

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE MEETS POLICY



SYMPOSIUM LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC



KU LEUVEN



Well-being

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Well-being: key questions

1

How was well-being overall impacted by the pandemic and its management?

2

At what time point was the impact greatest and did policy decisions play a role?

3

Was the impact different according to age and vaccination status?

4

What can be done to improve well-being?

Well-being

Ratings of

- Life satisfaction
- Vitality
- Feelings of anxiety
- Depressive feelings
- Sleep quality

Concerns about

- Situation in general
- My health
- Health of significant others (SO)
- Financial issues

Underlying model

ABC- model (Self-determination theory - Deci & Ryan, 2012)

Well-being: need frustration versus need satisfaction

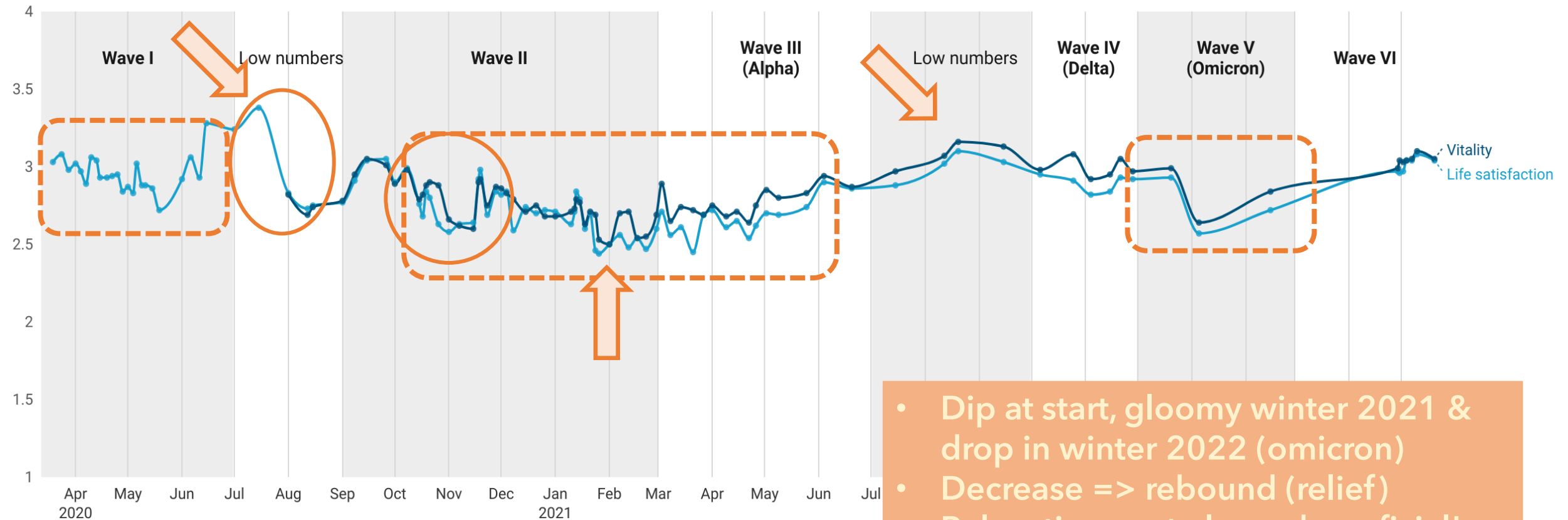
- **A**utonomy
- **B**elongingness (relatedness)
- **C**ompetence

Partial overlap with PERMA-model (Seligman, 2018)

Positive Emotion – Engagement – Relationships – Meaning – Accomplishment

Well-being throughout the pandemic

Life satisfaction - vitality

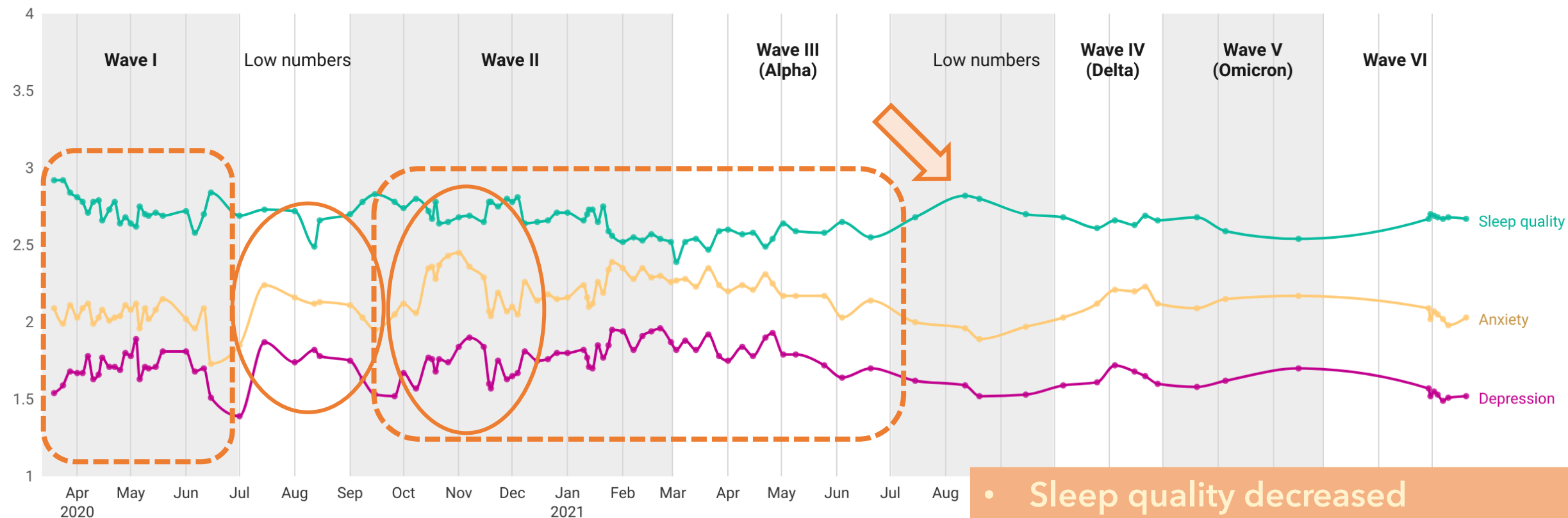


- Dip at start, gloomy winter 2021 & drop in winter 2022 (omicron)
- Decrease => rebound (relief)
- Relaxations not always beneficial!
- Constraints not always bad!

Weights are based on age, gender, education and region

Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

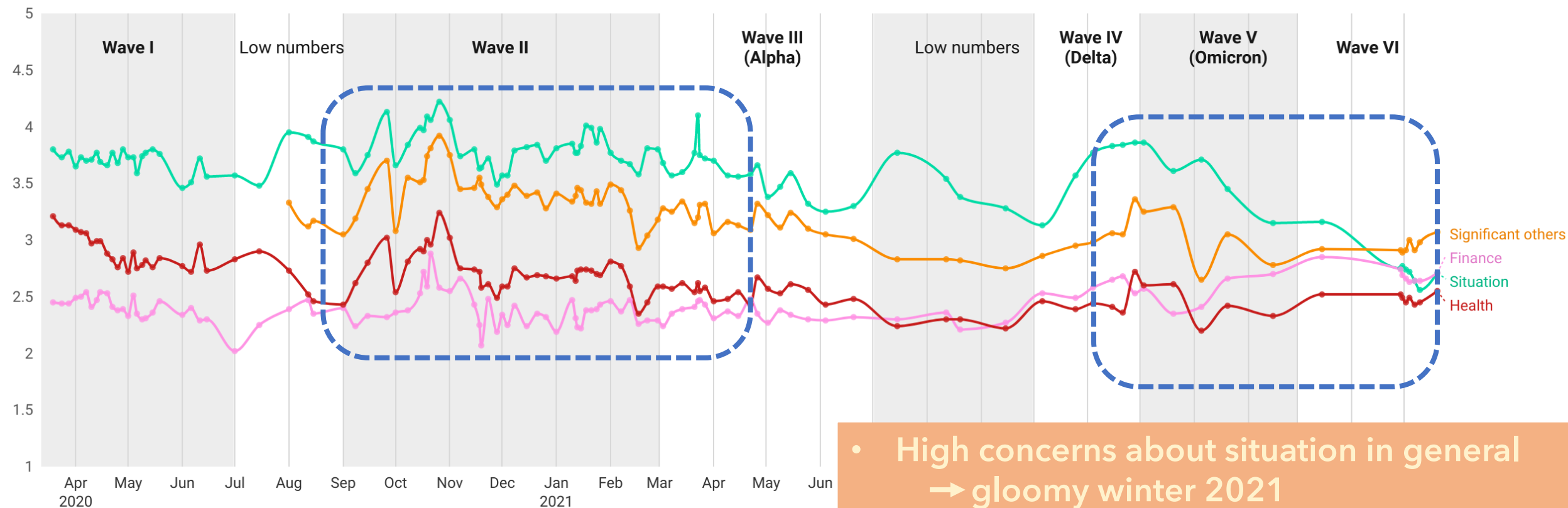
Depression - Anxiety - Sleep



- Sleep quality decreased
- Remained low during lockdowns in winter 2021, is still lower
- Rebound in summer 2021
- Stronger measures can have both positive and negative effects

Weights are based on age, gender, education and region
Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

Concerns

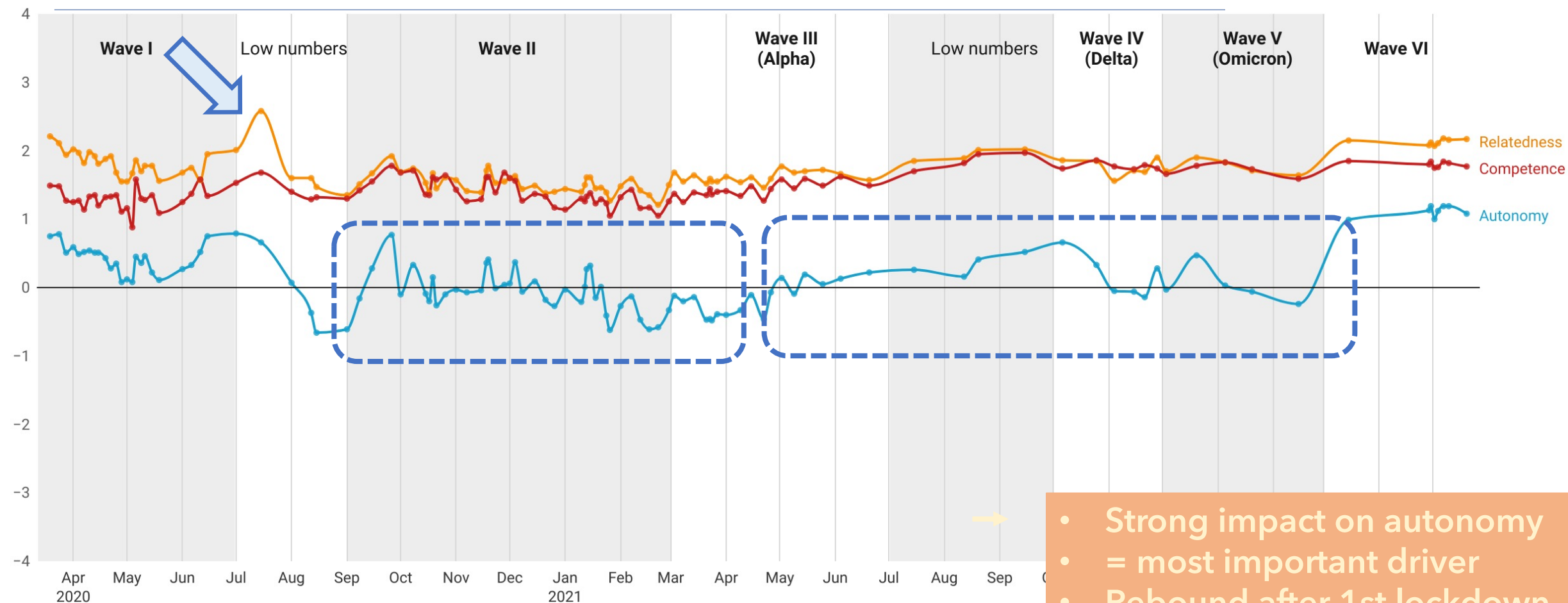


- High concerns about situation in general
→ gloomy winter 2021
→ strong decrease recently
- Moderate about own health
→ lower than for SO
- Rather low concerns overall about finances

Weights are based on age, gender, education and region

Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

Autonomy - Relatedness - Competence

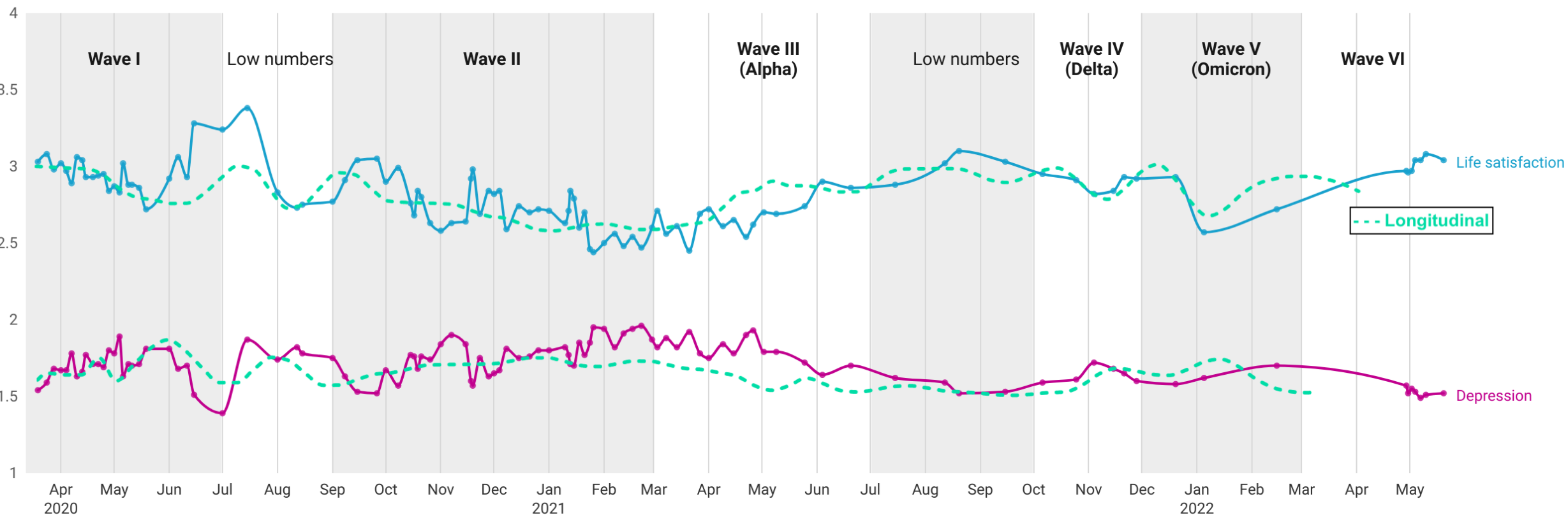


- Strong impact on autonomy
- = most important driver
- Rebound after 1st lockdown
- Also for relatedness
- Bumpy recovery

Weights are based on age, gender, education and region

Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

Cross-sectional vs longitudinal (N=250)

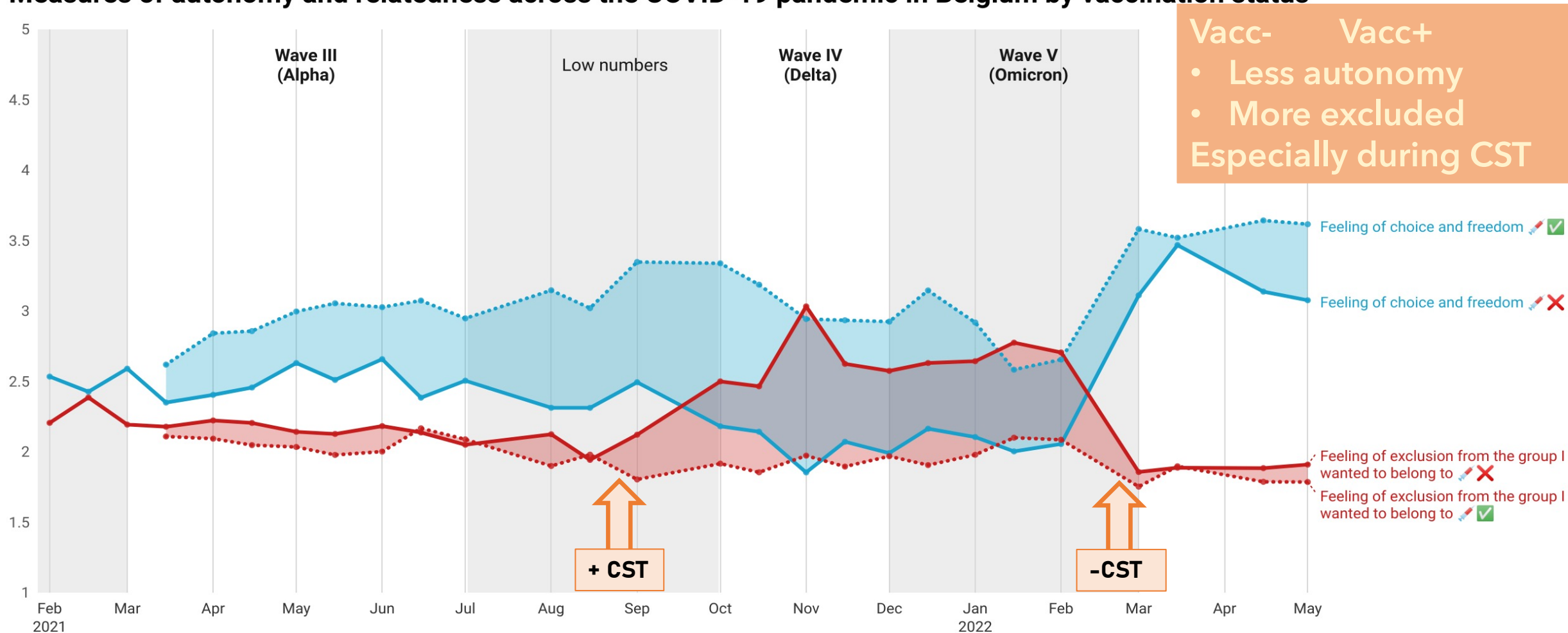


Weights are based on age, gender, education and region
Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

Did vaccination status play a role?

Autonomy - relatedness by vaccination status

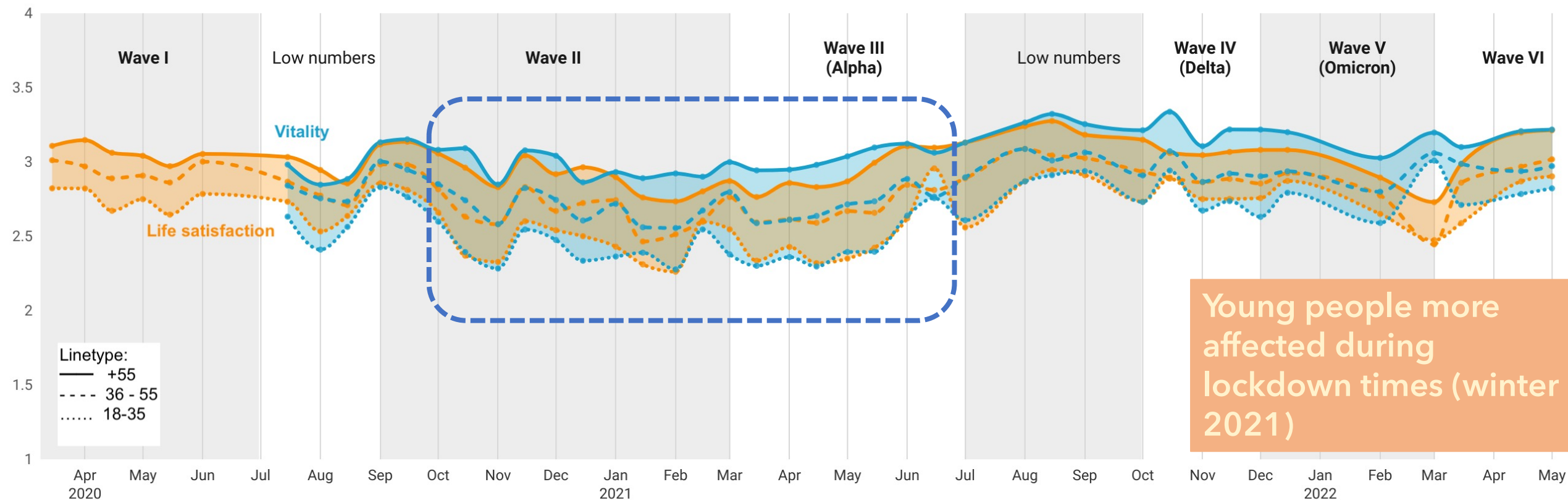
Measures of autonomy and relatedness across the COVID-19 pandemic in Belgium by vaccination status



Numbers are weighted averages per half of months with $N > 500$
Weights are based on age, gender, education and region

Did age play a role?

Life satisfaction - vitality by age

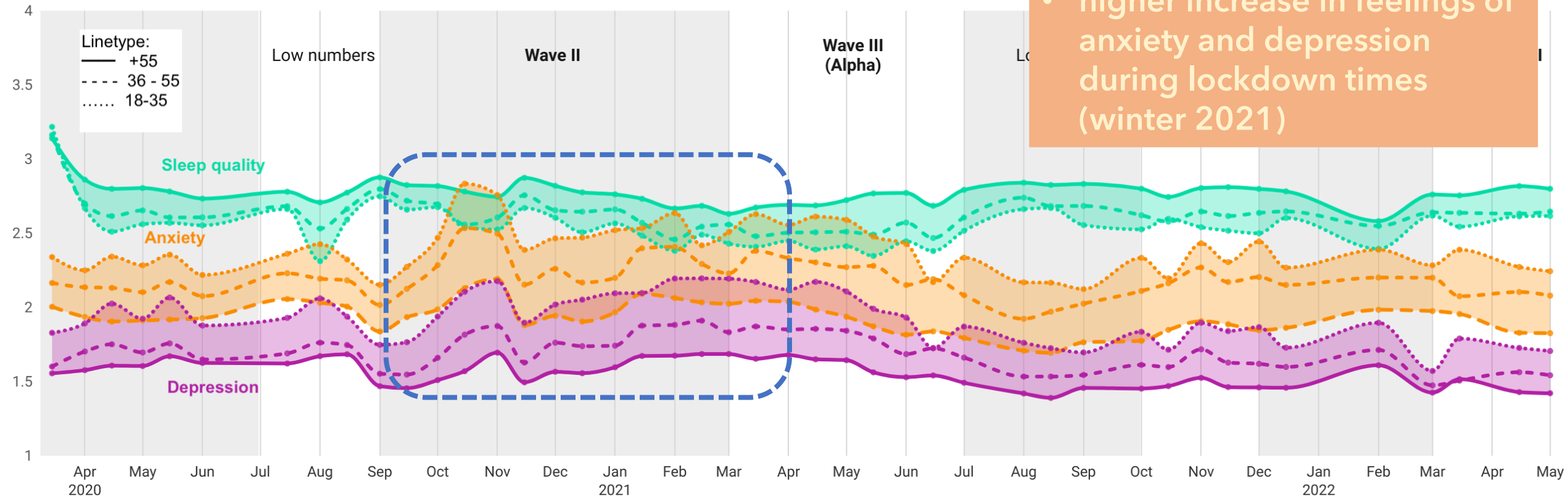


Young people more affected during lockdown times (winter 2021)

Weights are based on age, gender, education and region
Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

Depression - anxiety - sleep by age

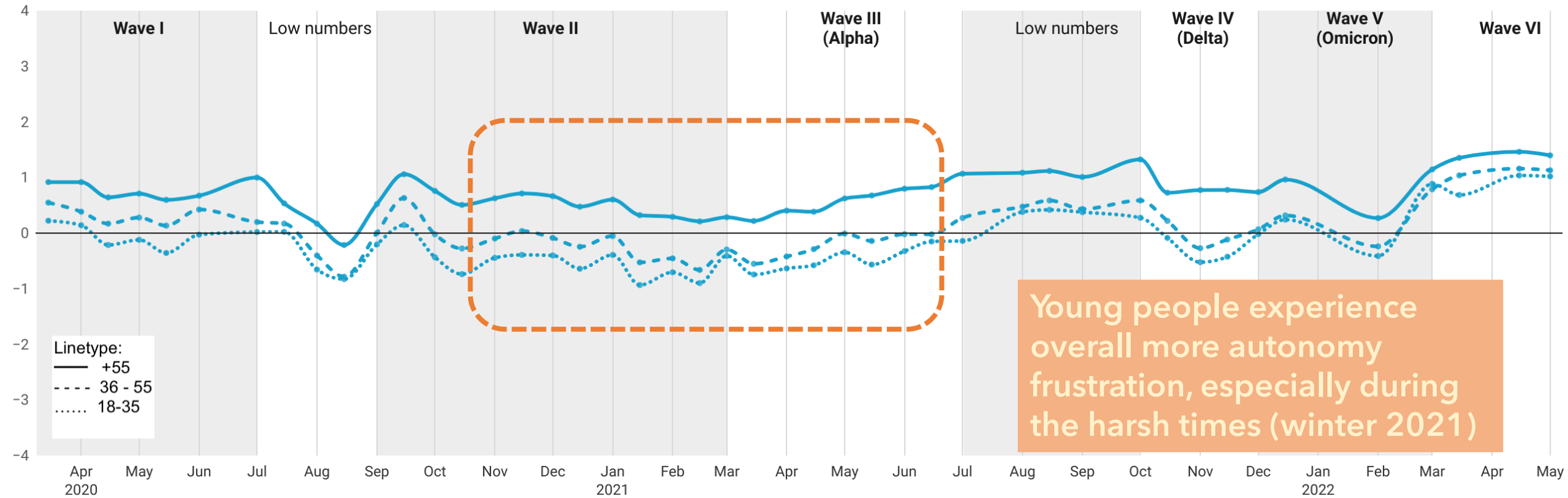
- Young people
- stronger decrease in sleep quality
 - higher increase in feelings of anxiety and depression during lockdown times (winter 2021)



Weights are based on age, gender, education and region

Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

Autonomy by age



Weights are based on age, gender, education and region

Source: Motivationbarometer • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusions

- People on average suffered
 - Especially during harsh times (e.g. lockdowns in winter 2021)
 - Mainly due to autonomy frustration
- Effects overall moderate with rather quick recovery
- Effects showed up
 - In less vitality and life satisfaction
 - In lower quality of sleep, higher feelings of anxiety and depression
 - More concerns, especially about situation in general, less for one's own health or finances
- Young people overall have suffered most
 - And were rather overlooked in the early phases of the pandemic
- Vacc- are a specific group
 - Feel more frustrated and excluded, especially due to CST

Conclusions

BUT: this is a story of averages

- What about vulnerable groups?
 - Those who lost someone?
 - Those who were already lonely?
 - Those who were in difficult situations, such as
 - Single parents, unsecure incomes, poor housing
 - Those already having mental health problems (or on the edge)
 - Those who were seeing their business go down
 - ...
- Mental health care became overloaded, e.g. waiting lists
 - Self-harm behavior increased
 - Eating disorders increased
 - Many people were pushed over the threshold of clinical levels of suffering

Lessons learned, population perspective

Well-being

- Not just a matter of relaxing and constraining measures
 - Underlying factors and their balance (perceived risk, autonomy, relatedness, ..)
 - People assess risks themselves: so, let them think along (visuals, communication!)
- Monitor psy-variables in general
 - Thresholds in barometer?
- Tailoring : monitor and target vulnerable groups
 - Living conditions of young people
 - Singles
 - ...
- Create social project
 - Systematic and professional investment to stimulate "sense of ownership and togetherness" to cope with the pandemic
cfr. initial period with spontaneous solidarity

Lessons learned, individual perspective

Well-being

- Not just low threshold for better care
 - Reinforce second line treatment facilities
- Provide low threshold preventative interventions
 - Many programs – online and live – are available
 - They work!
 - Often equally good as individual therapy
 - But they need a supportive structure
 - Drop out is a serious problem

Example: MoodSpace

MoodSpace

Over MoodSpaceNL EN

Home > Zelf aan de slag

Zelf aan de slag

Infotheek

Samen sterk

Test jezelf

Hier kun je terecht

Bezorgd om iemand

Krachtverhalen

Zelf aan de slag

Versterk jezelf. Handige zelfhulpmodules die je helpen je veerkracht te versterken en emotionele problemen het hoofd te bieden. Ga aan de slag op je eigen ritme.

LifeCraft

Ga **zelfstandig** en **anoniem** aan de slag met dit programma om je **tijd en energie** beter in handen te nemen.

Ontdek het programma

Gezonde levensstijl

Ga **zelfstandig** en **anoniem** aan de slag met dit programma om een **gezonde levensstijl** uit te bouwen.

Ontdek het programma

Stress en Angst

Ga **zelfstandig** en **anoniem** aan de slag met dit programma om grip te krijgen op je **stress en angsten**.

Ontdek het programma

STAR

Ga **zelfstandig** en **anoniem** aan de slag met dit programma om grip te krijgen op je **zelfverwondend gedrag**.

Ontdek het programma

Think Life

Ga **zelfstandig** en **anoniem** aan de slag met dit programma om grip te krijgen op je **zelfmoordgedachten**.

Ontdek het programma

Krachtverhalen

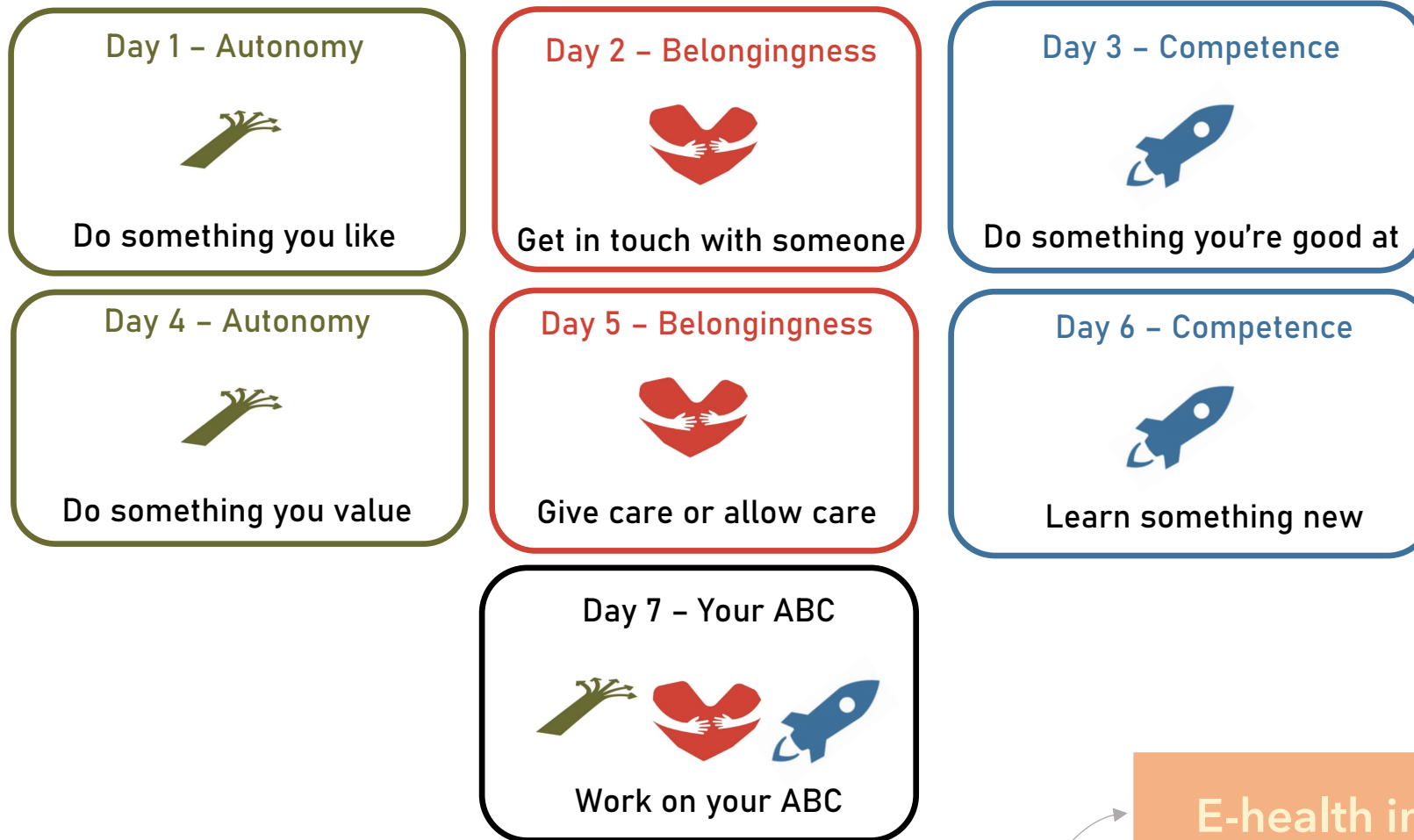
Je bent niet alleen. Maak kennis met inspirerende verhalen van studenten over kwetsbaarheid en twijfel, maar ook over de kracht van verbondenheid.

Bekijk de verhalen

Motivation

BAROMETER

Example: LifeCraft – 7 days, 6 challenges



E-health intervention works!

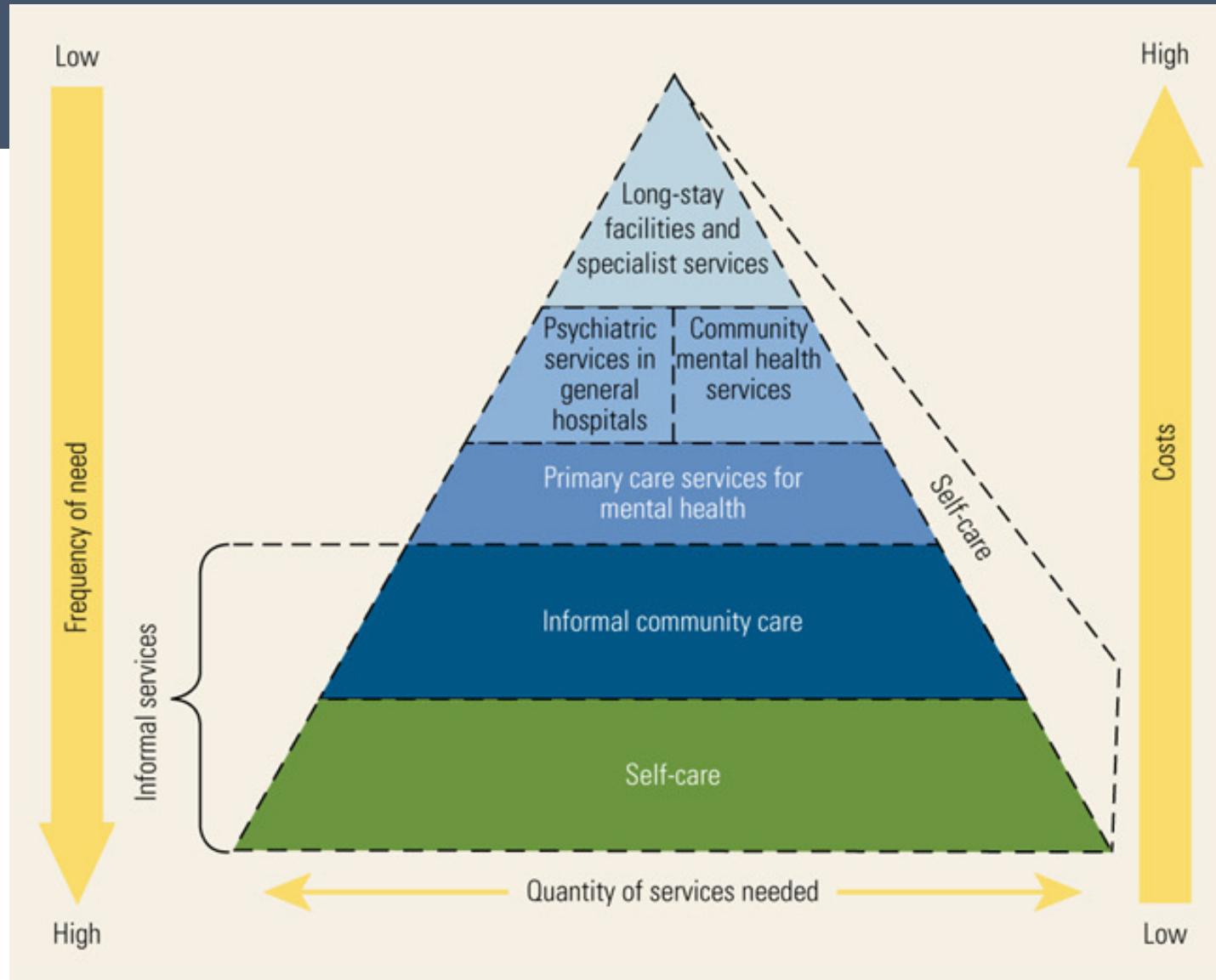


VLAAMSE VERENIGING
Klinisch Psychologen

Covid – 19 impact on mental health and well – being

Discussion

How to organize our mental health services?



E VERENIGING
ch Psychologen