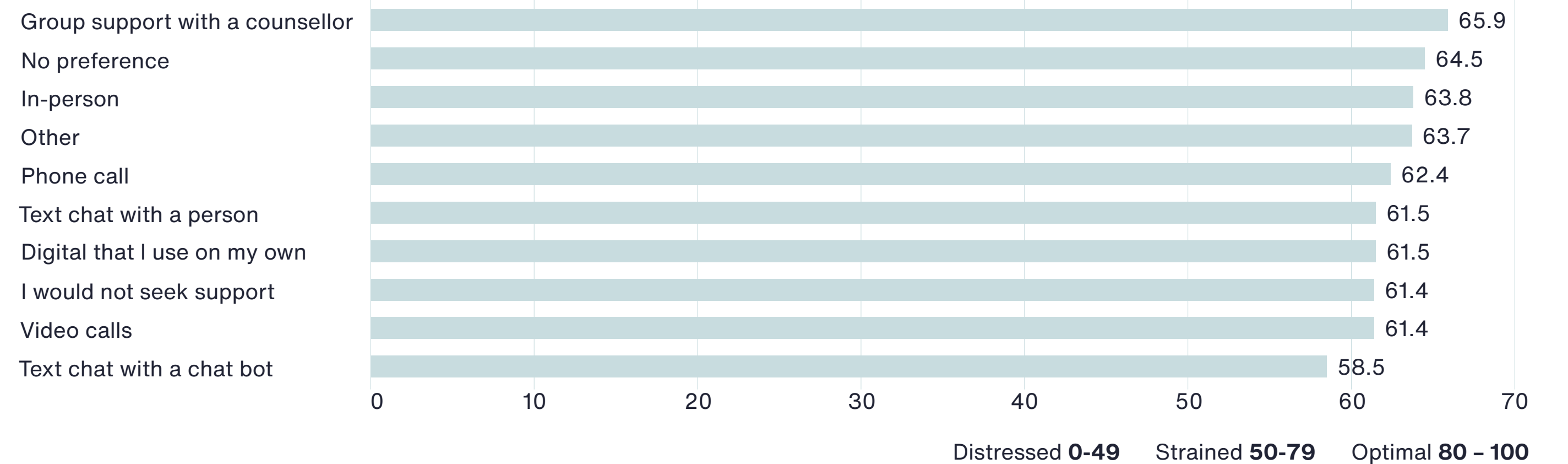
Stigma prevents workers from seeking appropriate help for mental health issues.

Non-managers are **60%** less likely to seek mental health support than managers.

Preference for mental health support

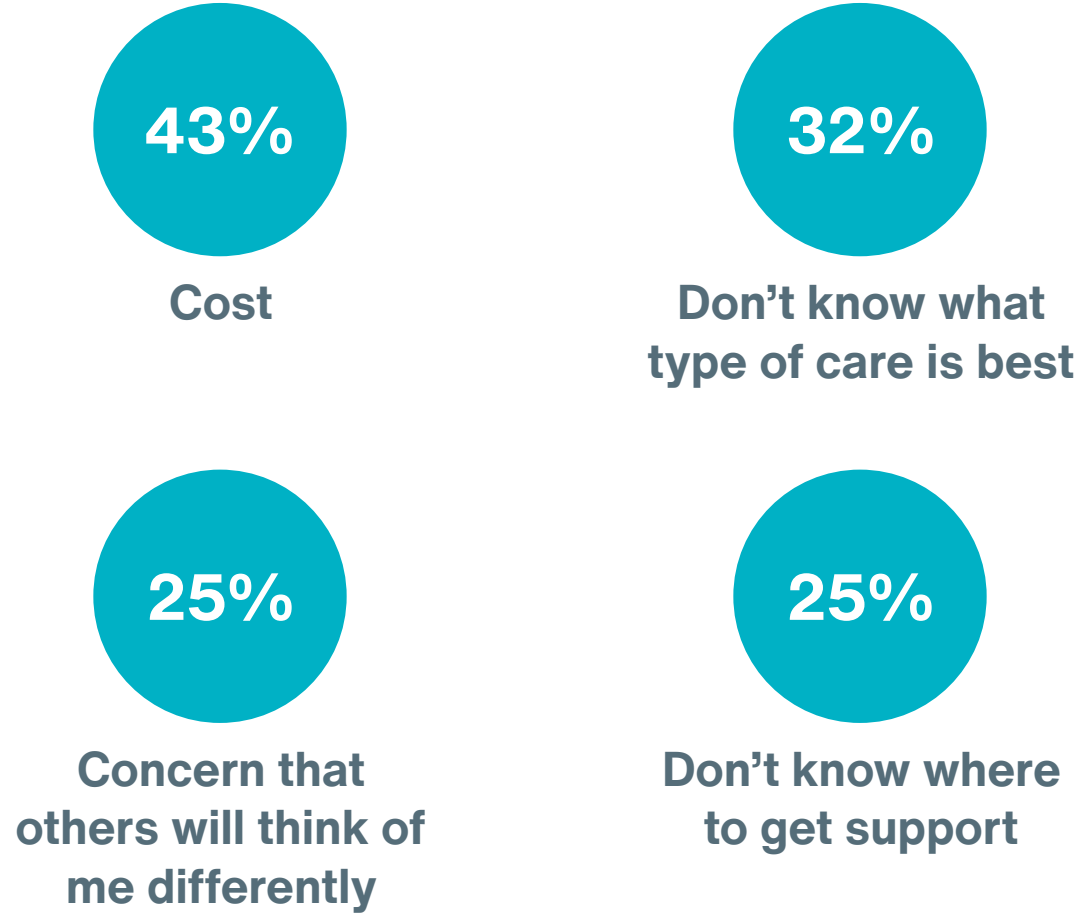


MHI score by “Preference for mental health support.”



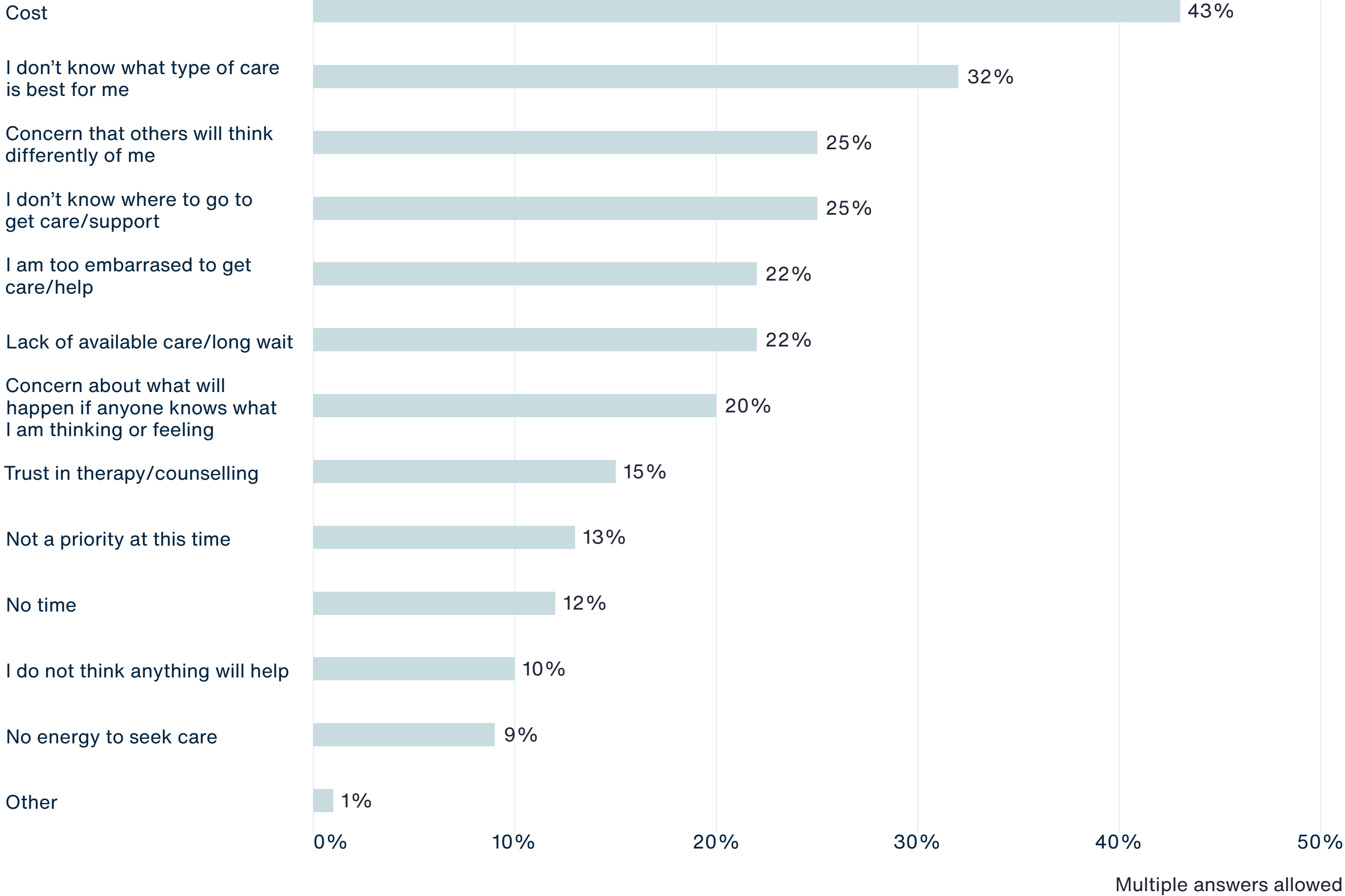
Mental Health Support

When asked what would prevent them from getting mental health support if needed, employees shared these primary reasons:



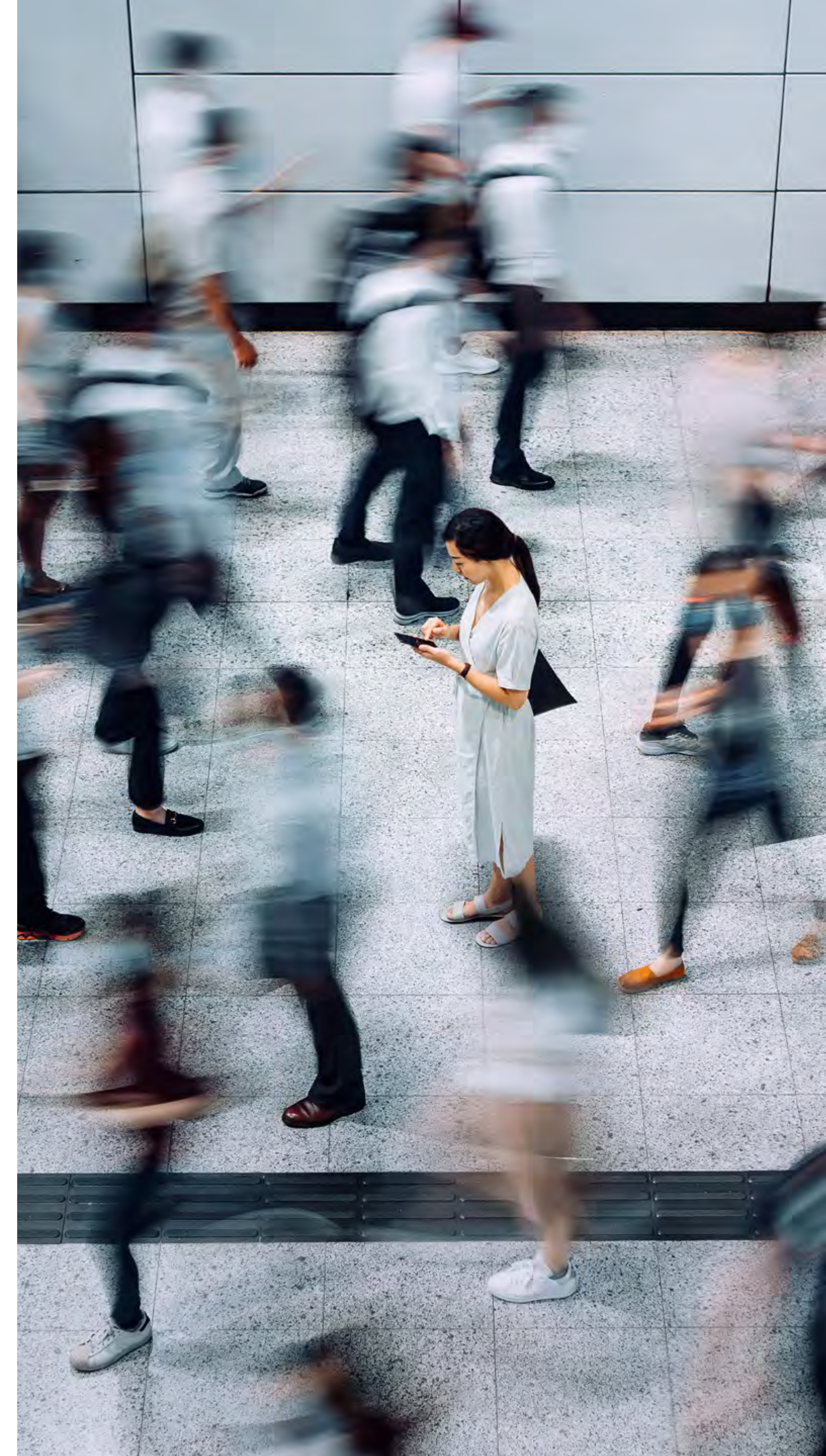
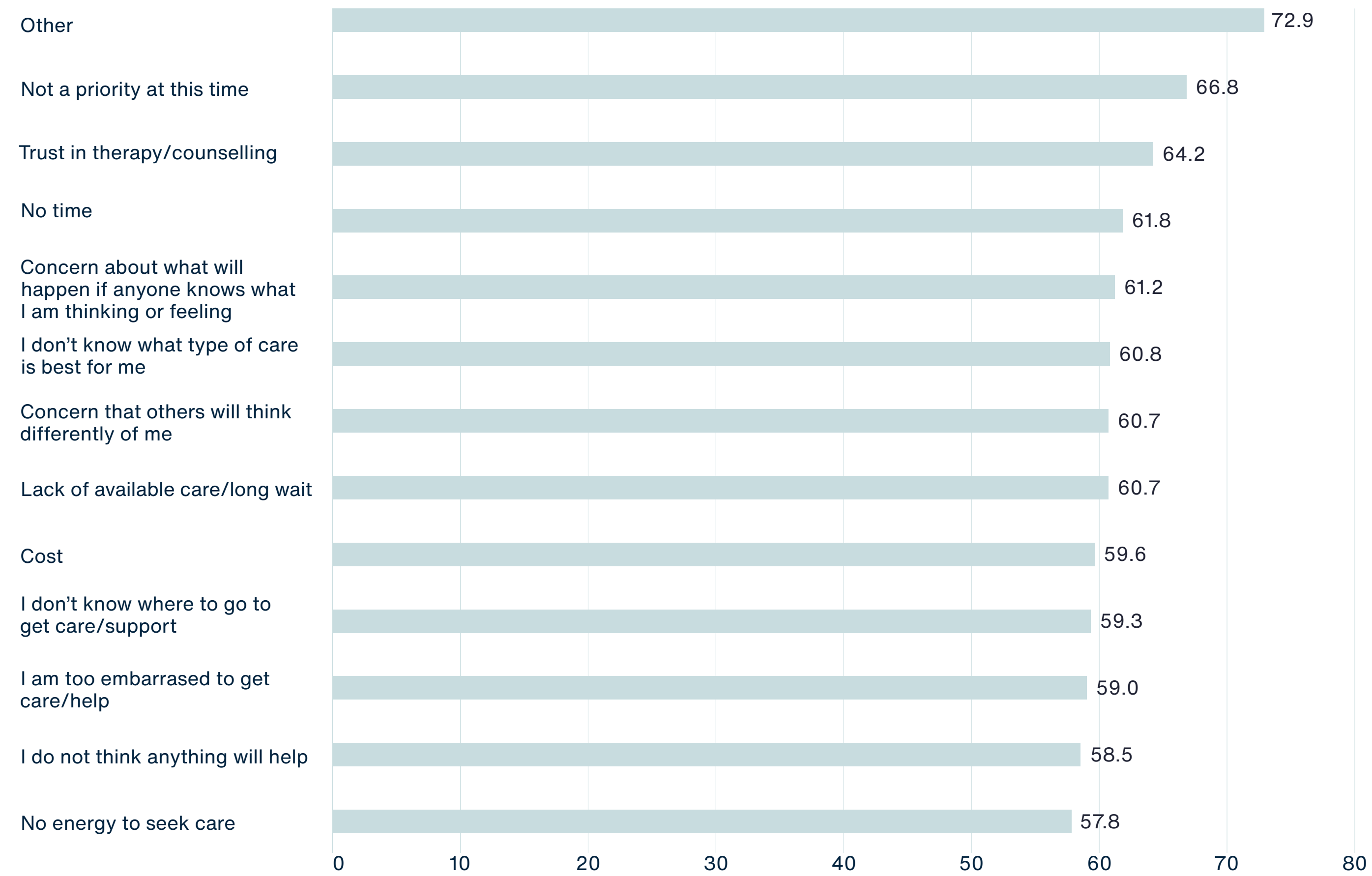
Cost is the biggest barrier preventing employees from getting help.

Barriers to getting mental health support



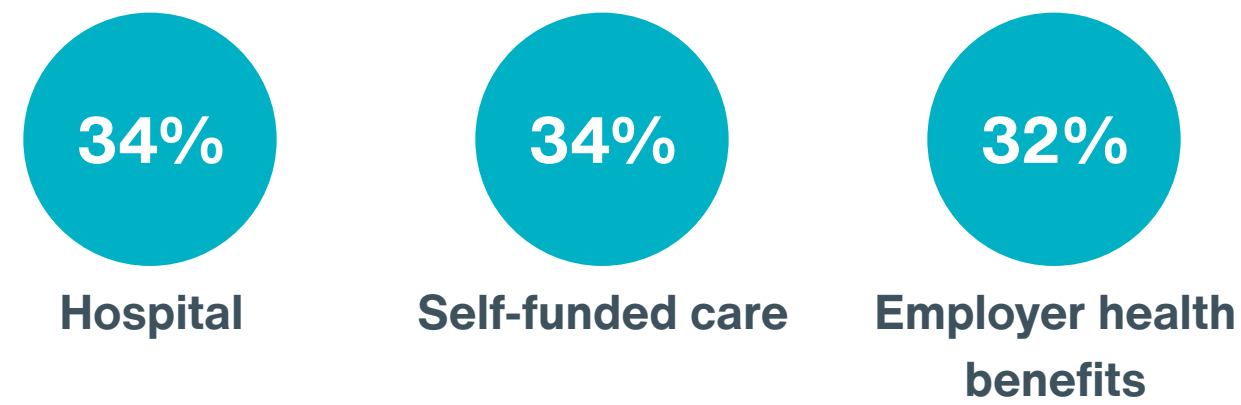
Mental Health Support

MHI score by “Barriers to getting mental health support”



Mental Health Support

Survey respondents say the sources of mental health care most available to them would be:

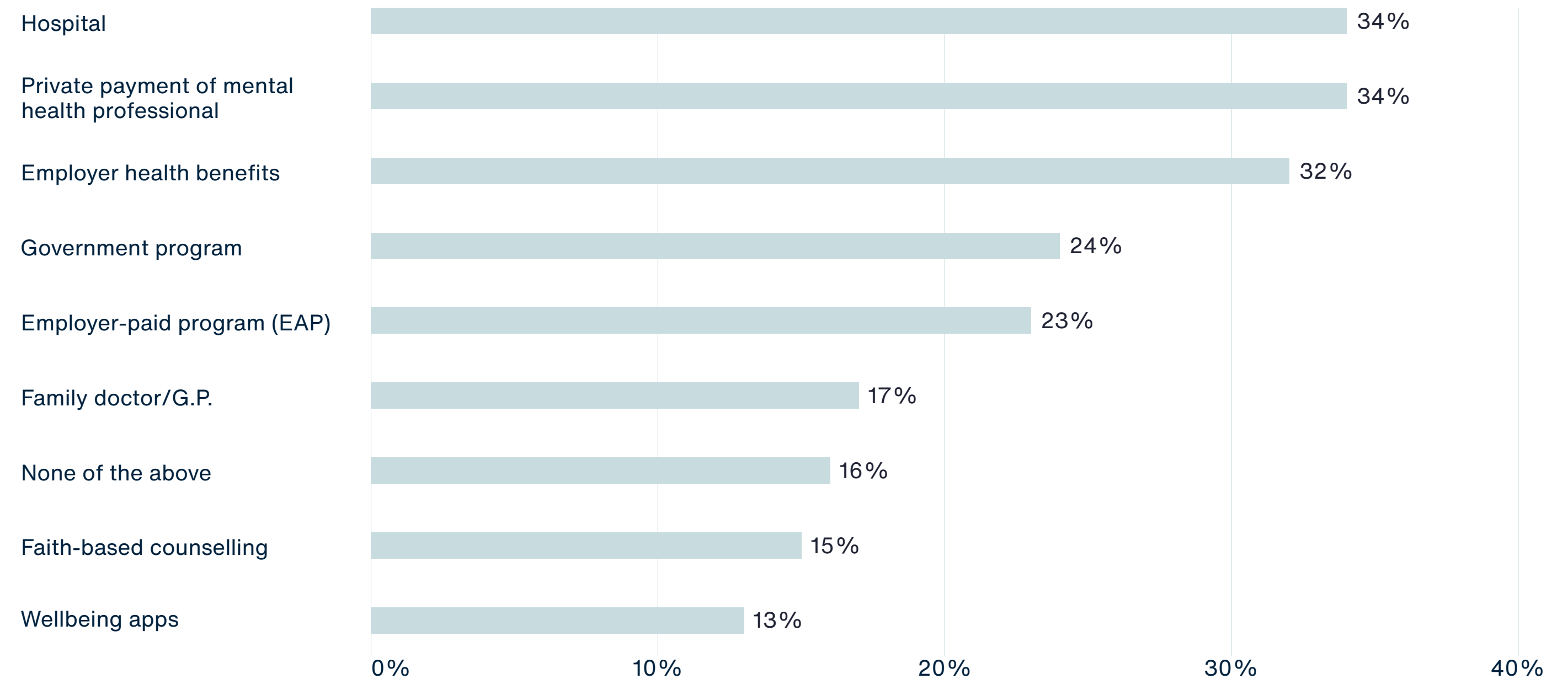


However, 16% say they have no access to mental health care through their community or employer.

Employees under 40 are 50% more likely than those older than 50 to have access to an employer paid program.

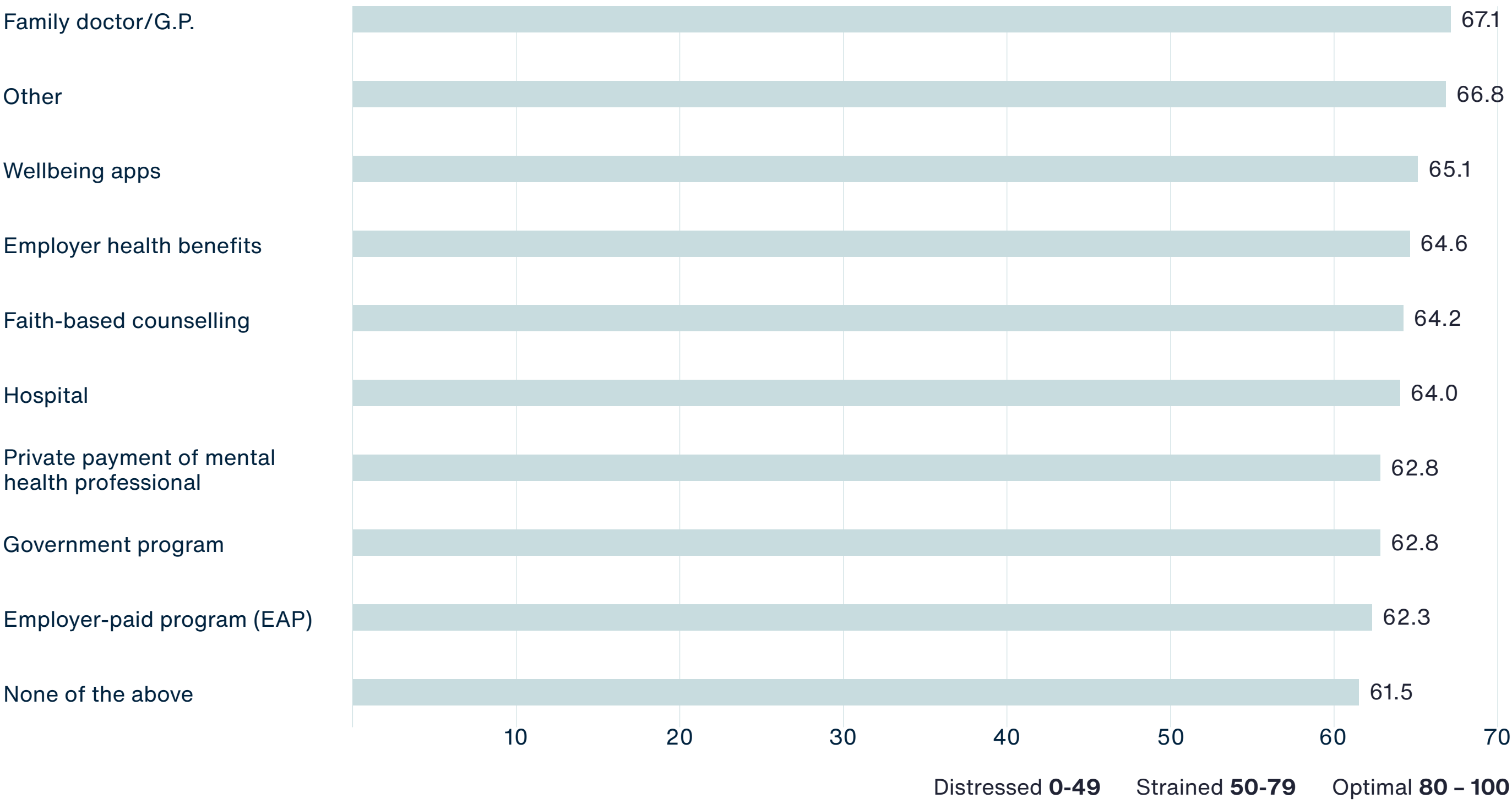
16% do not have access to mental health care through their community or employer.

Accessibility of Mental Health Care



Mental Health Support

MHI score by “Mental health care available through community or employer”



Actionable Insight

The preferred mode of receiving mental health support is via face-to-face meetings, so employers need to consider providing employees with onsite counselling via an Employee Assistance Provider (EAP).

Onsite support can complement virtual resources, including telephone counselling and digital solutions. Ensuring psychiatry, psychology and general counselling services are included as part of your employee benefits program (alongside other preferred modes of mental health support), provides employees with choice and flexibility while eliminating the stress that is too often associated with the significant cost of accessing psychological support services; a key barrier to seeking help. Clearly and repeatedly promoting and explaining the health resources available, and how to access them, is key to helping employees find appropriate care and addressing problems before they escalate into more complex issues that take longer and are more expensive to resolve.

5

Mental Health
by Location



The Mental Health Index score for China is 60.6, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 1.8 points lower than the median.

60.6

Below 62.4 Median
Strained

How Employees Feel

- 34% feel anxious
- 33% feel depressed
- 33% feel isolated

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 48% feel more sensitive to stress
- 46% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 32% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 38% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 46% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

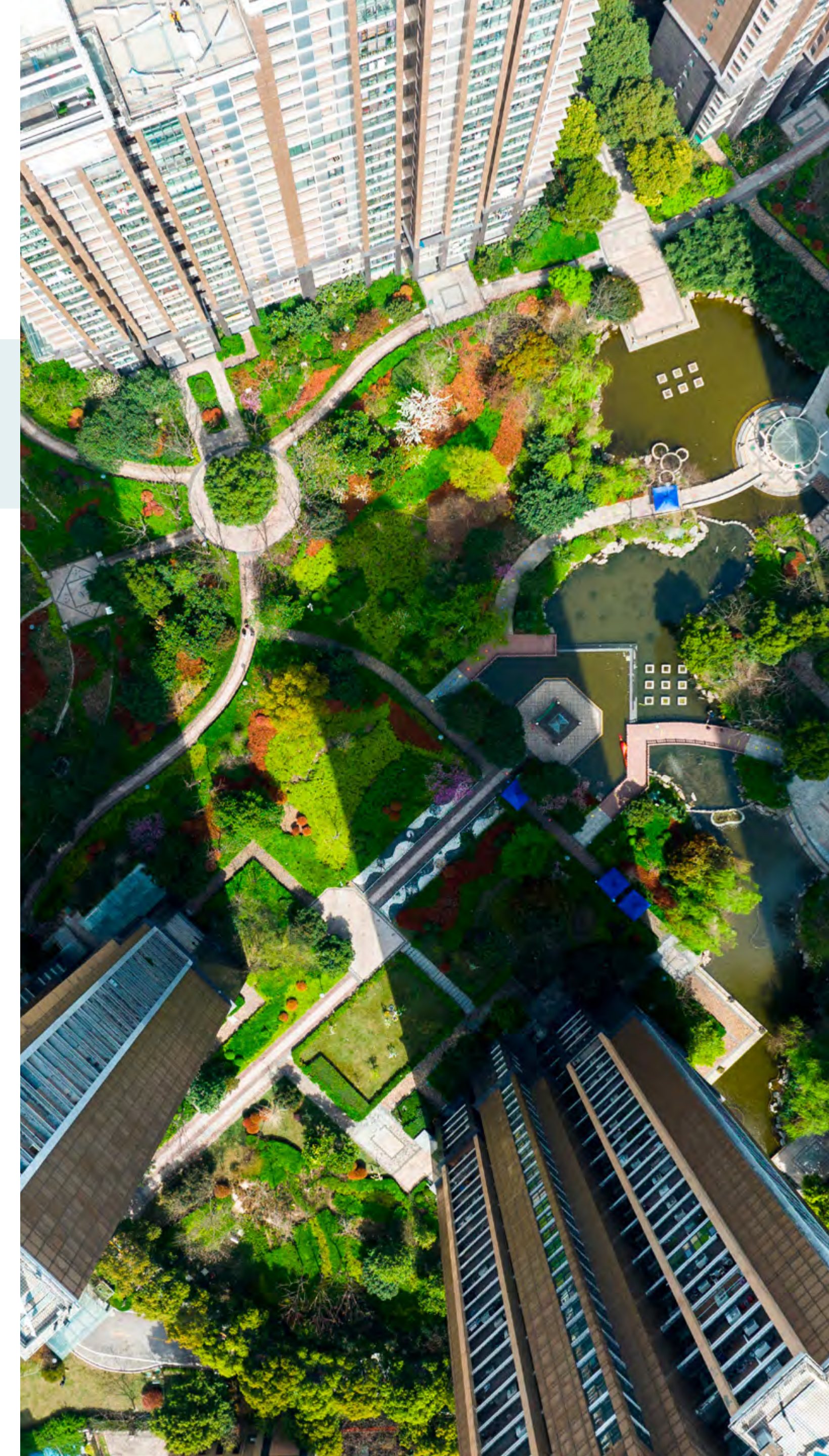
- 39% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 47% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 44% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 45% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 41% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 28% would not seek mental health support because of concern that others will think differently of them



The Mental Health Index score for Hong Kong is **59.9**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 2.5 points lower than the median.

59.9

Below 62.4 Median
Strained

How Employees Feel

- 39% feel anxious
- 33% feel depressed
- 32% feel isolated

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 54% feel more sensitive to stress
- 43% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 34% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 54% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 39% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

- 29% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 46% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 62% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 51% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue, and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 57% would not seek mental health support because of cost
- 41% prefer face-to-face mental health support

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



The Mental Health Index score for India is 64, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained despite being 1.6 points higher than the median.

64.0

Above 62.4 Median
Strained

How Employees Feel

- 44% feel isolated
- 43% feel anxious
- 43% feel depressed

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 62% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 60% feel more sensitive to stress
- 45% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 52% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 53% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

- 34% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 62% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 53% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 66% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue, and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 58% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 36% would not seek mental health support because of a lack of available care or long waiting times



The Mental Health Index score for Indonesia is **69.4**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained despite being seven points higher than the median.

69.4

Above 62.4 Median

Strained

How Employees Feel

- 23% feel isolated
- 20% feel anxious
- 14% feel depressed

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 37% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 33% feel more sensitive to stress
- 18% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 33% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 46% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

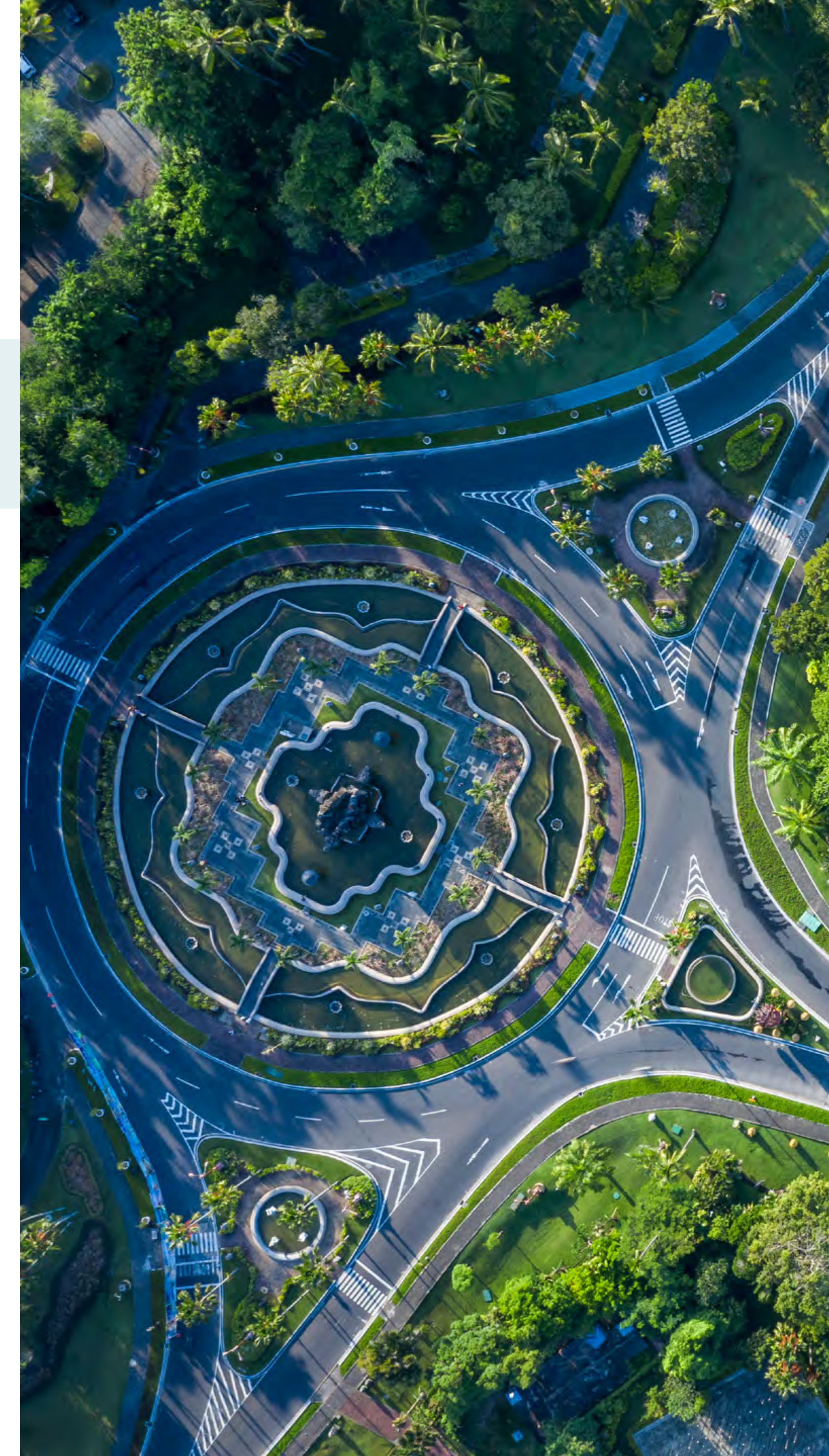
- 28% do not have emergency savings

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 44% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 29% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 49% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 64% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 48% would not seek mental health support because of cost



The Mental Health Index score for Japan is **58.1**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 4.3 points lower than the median.

58.1

Below 62.4 Median

Strained

How Employees Feel

- 30% feel anxious
- 27% feel depressed
- 25% feel isolated

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 42% feel more sensitive to stress
- 24% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 25% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 41% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 31% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

- 35% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 26% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 43% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 28% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 37% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 38% would not seek mental health support because they do not know what type of care is best



The Mental Health Index score for Malaysia is **59.6**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 2.8 points lower than the median.

59.6

Below 62.4 Median

Strained

How Employees Feel

- 45% feel anxious
- 44% feel depressed
- 40% feel isolated

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 57% feel more sensitive to stress
- 53% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 40% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 53% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 62% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

- 42% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 66% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 53% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 71% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 56% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 42% would not seek mental health support because of cost



The Mental Health Index score for the Philippines is 65, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained, despite being 2.6 points higher than the median.

65.0

Above 62.4 Median
Strained

How Employees Feel

- 41% feel anxious
- 35% feel isolated
- 32% feel depressed

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 54% feeling more sensitive to stress
- 53% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 46% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 33% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 60% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

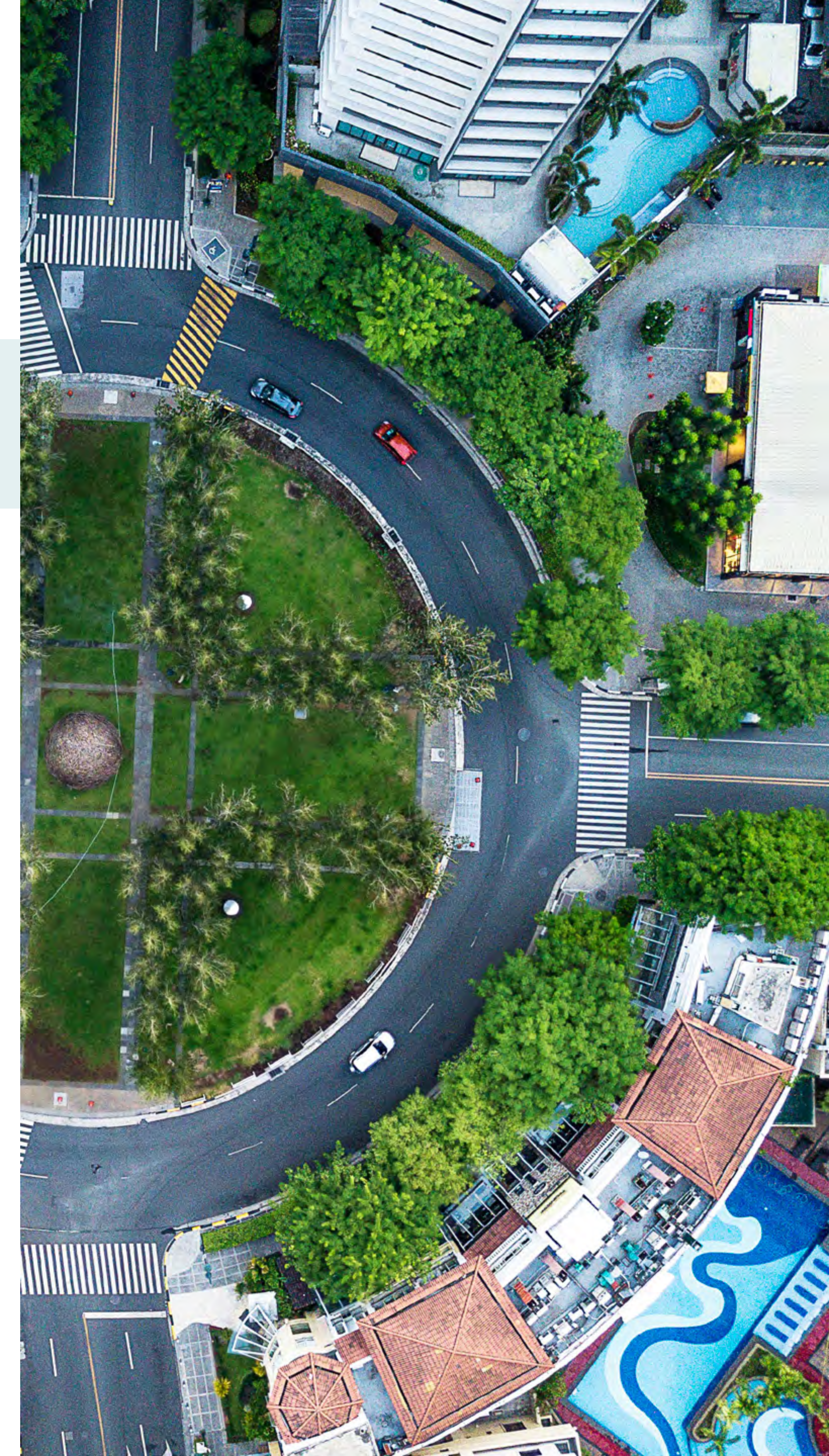
- 48% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 63% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 57% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 75% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 72% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 44% would not seek mental health support because of cost



The Mental Health Index score for Singapore is **63.2**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 0.8 points higher than the median.

63.2

Above 62.4 Median

Strained

How Employees Feel

- 33% feel anxious
- 32% feel isolated
- 31% feel depressed

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 52% feel more sensitive to stress
- 44% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 49% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 32% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 43% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

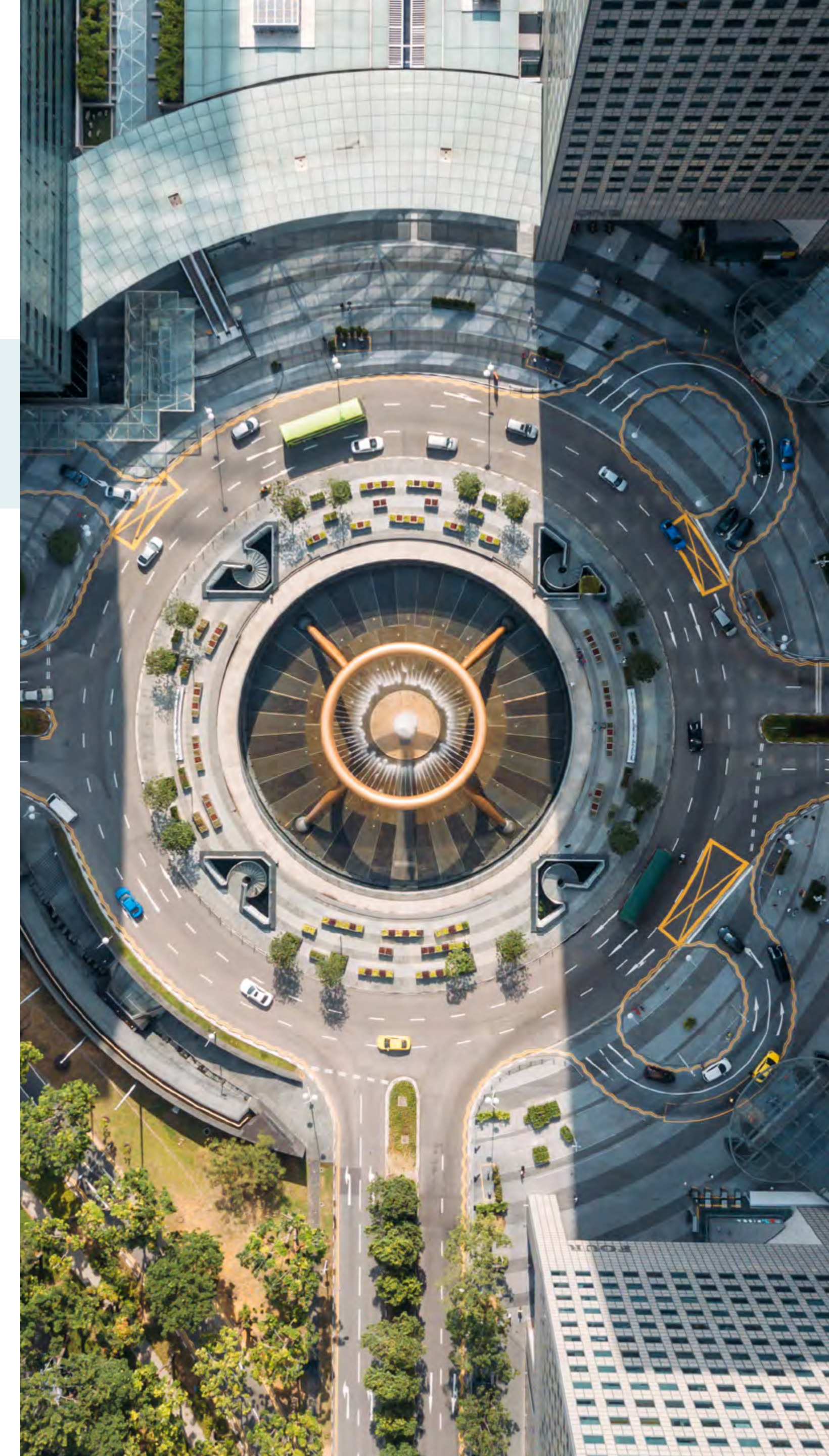
- 28% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 60% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 49% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 64% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 50% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 55% would not seek mental health support because of cost



The Mental Health Index score for South Korea is **57.8**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 4.6 points lower than the median.

57.8

Below 62.4 Median
Strained

How Employees Feel

- 49% feel isolated
- 46% feel depressed
- 41% feel anxious

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 51% feel more sensitive to stress
- 36% notice that colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 30% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 51% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 30% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

- 36% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 54% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 39% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware
- 37% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 48% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 46% would not seek mental health support because of cost



The Mental Health Index score for Taiwan is **61.4**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 1 point lower than the median.

61.4

Below 62.4 Median
Strained

How Employees Feel

- 32% feel anxious
- 30% feel depressed
- 29% feel isolated

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 54% feel more sensitive to stress
- 37% notice their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 53% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 28% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 31% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

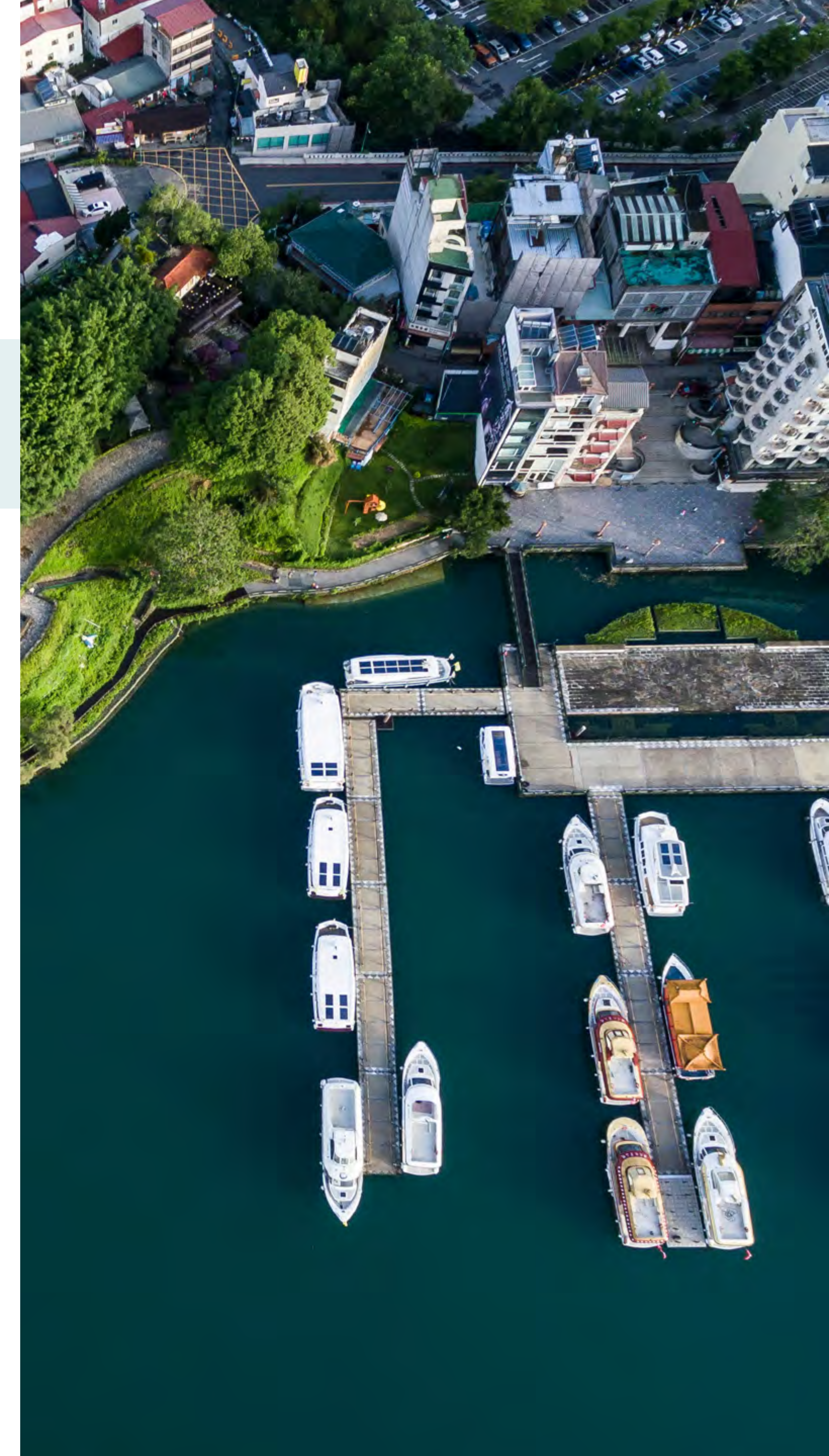
- 29% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 48% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 45% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 51% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 48% would not seek mental health support because of cost
- 42% prefer face-to-face mental health support



The Mental Health Index score for Thailand is **66.4**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained despite being 4 points higher than the median.

66.4

Above 62.4 Median
Strained

How Employees Feel

- 36% feel anxious
- 26% feel isolated
- 24% feel depressed

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 54% feel more sensitive to stress
- 56% notice that their colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 48% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 39% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 50% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

- 31% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 46% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 57% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 51% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 53% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 52% would not seek mental health support because of cost



The Mental Health Index score for Vietnam is **63.6**, indicating that the mental health of employees there is strained at 1.2 points higher than the median.

63.6

Above 62.4 Median

Strained

How Employees are Feeling

- 40% feel isolated
- 36% feel anxious
- 33% feel depressed

Impact of Stress and Exhaustion on Employees and Productivity vs Last Year

- 51% feel more sensitive to stress
- 46% notice colleagues are more sensitive to stress
- 42% more often end their workday feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted
- 39% find it more difficult to concentrate on their work
- 53% say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity

Financial Risk

- 32% do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs

Mental Health Stigma, Self-Stigma and Career Progression

- 50% would be concerned that their friends or family would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue
- 42% would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue
- 58% would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware

Accessing Mental Health Support

- 59% prefer face-to-face mental health support
- 45% would not seek mental health support because of cost



6

Conclusion



Asia's working population is under strain. They are facing a higher prevalence of mental health issues and higher mental health risk than other regions - and it is taking a toll on productivity. Yet, taking care of wellbeing can enhance business outcomes by 11% to 55%¹.

Leaders have become more focussed on this issue since the pandemic, with nearly half saying wellbeing will be a core priority over the next five years. To create change, though, C-suite and senior executives need to lead with heart to create work environments where everyone feels safe, and where open and honest dialogue is encouraged. More knowledge and skills are needed among frontline managers, too, to identify at-risk employees, start a conversation, reinforce a caring culture, and guide employees to appropriate support.

Whilst 45% of employees say factors including stress, anxiety, burnout and financial insecurity are impacting their productivity, stigma prevents many from seeking help, ensuring these issues are likely to continue stifling growth and driving costs higher.

The message is clear:

- Mental health issues are impacting workplaces
- Current interventions are not adequately mitigating mental health risk
- Doing nothing will increase the financial cost to organisations

The data and insights from this study can be used to build a successful business case for initiating and accelerating change.

For help applying these insights to reduce mental health risk in your workplace, or to delve into the findings for your location, [please contact us](#).



About TELUS Health

TELUS Health is a global wellbeing leader supporting people in more than 180 countries. We deliver both digital innovation and clinical services to improve total physical, mental, and financial health and wellness for employees across the full spectrum of primary and preventative care.

About Aon

Aon plc (NYSE: AON) exists to shape decisions for the better — to protect and enrich the lives of people around the world. Our colleagues provide our clients in over 120 countries and sovereignties with advice and solutions that give them the clarity and confidence to make better decisions to protect and grow their business.

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