

2022 Norwalk Youth Survey Results: What health teachers should know

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Background

In late October 2022, we conducted the third Norwalk Youth Survey to gather data on teen mental health and substance misuse and related risk and protective factors.

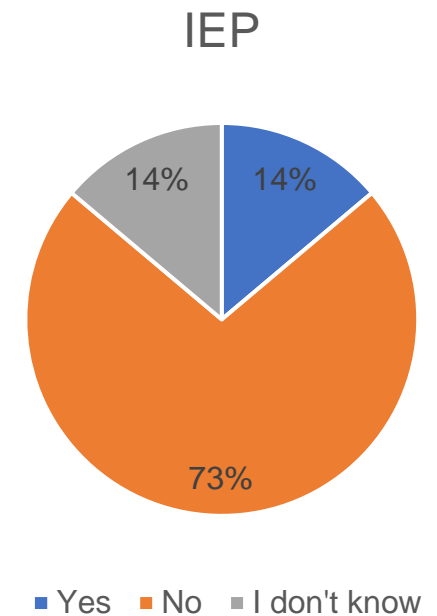
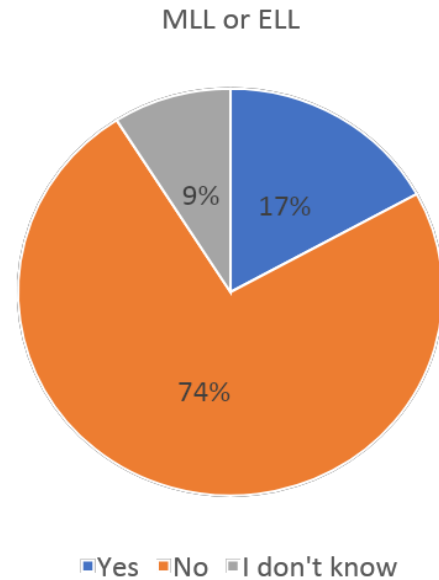
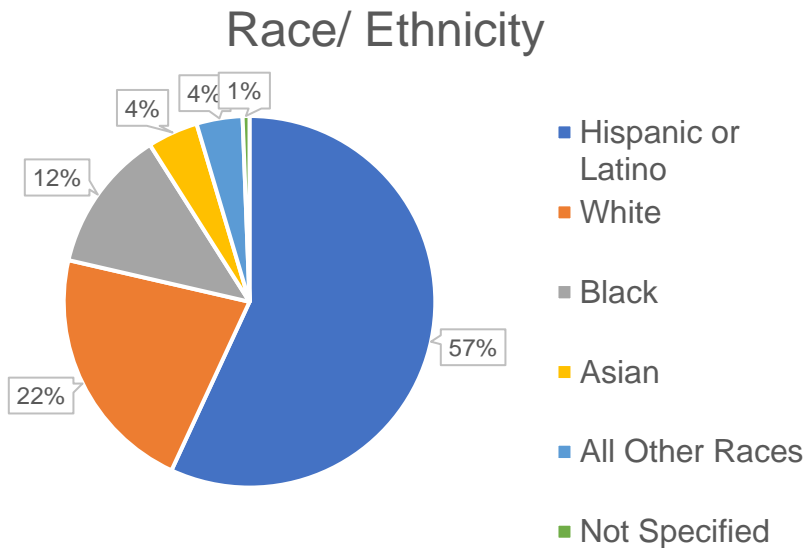
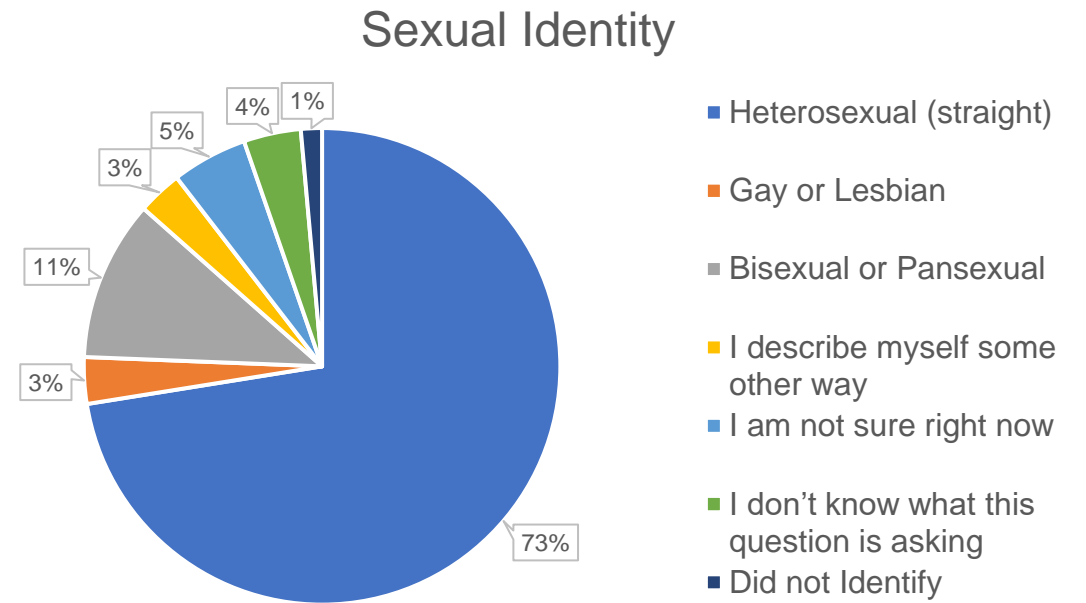
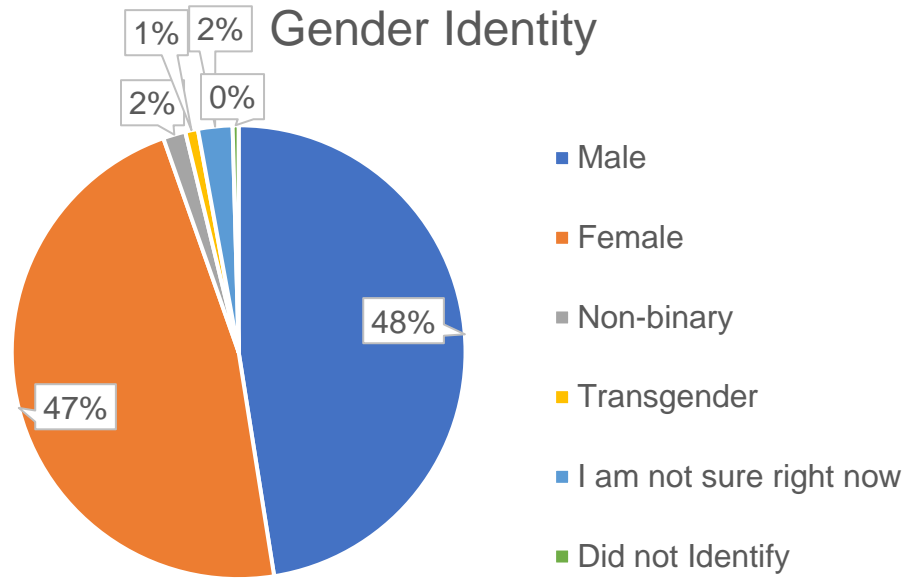
- Used “Youth Voices Count” survey tool
- Administered to students in grades 7-12
- All NPS middle and high schools participated
- Funded by [Positive Directions](#) through the CDC Drug-Free Communities grant, which supports [The Norwalk Partnership](#) (TNP)
- Completely anonymous; no identifying information collected

Response Rate

Sample Response Rates	Sample Count	Population Count	Response Rate (%)
Grade 7	725	847	86%
Grade 8	775	906	86%
Grade 9	787	1028	77%
Grade 10	637	1051	61%
Grade 11	533	987	54%
Grade 12	512	962	53%
Middle (Grades 7-8)	1500	1753	86%
High (Grades 9-12)	2469	4028	61%
All (Grades 7-12)	3969	5781	69%



Respondent Demographics



Analysis

- Full survey report is available at TheNorwalkPartnership.org/data
- Subgroup analysis was performed by race/ethnicity, biological sex, and gender identity to allow identification of higher risk groups or behaviors
- All *statistically significant* demographic differences are identified under each table in the full report and summarized in boxes on the data slides.

Abbreviations used in charts:

MS: Middle School; HS: High School

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

MLL/ELL: Multi Language Learner / English Language Learner

LGBS: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Pansexual, Self-Describe sexual identity

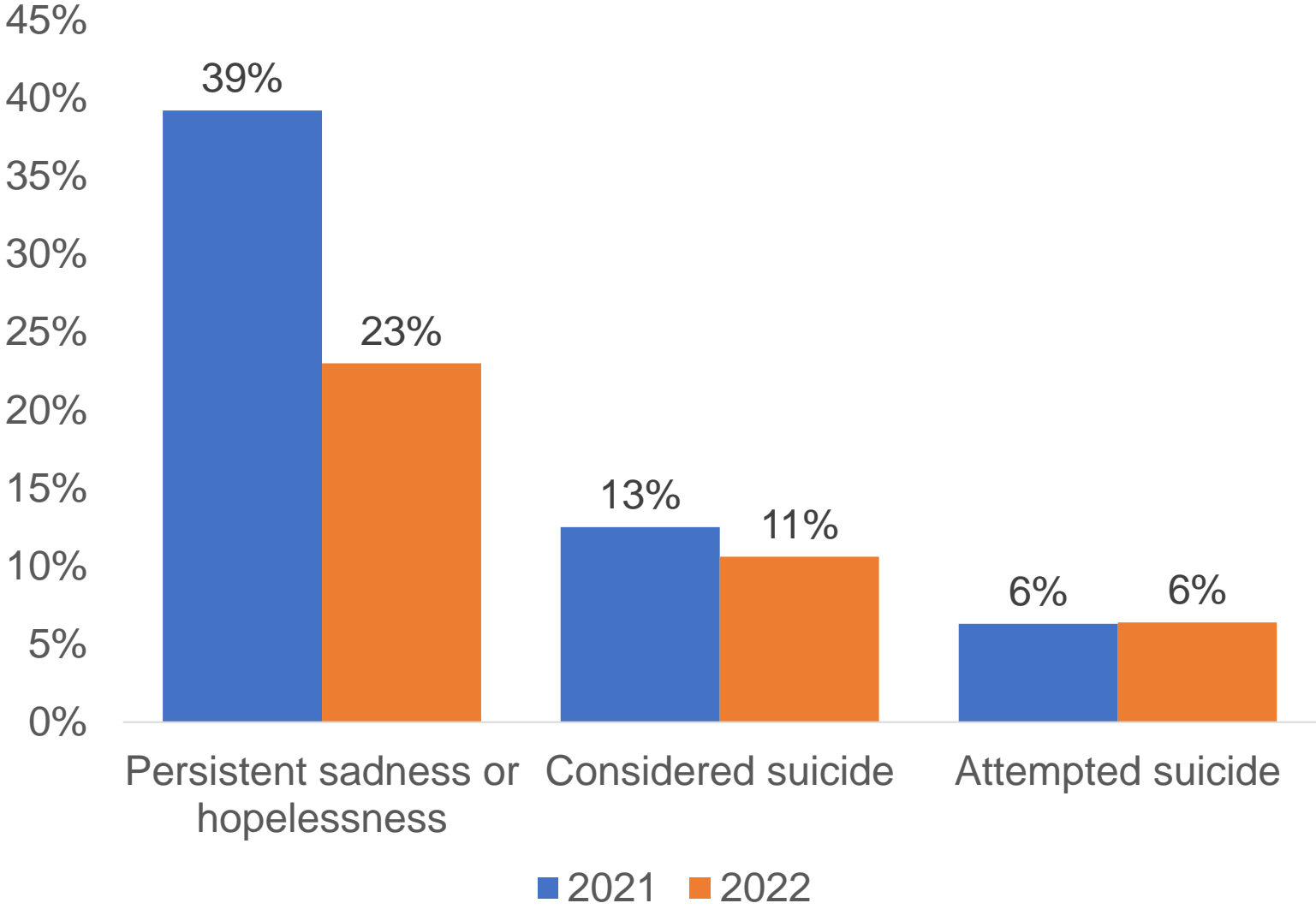
LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Pansexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning. LGBTQ is used here when *both* LGBS youth and youth identifying as Transgender, Nonbinary, or Unsure of their gender identity are identified as higher risk.



Mental Health

Depression, Suicidal Ideation &
Attempt, Anxiety, Other Emotional
Health Indicators

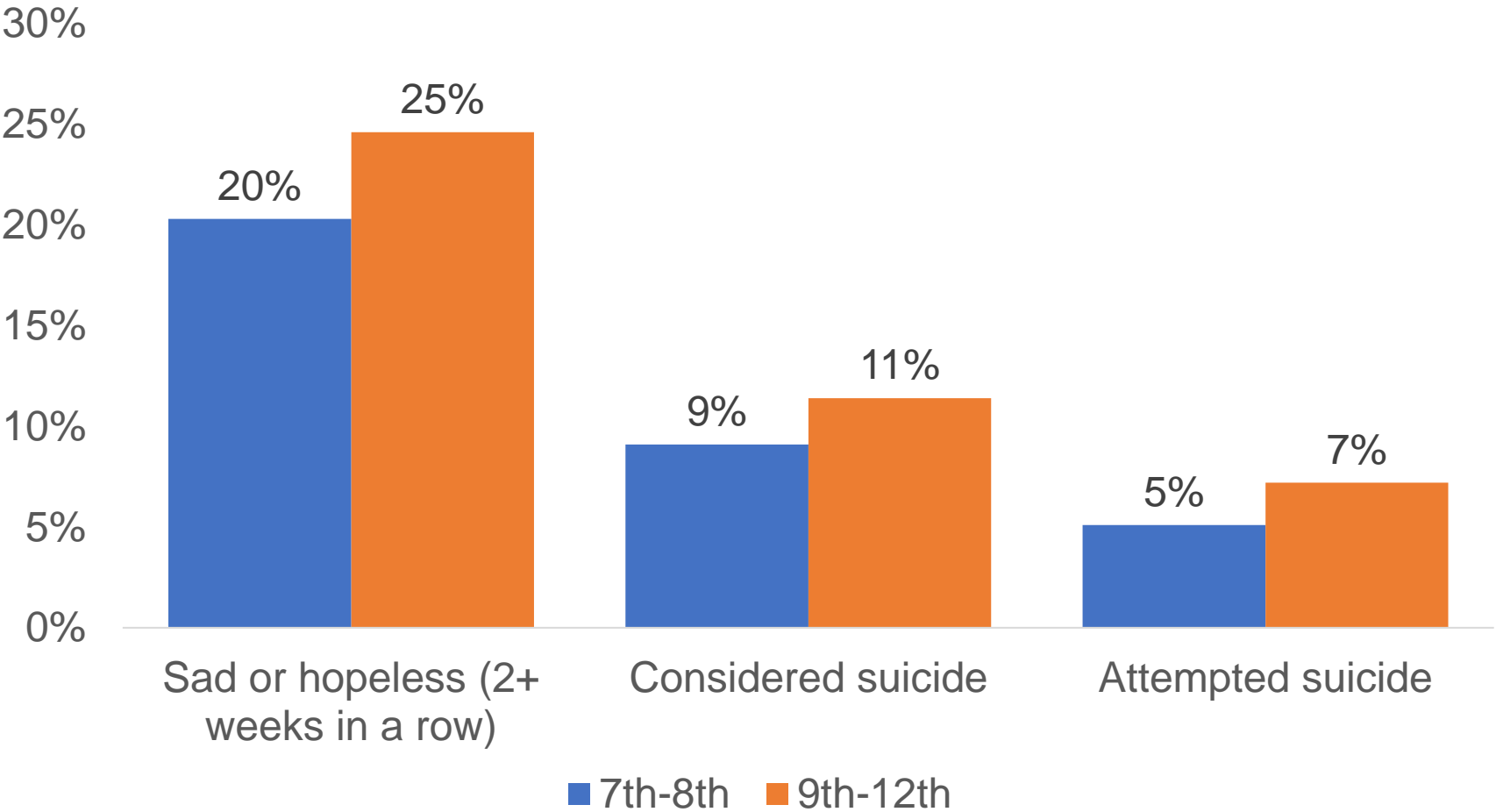
Depression & Suicidality among NPS Students, June 2021 and October 2022



2022 data for shows the following changes from 2021:

- Depression & suicidal ideation rates *decreased* significantly
- The suicide attempt rate looks relatively flat when averaged across all grades. However, among HS students, the suicide attempt rate *increased* from 6.0% to 7.2%

Depression and Suicidality among NPS Students in 2022, by Middle and High School

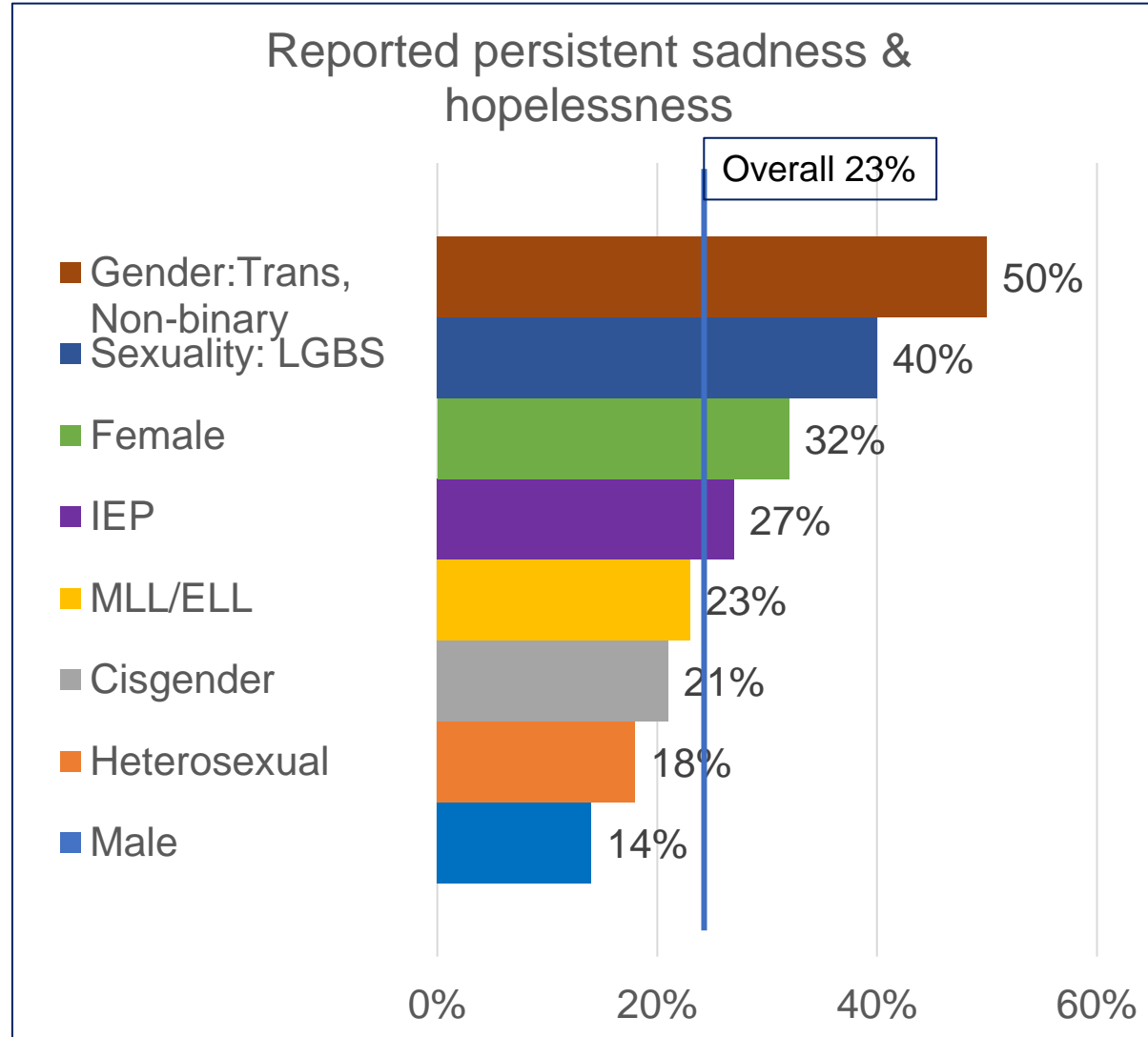


The following groups report statistically significant higher levels of:

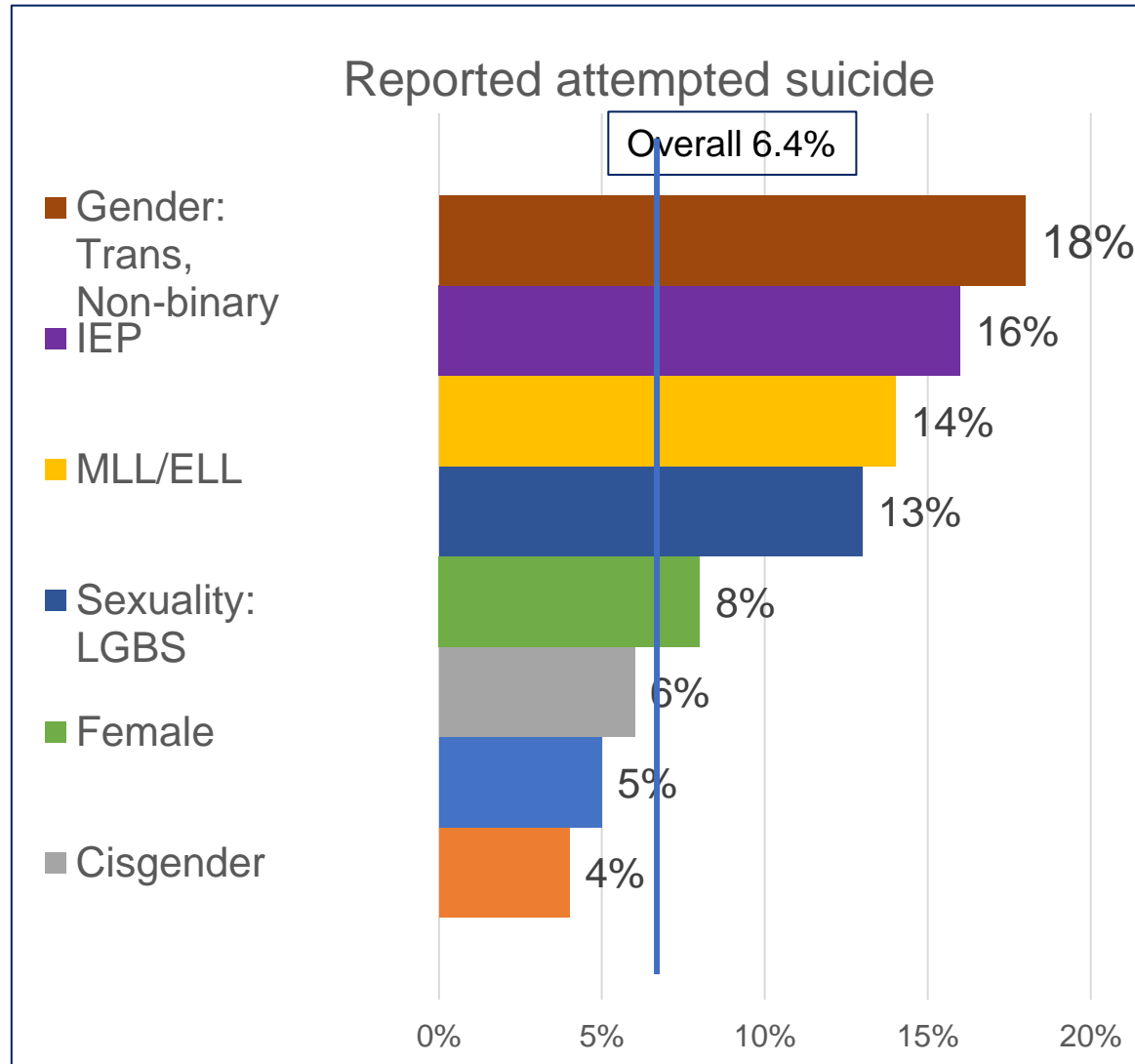
- **Depression:** LGBTQ, female, high school+Hispanic, middle school+all other races
- **Suicidal ideation:** LGBTQ, female, high school+Black, middle school+MLL, IEP

In 2021, 32% of NPS MS and 46% of NPS HS students reported depression.

Depression rates by groups, 2022



Attempted suicide rates by groups, 2022

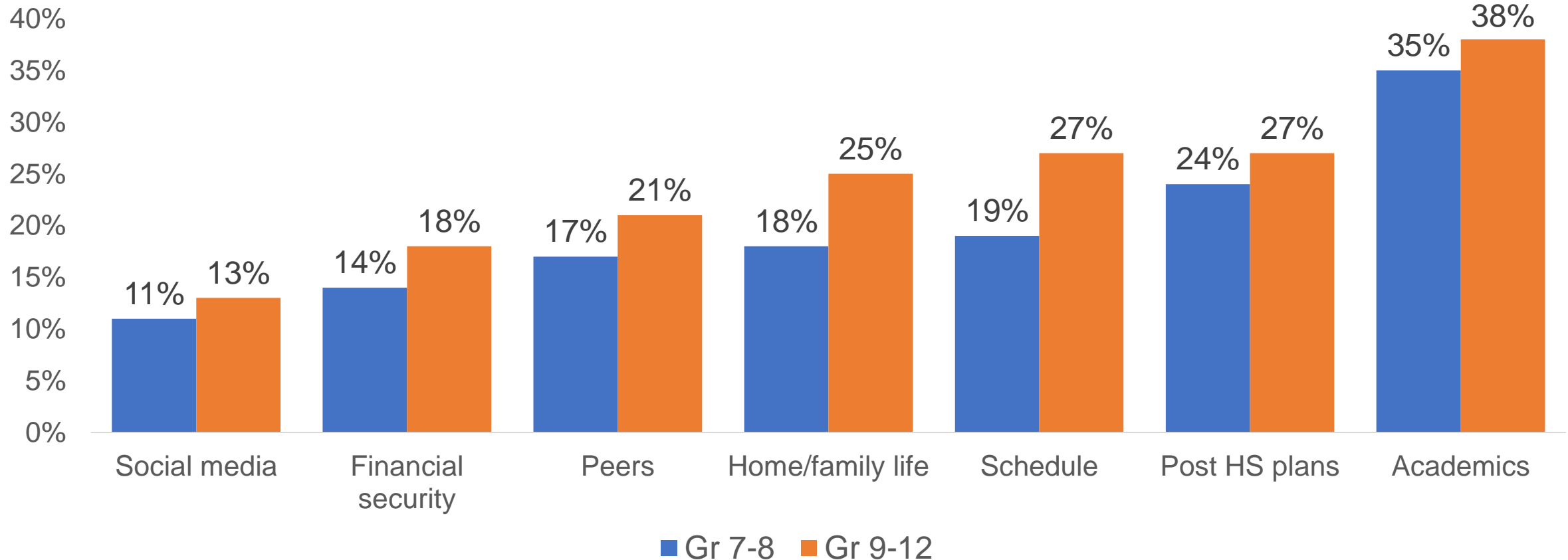


Anxiety among NPS Students, 2022

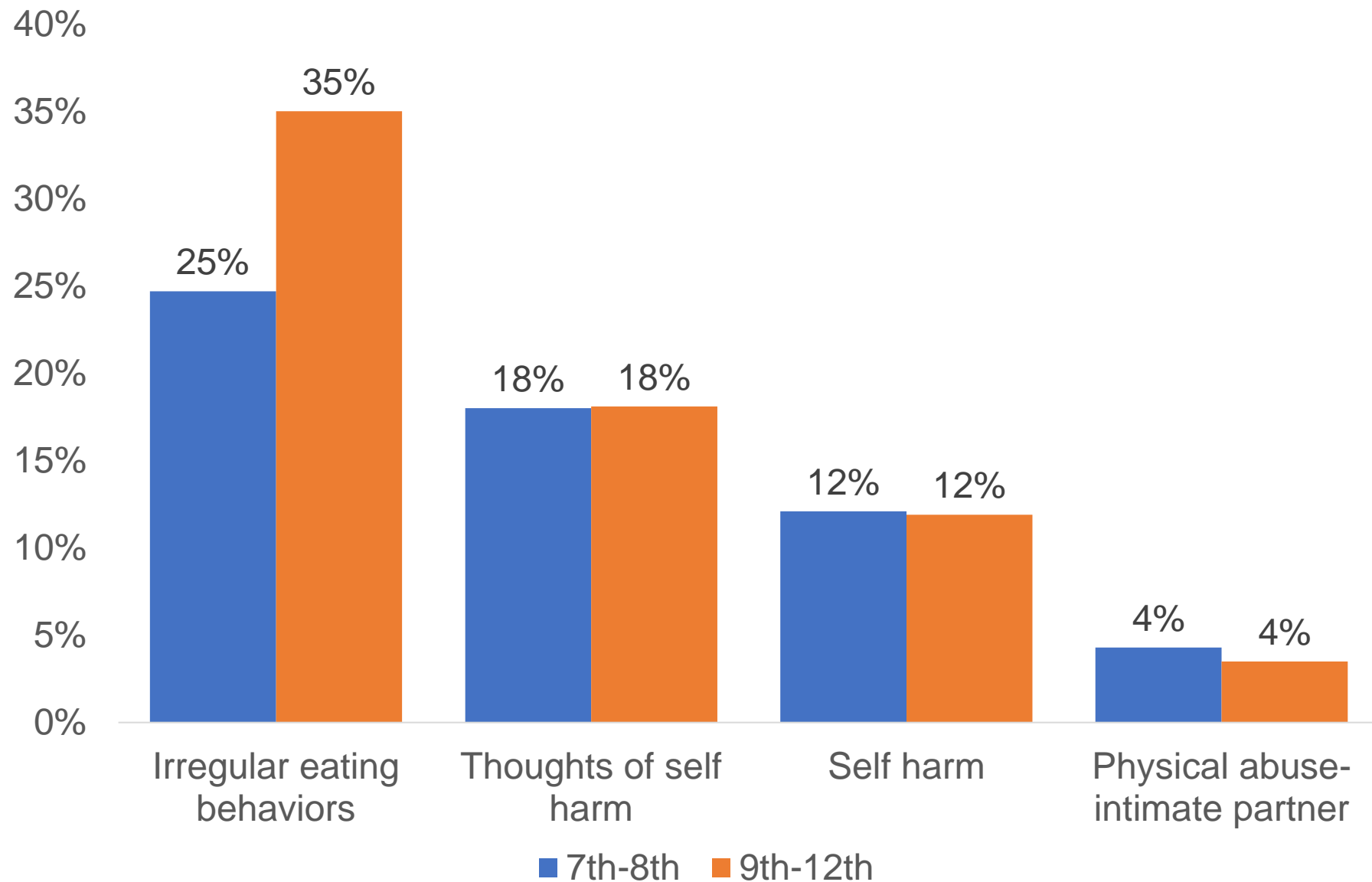
- 27.1% report “almost always” or “always” feeling anxious or nervous
- 27.4% report anxiety makes their life difficult “almost always” or “always”

Female students and those identifying as LGBTQ were more likely to report anxiety

Percent of Students Reporting “High” Anxiety from Home & School Stressors, by Middle & High School



Other Emotional Health Indicators among NPS Students in 2022, by Middle and High School



The following groups report statistically significant higher levels of:

- Irregular eating behaviors:** females, MS Hispanic or Black, LGBTQ, students with IEPs, MLLs
- Thoughts of self-harm and of self-harm:** females, LGBTQ youth, students with IEPs
- Physical abuse by boyfriend or girlfriend:** MS students identifying as trans, nonbinary or unsure; HS students identifying as LGBS

Mental health life skills kids need

- Recognize warning signs (not specific to a particular diagnosis)
- Identify and practice various coping skills (8 dimensions of wellness)
- Identify trusted adults they can & would go to with any problem (coaches, ministers, club leaders...)
- Understand the connection between mental illness/trauma and substance misuse
- Know how to talk to someone about suicide (Positive Directions can provide QPR training for 16yo+)
- Know at least 1 hotline: 988 lifeline, 741741 crisis text line, Trevor Project
- Understand there are multiple types of MH providers (LMSW, LPC, LMFT, psychologist, psychiatrist...)
- Know the free, confidential services here in school, such as TeenTalk (use videos from The Norwalk Partnership's youtube channel)
- Recognize that towns, schools/colleges, employers & insurers all provide navigation to help people find appropriate resources (e.g., 211 in CT, Community Resources Hub in Norwalk...)
- Be aware of free peer support groups such as NAMI, DBSA



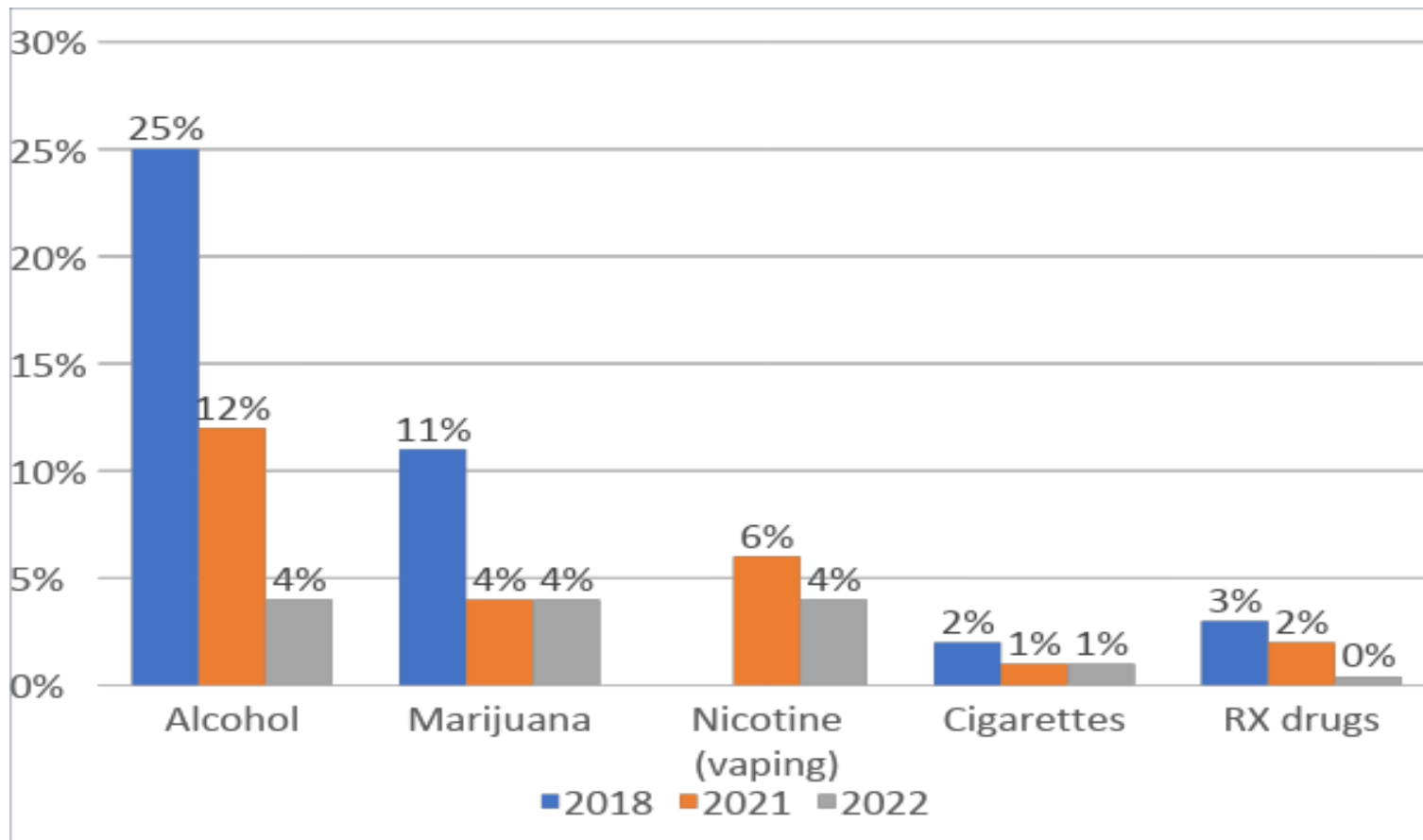
Substance Misuse / Addiction

Recent & current rates of
substance use, youth
perceptions, family role,
impaired driving & riding

Other addiction:
gambling/gaming

Recent & Current Substance Use by NPS Students

Grades 7-12, 2018 to 2022 *(2018 survey only included grades 7, 9 and 11)*



% of 2022 NPS seniors reporting lifetime use (that is, ever having used):

- Alcohol 27%
- Marijuana 20%
- Vapes (nicotine) 18%
- Vapes (liquids) 17%
- Tobacco 6%
- **Binge drinking (4+ drinks) 18%**

Methods of marijuana use among those youth who used it in the past 12 months, 2022 (n=350):

- Smoked or inhaled 69%
- Vaped 60%
- Edibles 48%

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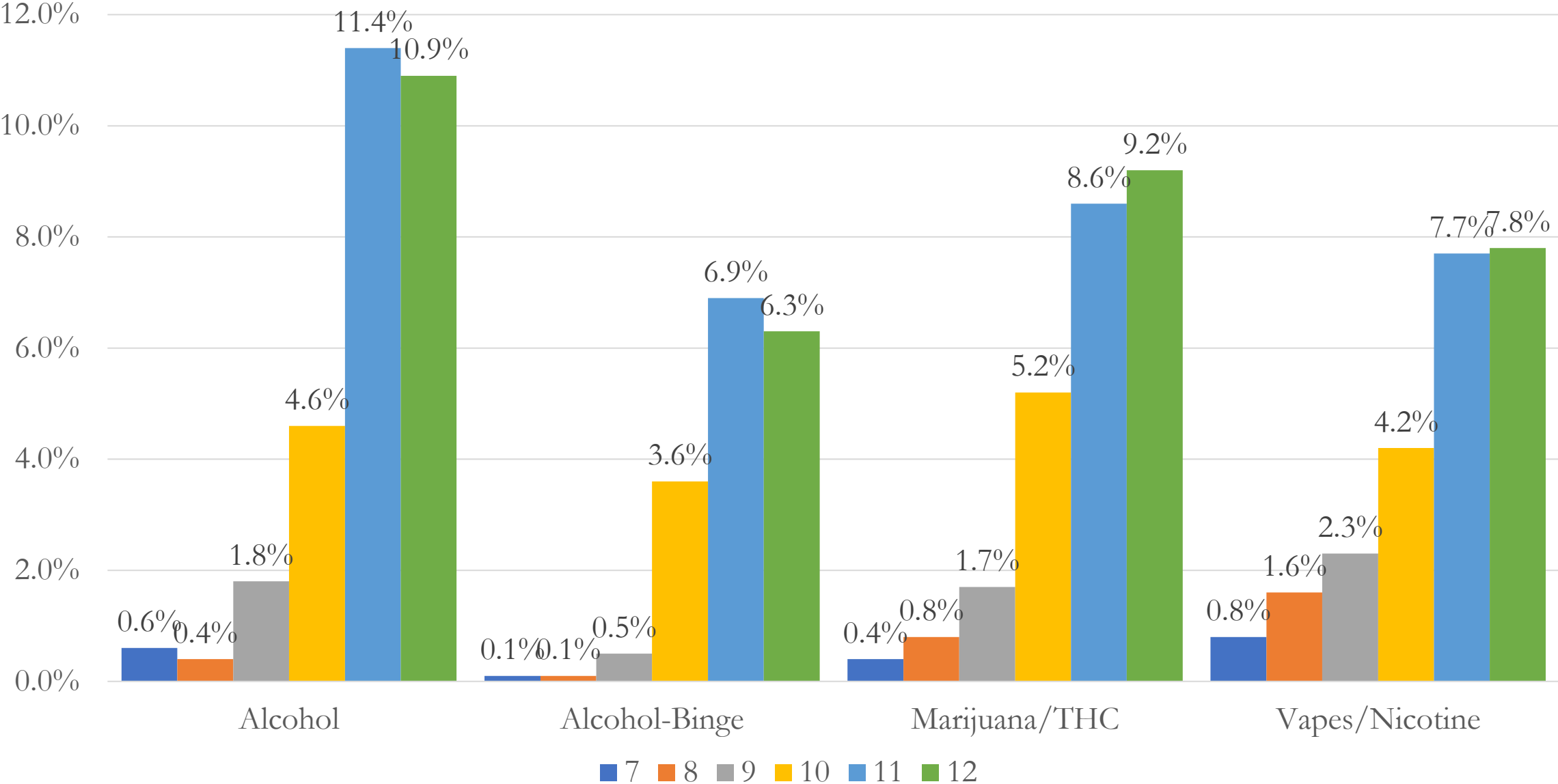
Age at 1st use of alcohol, vapes, 2022

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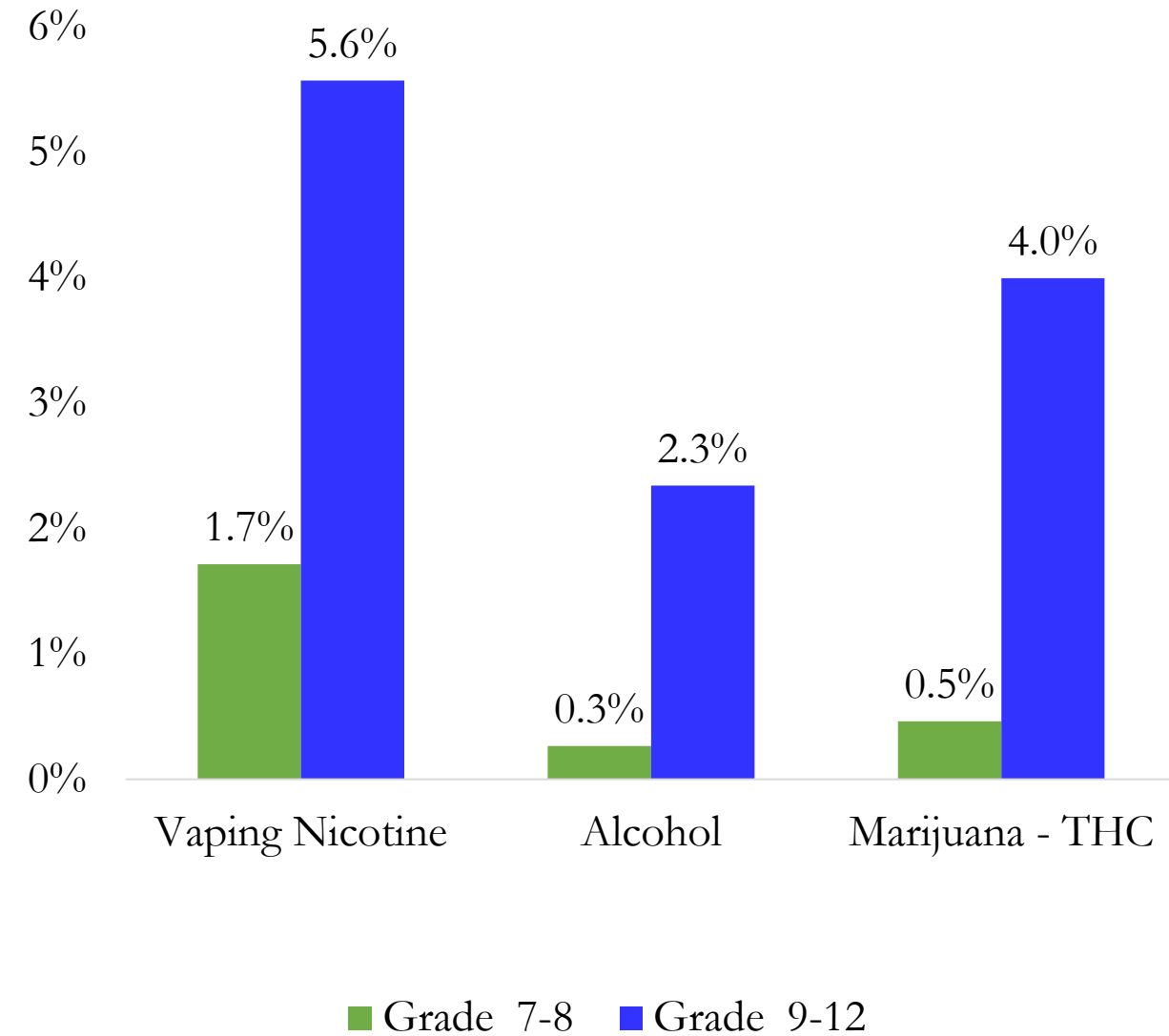
Age at 1st use of marijuana, cigarettes, 2022

Other substances reported by HS students, 2022: 2% CBD, 1% synthetic MJ (K2, spice, Delta 8)

Current Substance Use by Grade, 2022



Youth Reporting Ever Using a Substance at School, 2022



Youth Perceptions Related to Substance Use, 2022

Most, but not enough, students see substance use as harmful. Marijuana is seen as least harmful:

- 84% think misuse of Rx drugs is risky
- 77% - alcohol
- 77% - cigarettes
- 75% - vaping nicotine
- 66% - marijuana

71%-86% students believe their peers disapprove of substance use (% varies based on substance)

Students who do not think their peers disapprove are:

- 17x more likely to use marijuana
- 7x more likely to vape nicotine
- 4x more likely to misuse Rx drugs
- 2x more likely to use alcohol

The majority of students believes, correctly, that very few of their peers are using alcohol or marijuana.

However, there are still many who think substance use is more popular than it is. In particular:

- 35% of students believe that “most” or “almost all” students are currently vaping. Actually, only 4% of all Norwalk MS+HS students are currently vaping

Family Impact on Youth Substance Use, 2022

% students reporting that substance use in their family has created problems at home, at work or with friends:

- 23% ALCOHOL
- 8% marijuana/THC
- 6% Rx drugs
- 4% other drugs

% students reporting clear family rules around substance use that discourage use:

- 78% cigarettes
- 77% vaping nicotine
- 77% Rx drugs
- 75% marijuana/THC
- 72% alcohol

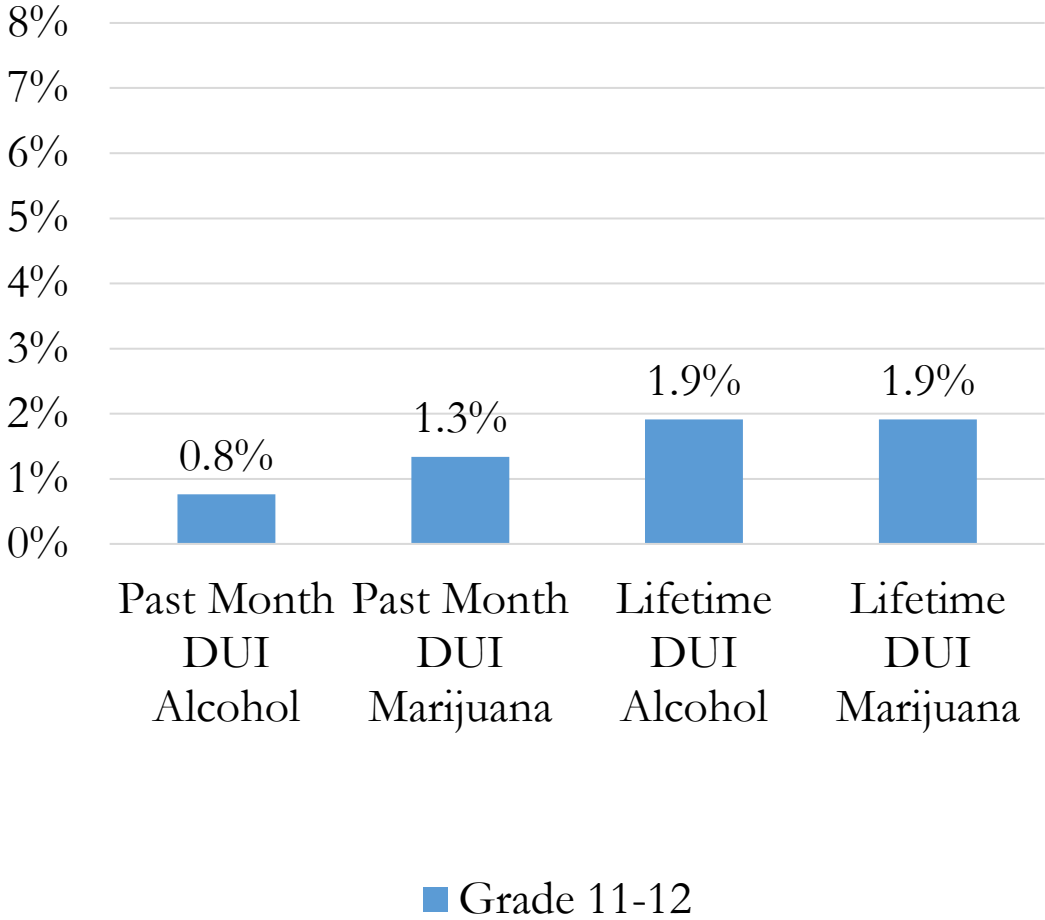
90% students report that their parents disapprove of substance use

Compared with students whose parents send a strong message of disapproval, students who do not perceive parental disapproval are:

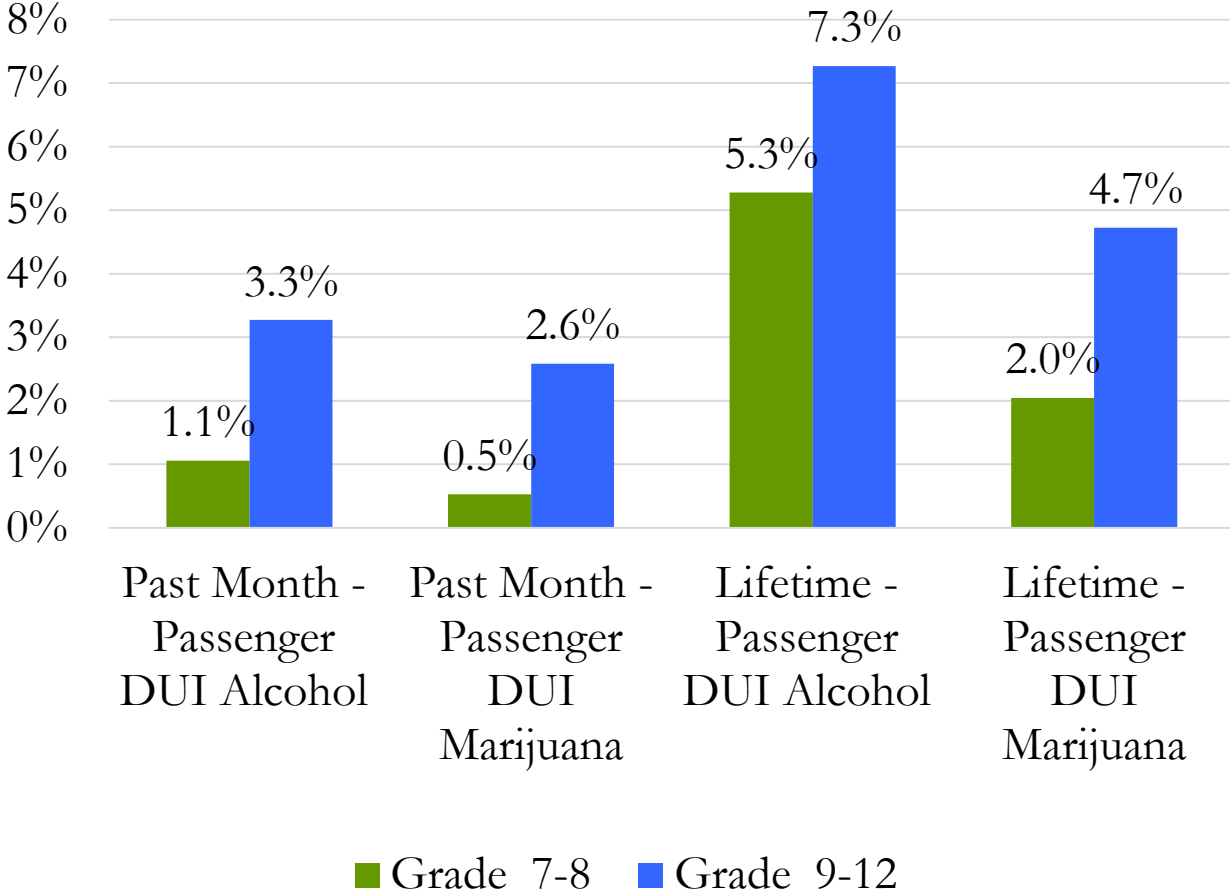
- 5x more likely to use marijuana
- 4.5x more likely to vape nicotine
- 3.5x more likely to use alcohol

Impaired Driving & Riding, 2022

Reporting Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol and/or Marijuana, 2022



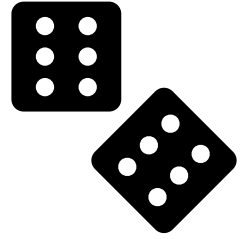
Reporting Being Passenger of a Driver, Age 20 or Younger, Who was Under the Influence of Alcohol and/or Marijuana, 2022



Substance use life skills kids need

- Recognize the risks of any substance use to brain development & increased likelihood of addiction
- Be aware of risks of marijuana (esp. concentrates), particularly for teens and in pregnancy
- Be aware that the vast majority of teens do not use substances (consider friend groups)
- Practice refusal skills, have an exit plan
- Recognize the risks of mixing alcohol and other drugs, borrowing drugs, black-market drugs (fentanyl, xylazine, etc.) (Positive Directions can provide *If They Had Known* 30 minute film)
- Understand the impact of addiction on an individual and family (personal story, e.g., Jordan's marijuana recovery story on The Norwalk Partnership's youtube channel, 7 minutes)
- Recognize multiple pathways to recovery, role of Medication-Assisted Treatment for opioid use disorder
- Recognize & respond to an overdose (The Norwalk Partnership can provide Narcan training)
- Know at least 1 hotline (CT: 800-563-4086, US: 800-662-HELP)
- Be aware of free peer support groups for *individuals* (AA, NA, SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery, Women for Sobriety, etc.) and for *families* (AlAnon/Alateen, SMART Family & Friends, etc.)

Gambling, Behaviors & Perceptions, 2022



Youth Gambling

- 2% of high schoolers reported gambling in the past month & 7% reported gambling in their lifetime
- Less than 1% of 7th and 8th graders reported gambling in the past month & 4% reported gambling in their lifetime
- Rates are higher among males and increase by grade level

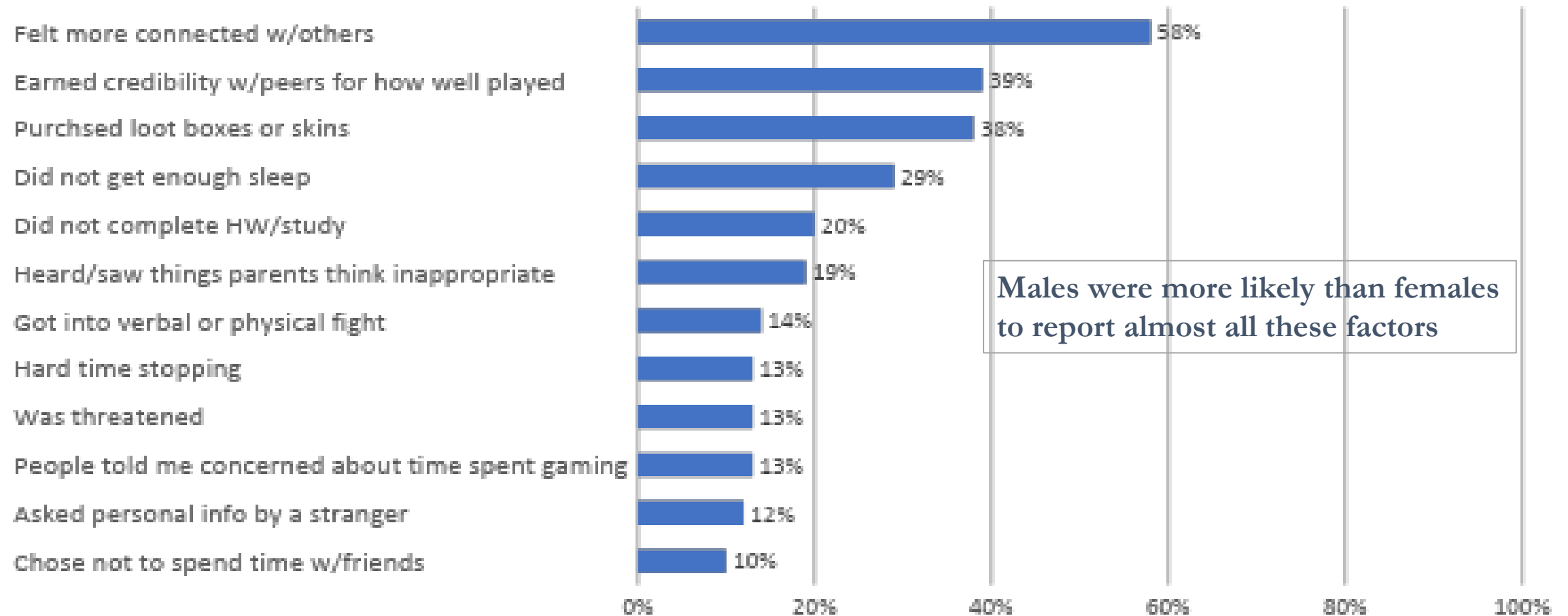
Problems Tied to Gambling (7th to 12th grade)

- 9% of youth reported that someone in their family has gambled enough that it has created problems

Perception of Gambling (7th to 12th grade)

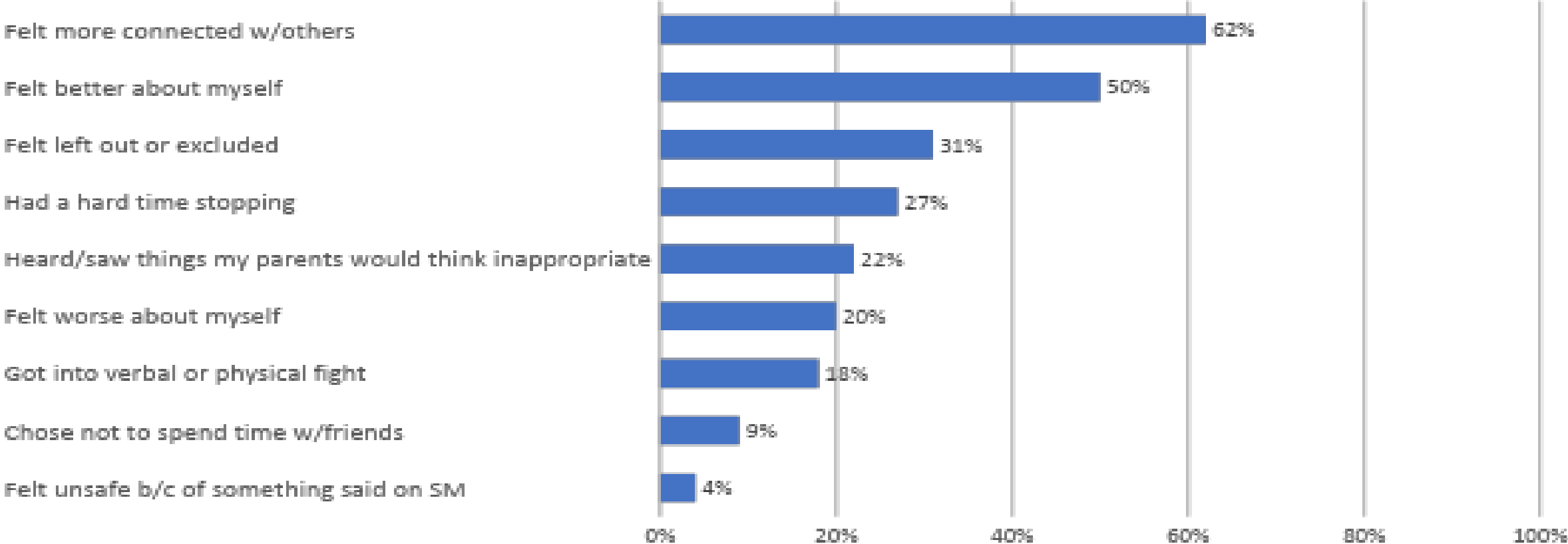
- 67% of youth reported that their family had clear rules or expectations discouraging them from gambling
- 69% perception of risk or harm on gambling something of value once a week or more
- 88% Perception of parent disapproval on gambling
- 73% Perception of peer disapproval on gambling

NPS Student Past-Year Experiences Related to Video Games, 2022



- 31% NPS youth believe gaming 3+ hours/day poses moderate or great risky
- 47% NPS youth believe their parents disapprove of gaming 3+ hours/day

NPS Student Past-Year Experiences Related to Social Media, 2022



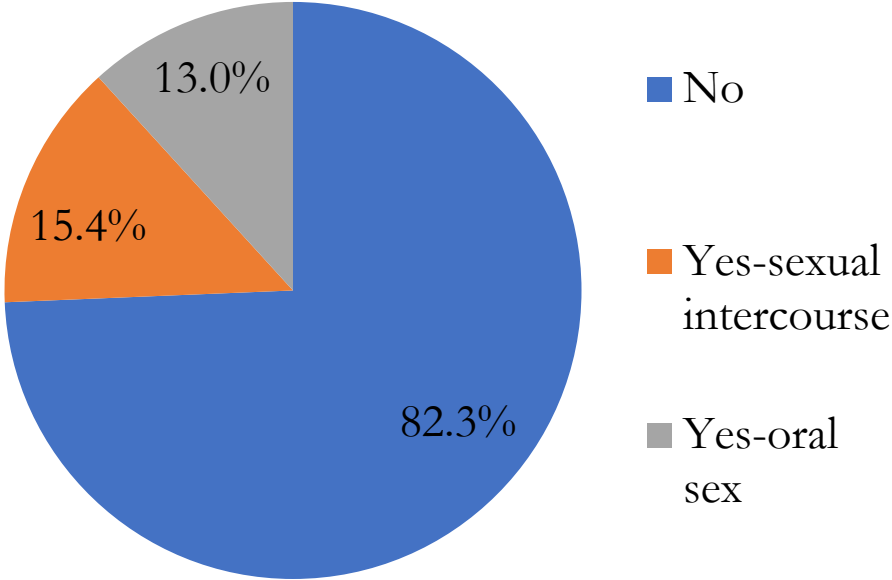
Females were more likely than males to report feeling left out or excluded, feeling worse about themselves, and having a hard time stopping.

Sexual Activity

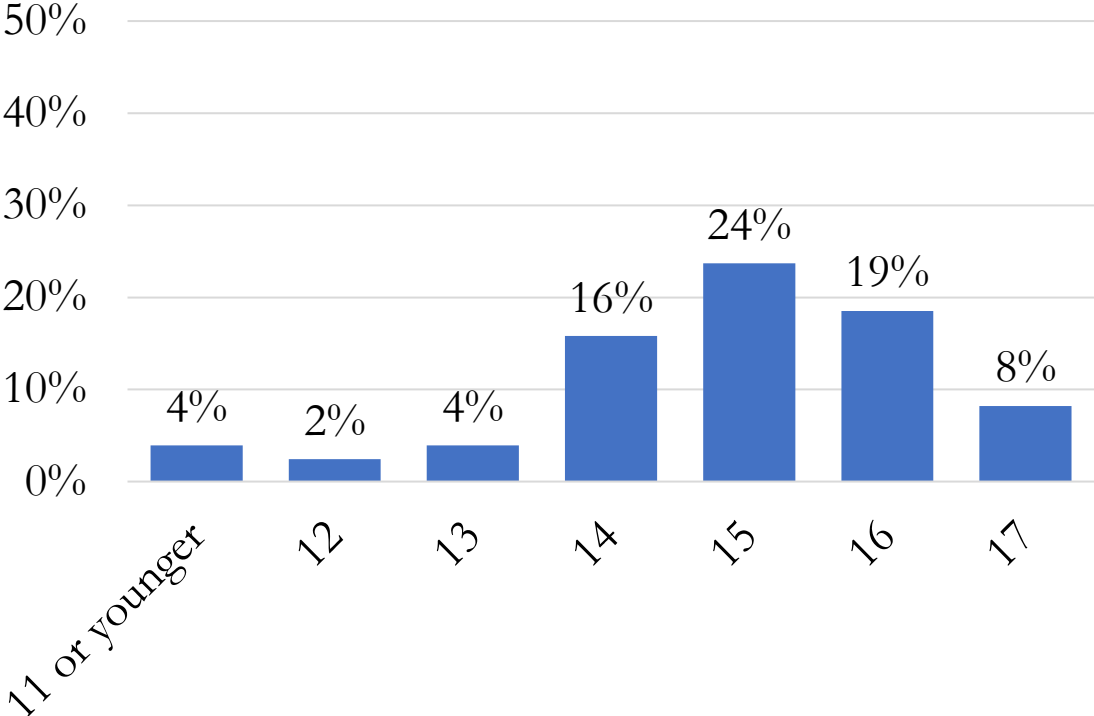
Among NPS High School Students
(not asked in middle school)

Sexual Activity among NPS High School Students, 2022

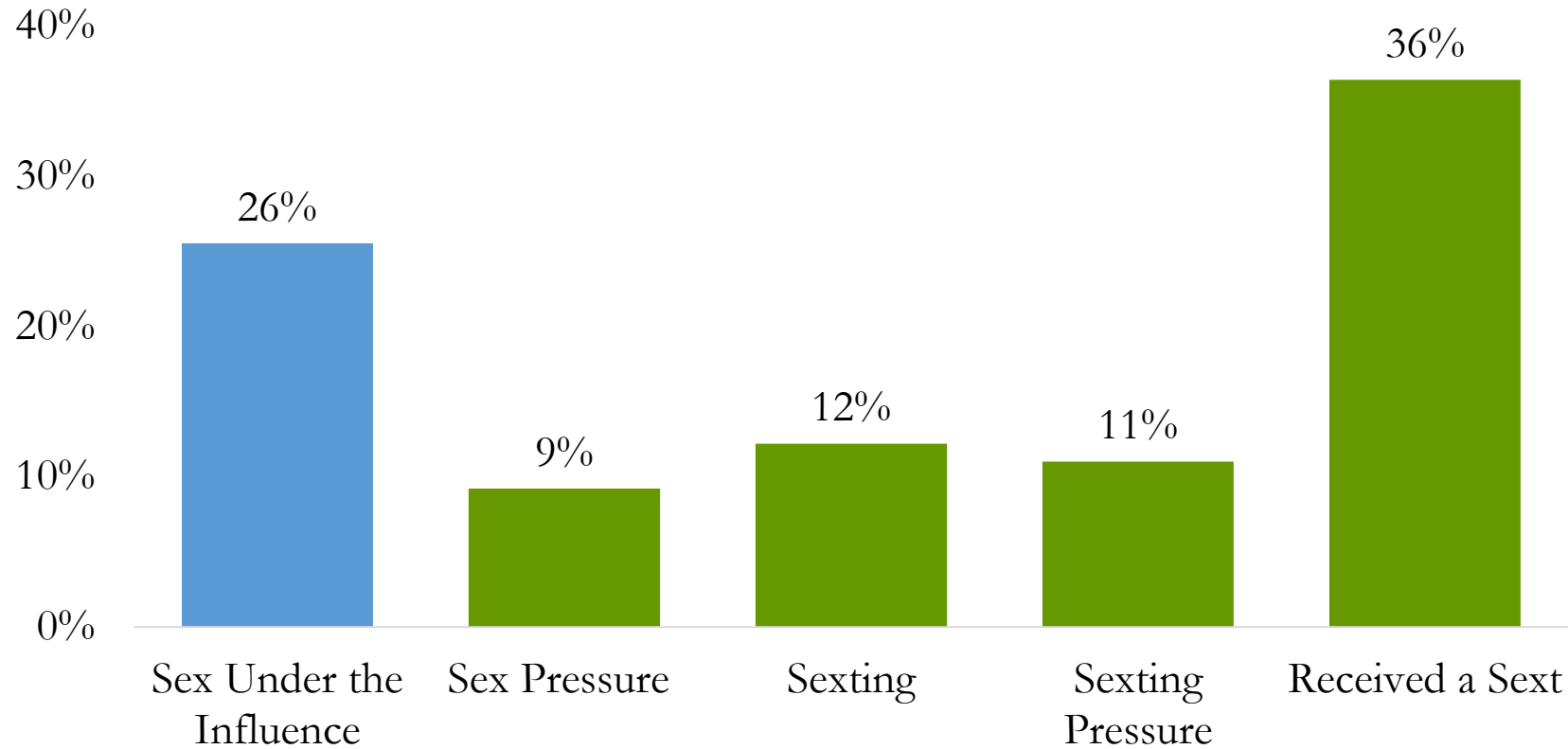
NPS 9th-12th Graders Reporting Sexual Experience



Sexual Intercourse: Age of Initiation (n=329)



Risky Sexual Behaviors among NPS HS Students, 2022



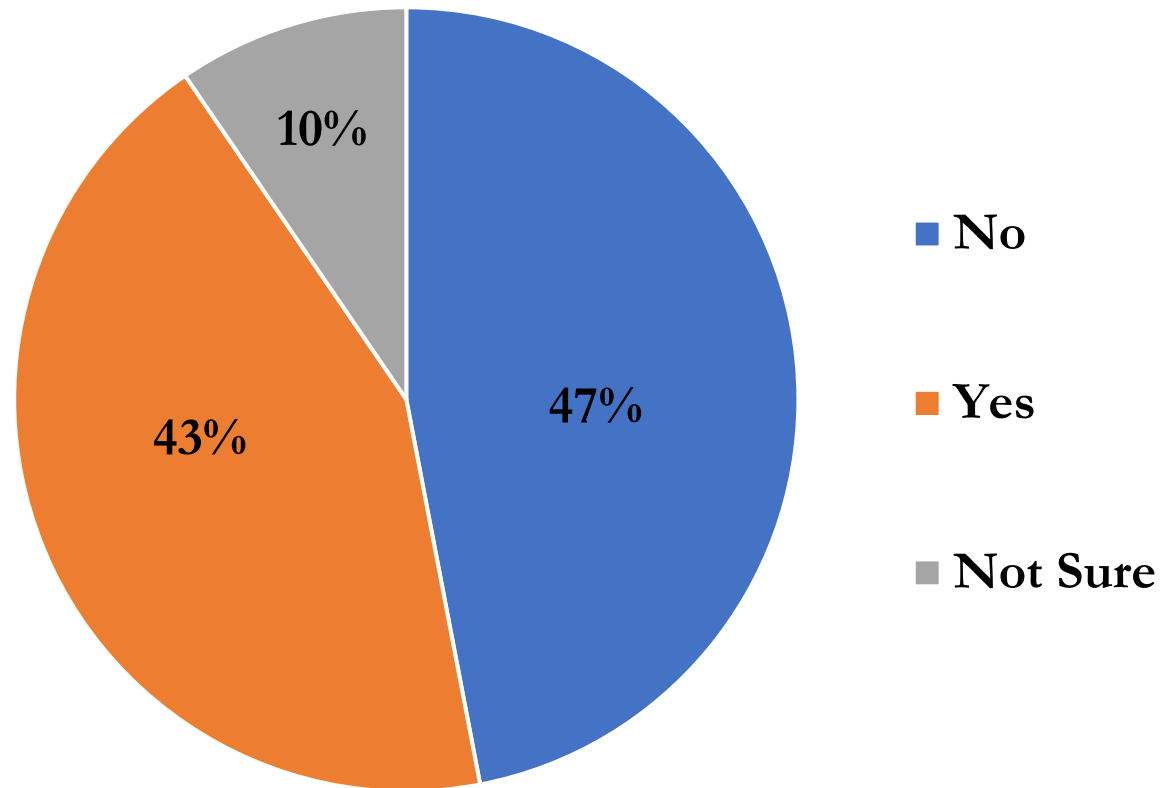
(% of students reporting sexual activity)

% of all valid high school respondents

Groups statistically more likely to have engaged in risky sexual behaviors:

- **Had sex under the influence of drugs/alcohol:** Females, Whites
- **Felt pressured to have sex:** Females, All Other Races, LGBTQ
- **Engaged in sexting:** LGBTQ
- **Felt pressured to send sext:** Females, All Other Races, LGBTQ
- **Received sext:** Females, All Other Races, LGBTQ

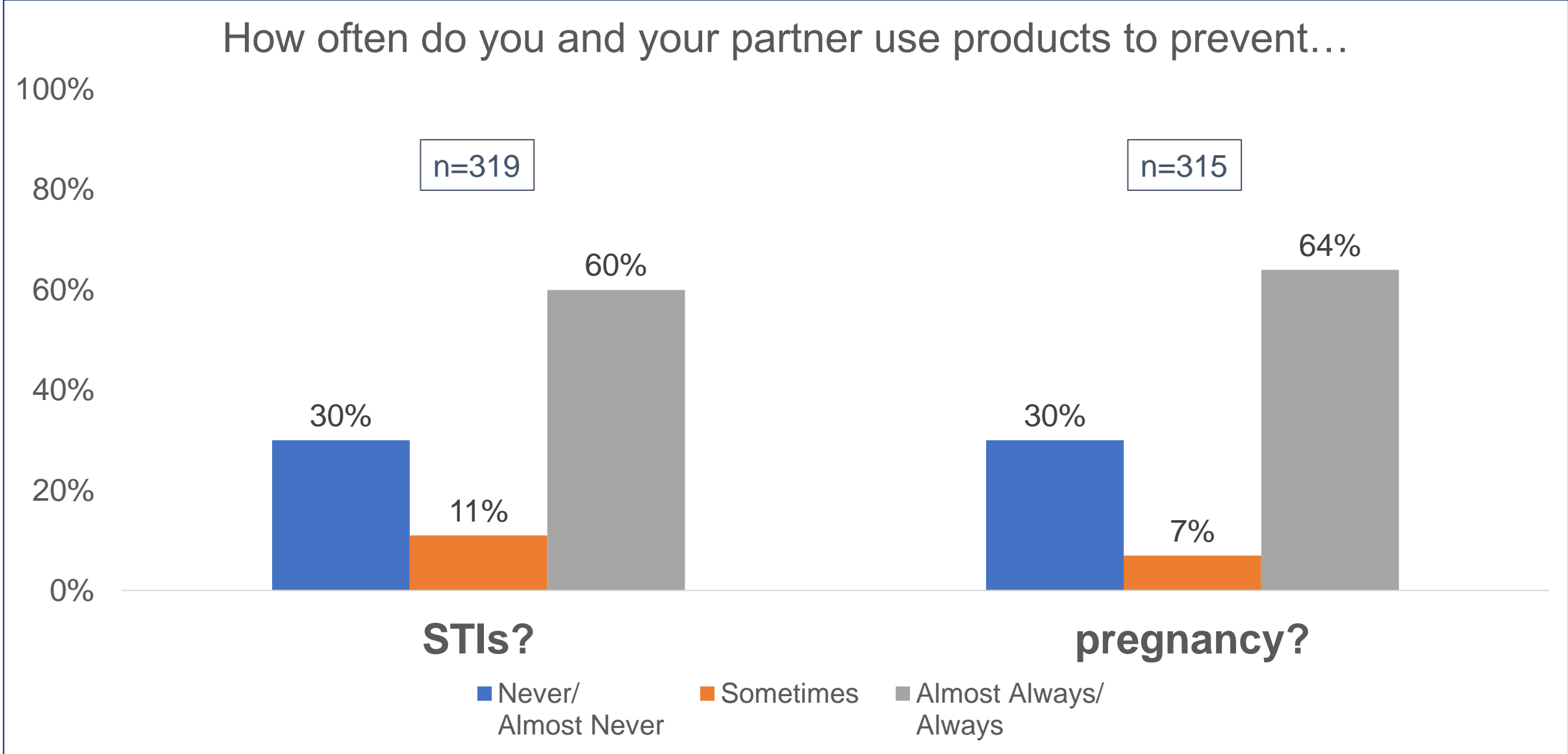
NPS Students Reporting Having Had Sex Talk with Parents (Birth Control, Risks of STIs, Delaying Pregnancy), 2022



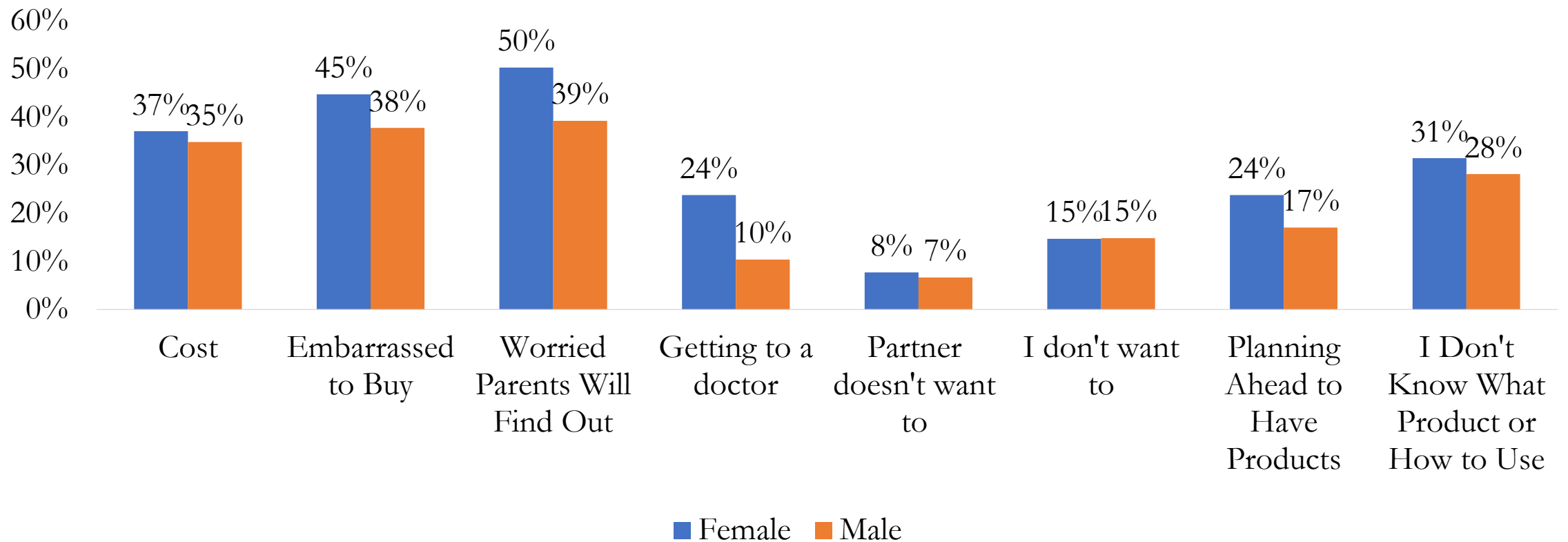
2022 survey finds the following groups were statistically less likely to have talked with their guardian about sex, STIs, delaying pregnancy:

- Males
- Asian youth

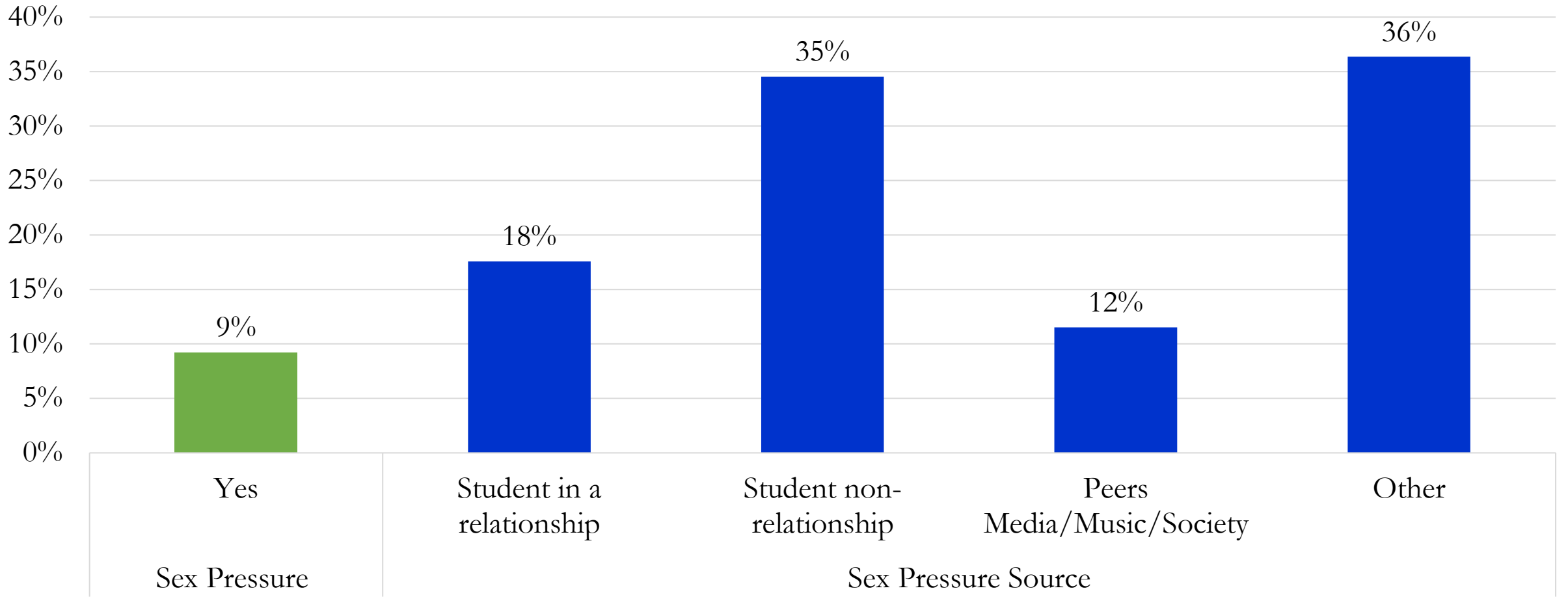
STI & Pregnancy Prevention by NPS HS Students, 2022



Perceived Barriers to Prevention of STIs and Pregnancy among NPS High School Students, 2022, by Biological Sex



Sources of Pressure for Sexual Behaviors Grade 9 -12



% of all valid high school respondents

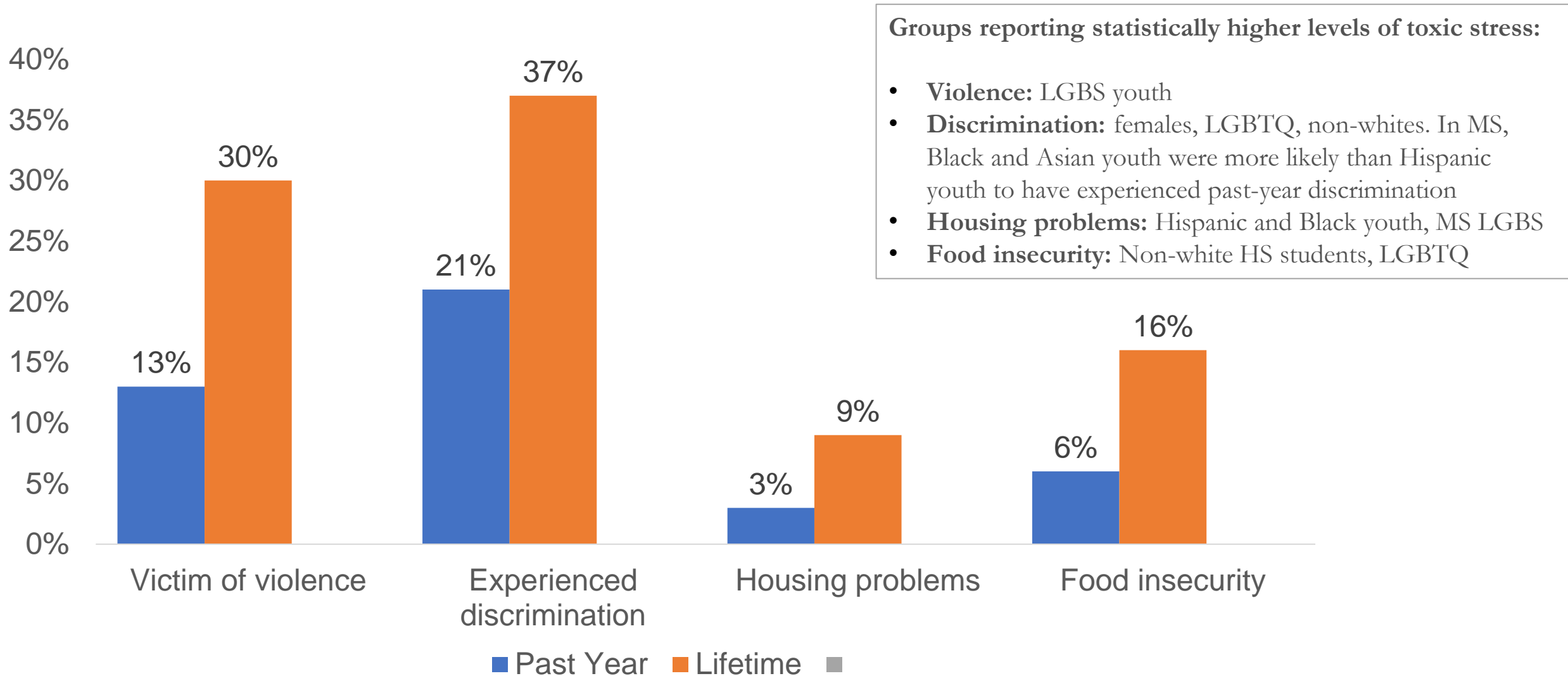
% of those who answered yes to sex pressure

Risk Factors

Toxic Stress, Bullying, Time Alone, No
Extracurricular Involvement



Toxic Stress Indicators among NPS Students, 2022, By Past Year & Lifetime



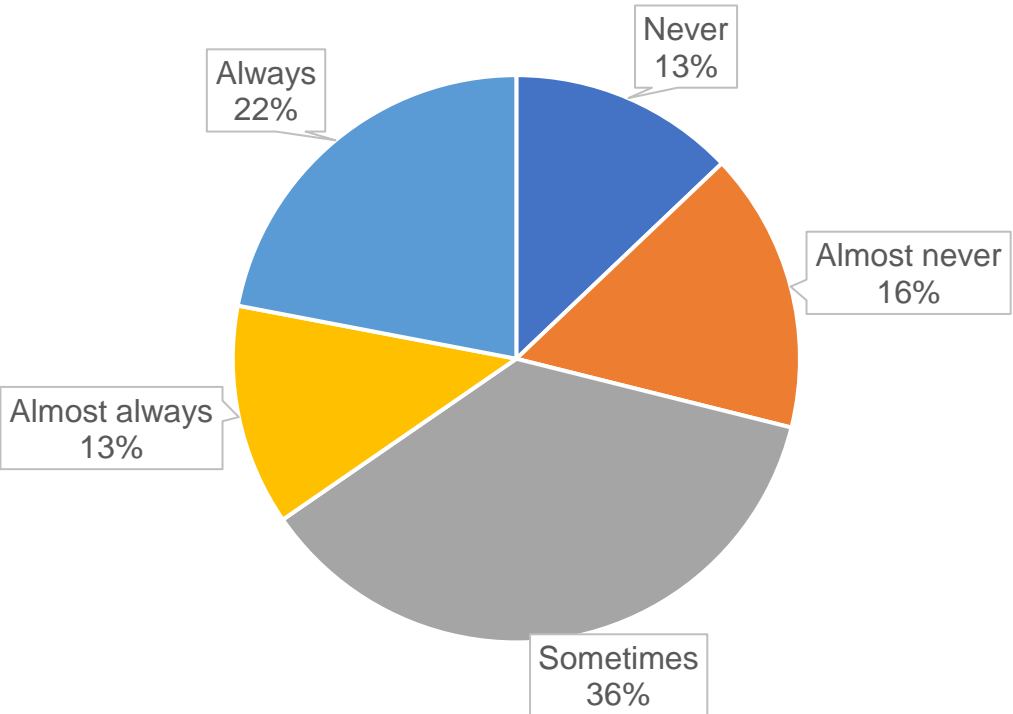
Bullying as Experienced by NPS Students, 2022, Grades 7-12

- 53% reported they had NEVER been bullied
- 39% reported being bullied in their lifetime
- 9% reported being bullied in past 30 days

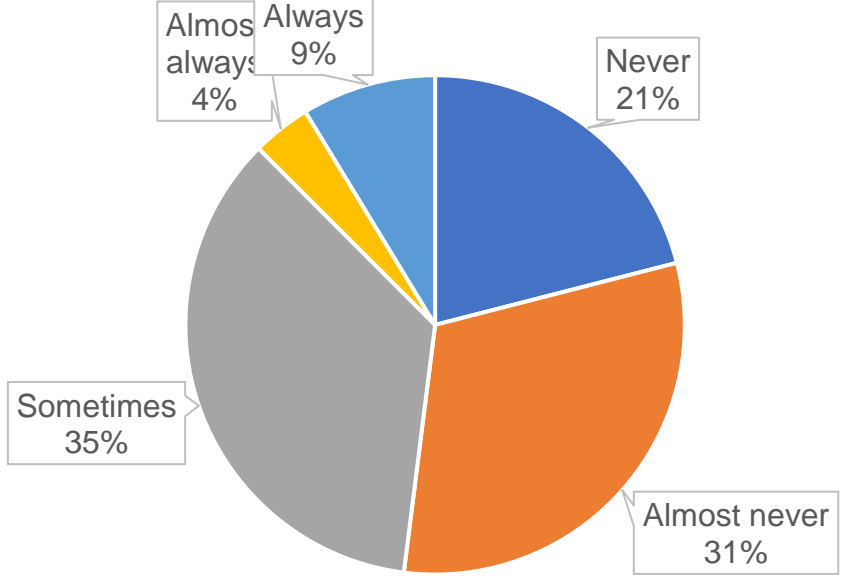
Groups reporting statistically higher levels of bullying:

- Females
- Hispanic youth
- LGBTQ youth

Teacher/Adult Intervention



Student Intervention



Bullying Reported by NPS Students, 2022, continued

Types of bullying (n=244):

80% - Mean names/comments
55% - Lies/rumors spread
52% - Left out/excluded
20% - Threatened
19% - Physically hurt
9% - Money/things taken

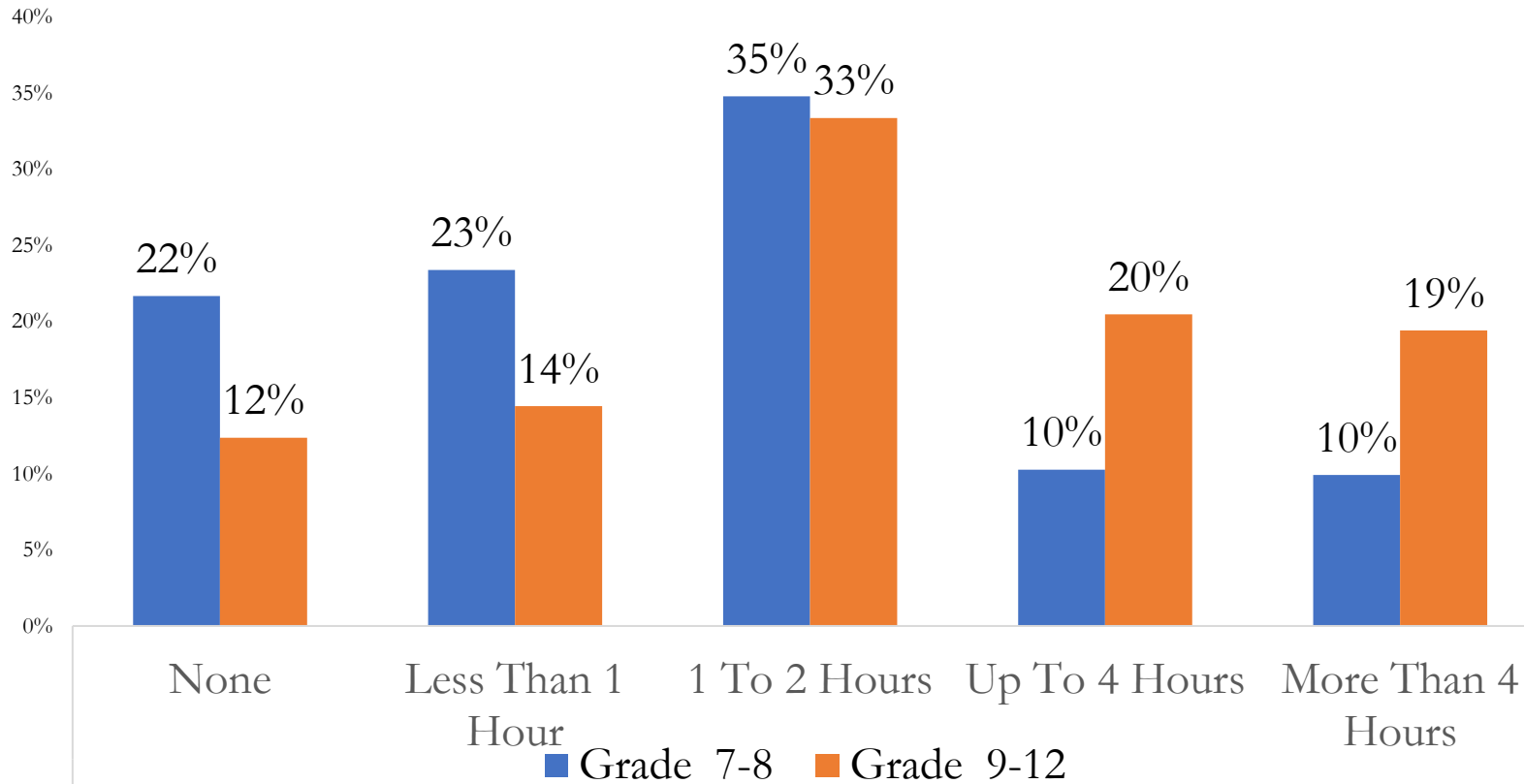
Locations of bullying (n=244)

60% - Classroom
55% - Hallways
44% - Online*
43% - Lunchroom
24% - After school*
20% - Bathroom
17% - School Bus & Gym
12% - On way to school*

**Locations outside NPS purview*

Youth Time Alone on Weekdays without Supervision among NPS Students, 2022

Youth Time Alone on Weekdays without Supervision

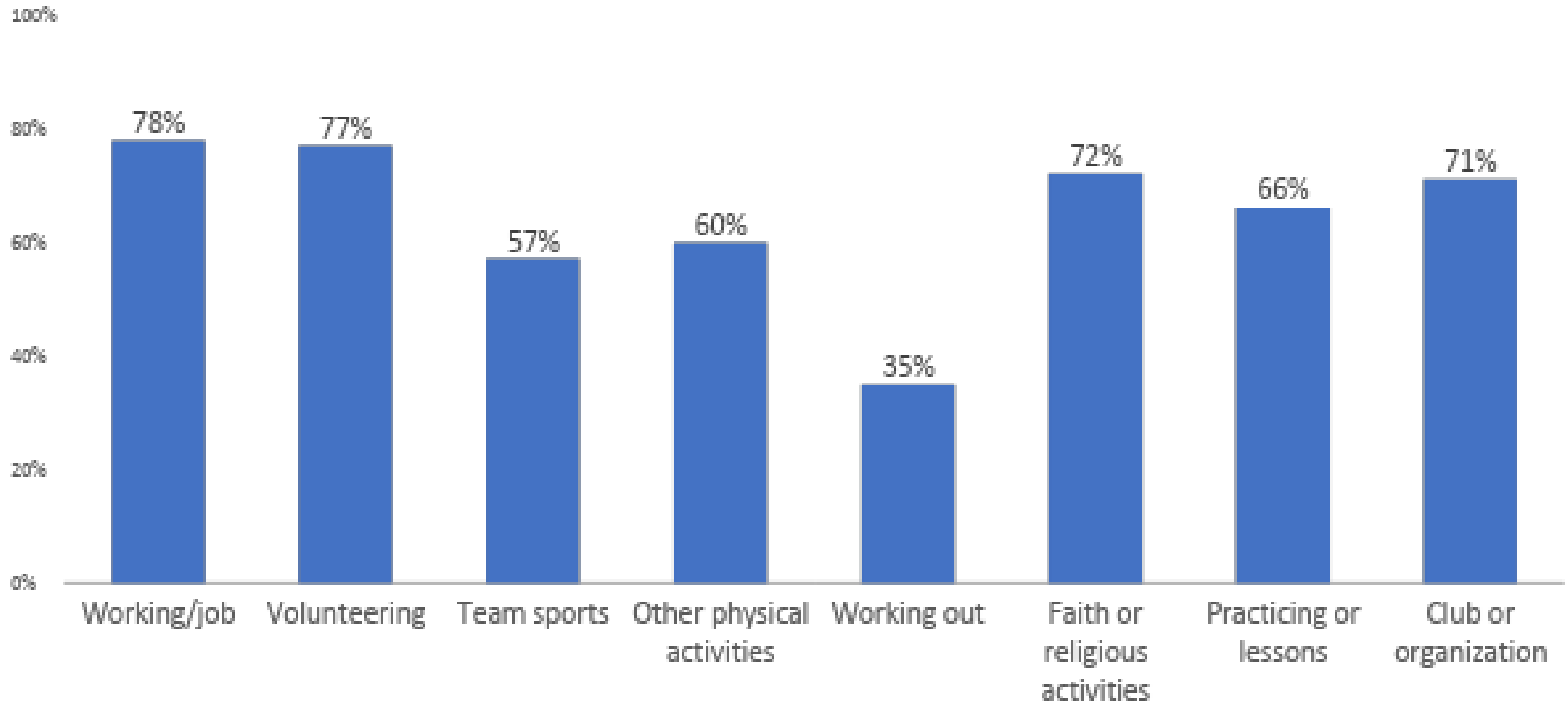


The following groups report statistically significant higher levels of being unsupervised on weekdays:

- Middle school males
- Middle school Black or Hispanic youth
- High school MLLs

On a regular weekday, how many hours do you usually spend WITHOUT an adult present?

NPS Youth who report **No Time** spent on individual extracurriculars, 2022



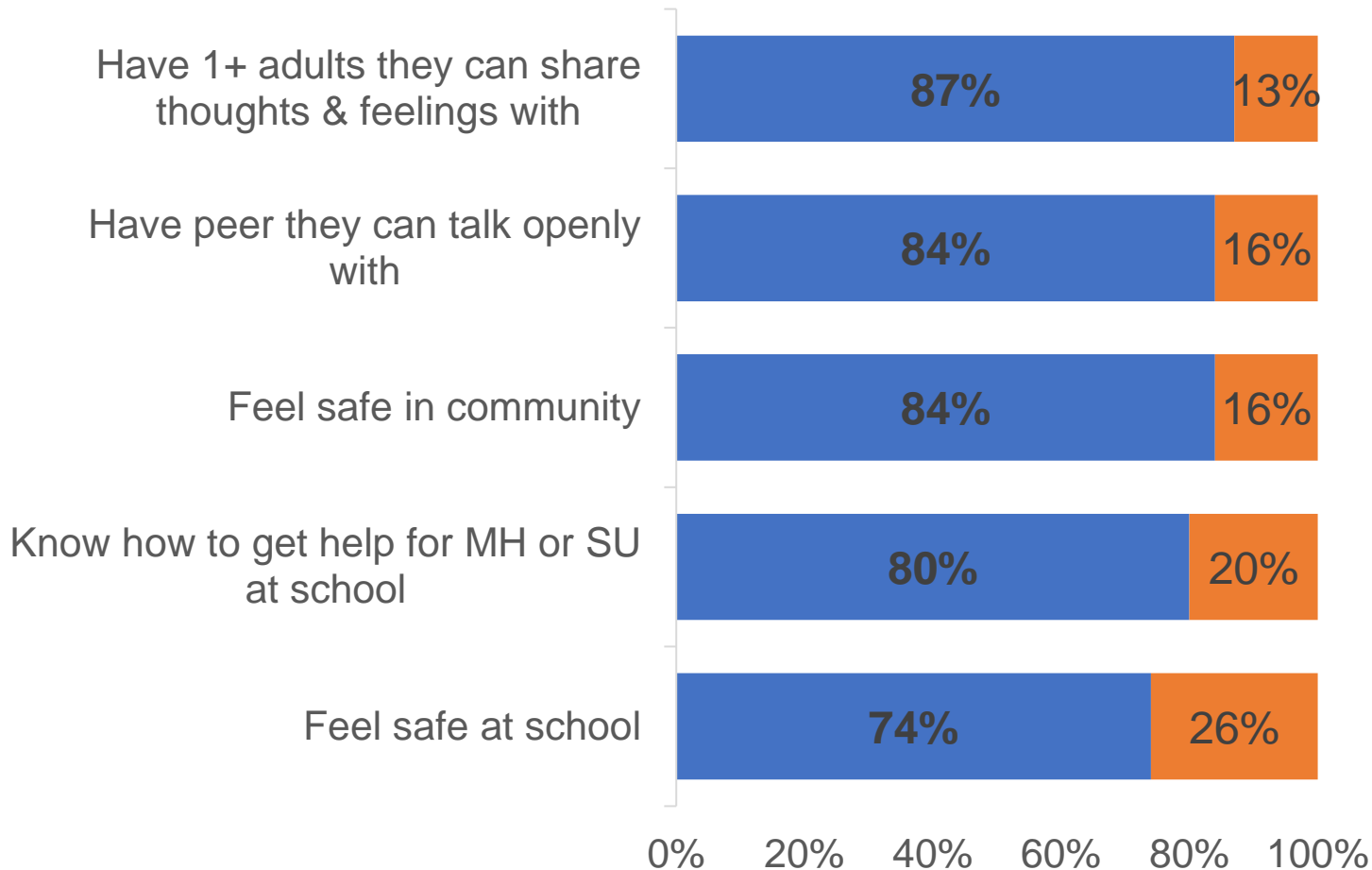
Protective Factors



Safety, Know Where to Get Help,
Someone to Talk to, Sleep, Physical
Activity, Extracurricular Involvement,
Connectedness to Teachers &
Students, Trusted Adults

Perceived Safety, Support, Knowledge of Where to Get Help among NPS Students, 2022

% NPS Students Reporting Protective Factors



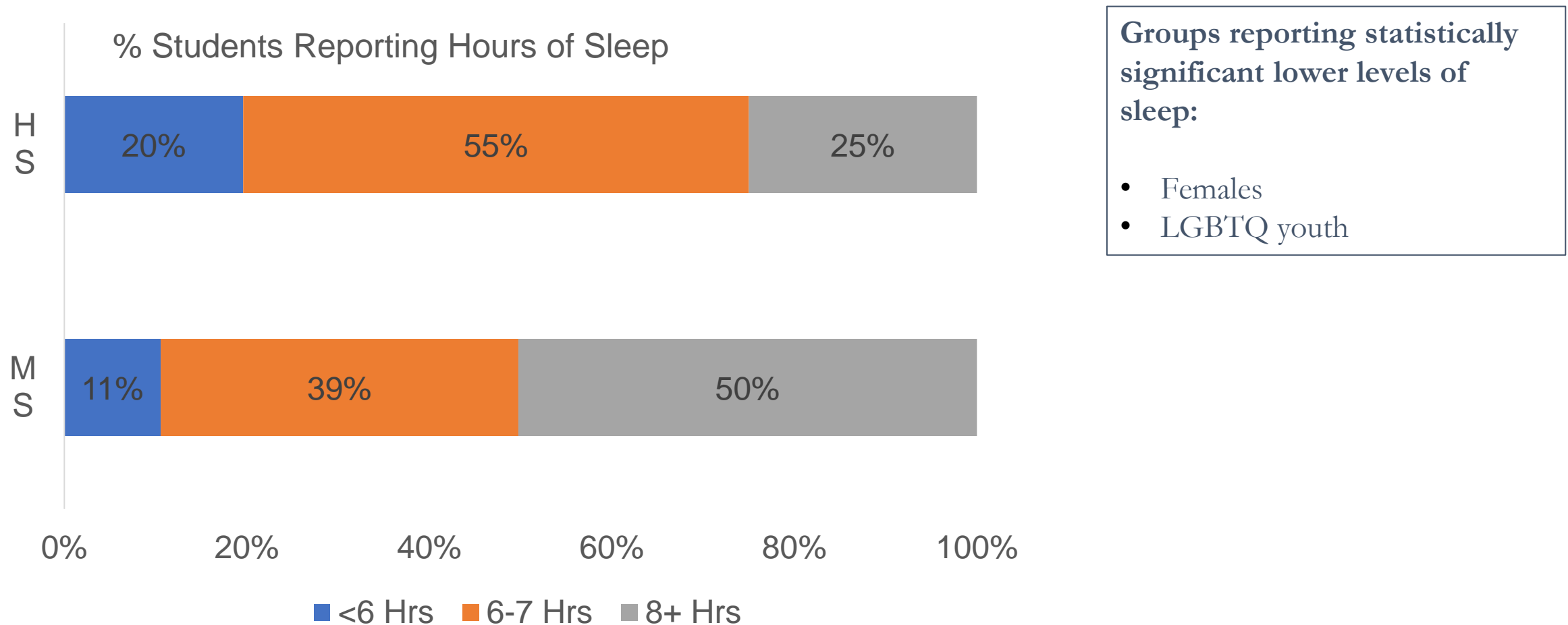
Youth who reported depression were *less likely* to:

- feel safe in the community
- feel safe at school
- know how to get help for themselves or peers for mental health or substance use problems at school
- have one adult they can share thoughts or feelings with

Groups that are significantly less likely to:

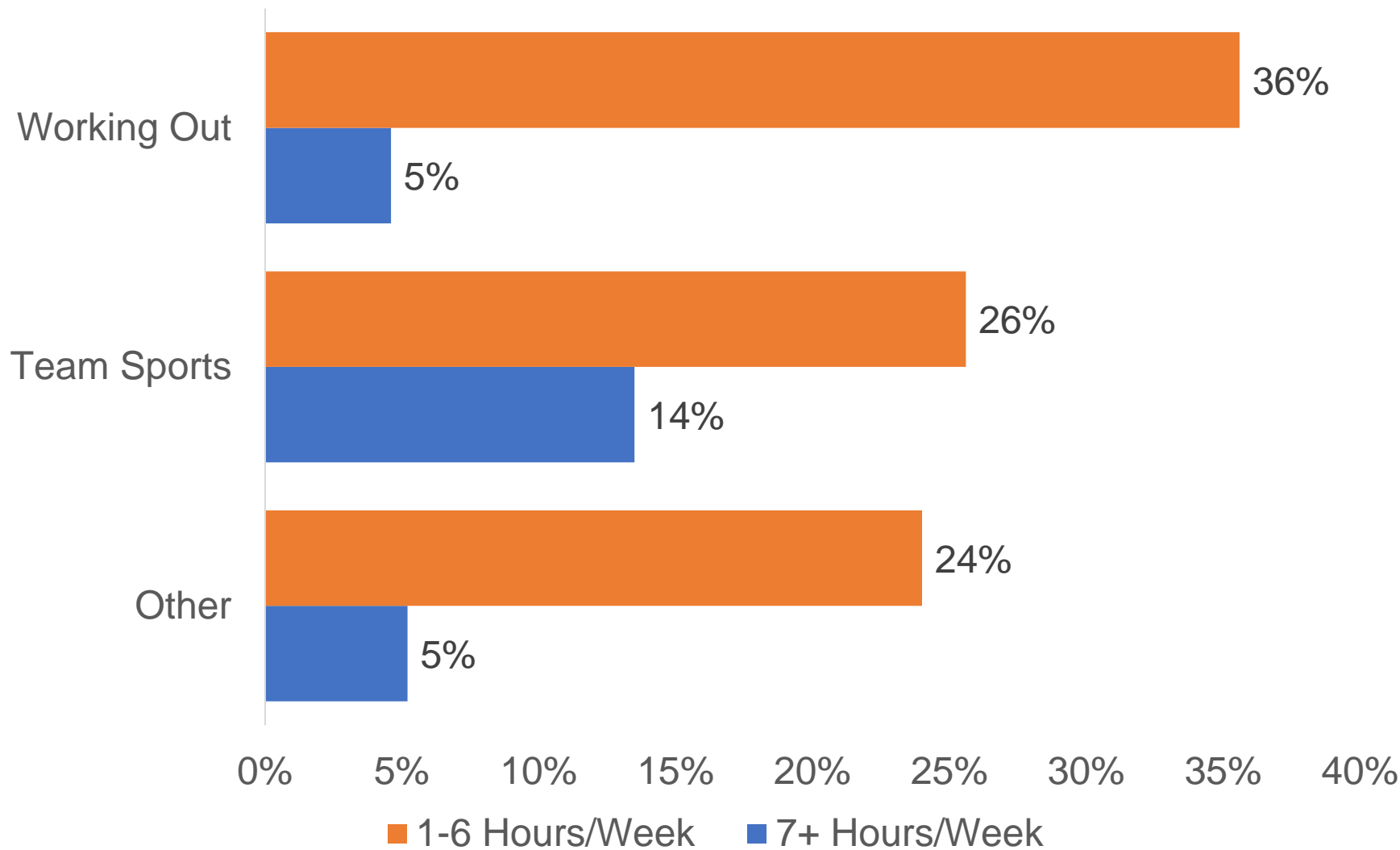
- **Have a trusted adult:** LGBTQ, MS females, HS non-White students, MS Hispanic students
- **Feel safe in community:** females, HS Black students, LGBTQ, MS MLLs
- **Feel safe at school:** females, LGBTQ
- **Know how to get help at school:** females, LGBS

Amount of Sleep on Weeknights Reported by NPS Students, 2022, by Middle and High School



NPS Youth Weekly Hours of Physical Activity, 2022

% NPS Students Spending Time on Physical Activity



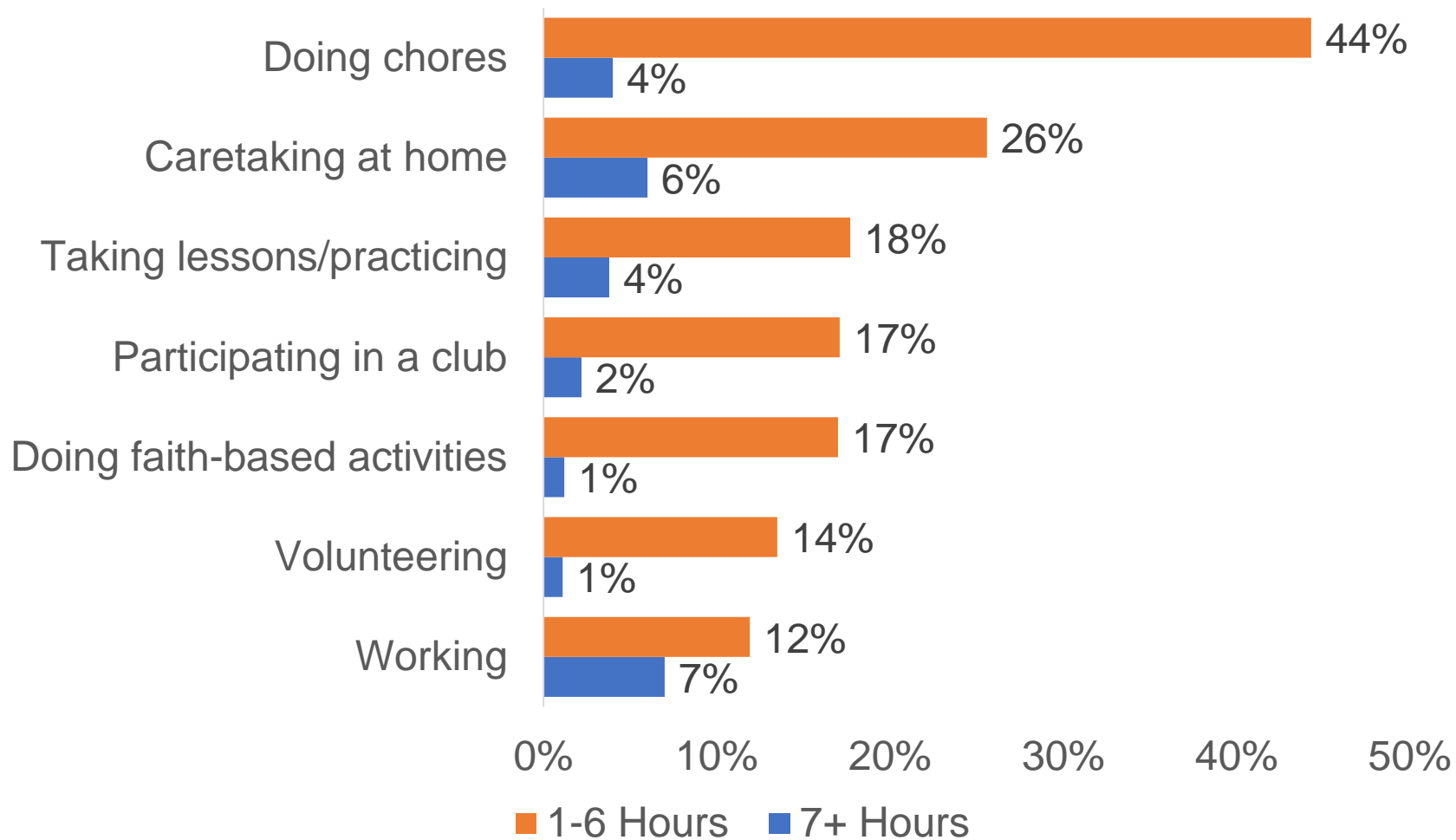
Groups spending significantly less time on physical activity:

- Girls
- Non-Whites
- LGBTQ

*21% of students selected 'none' to all of these

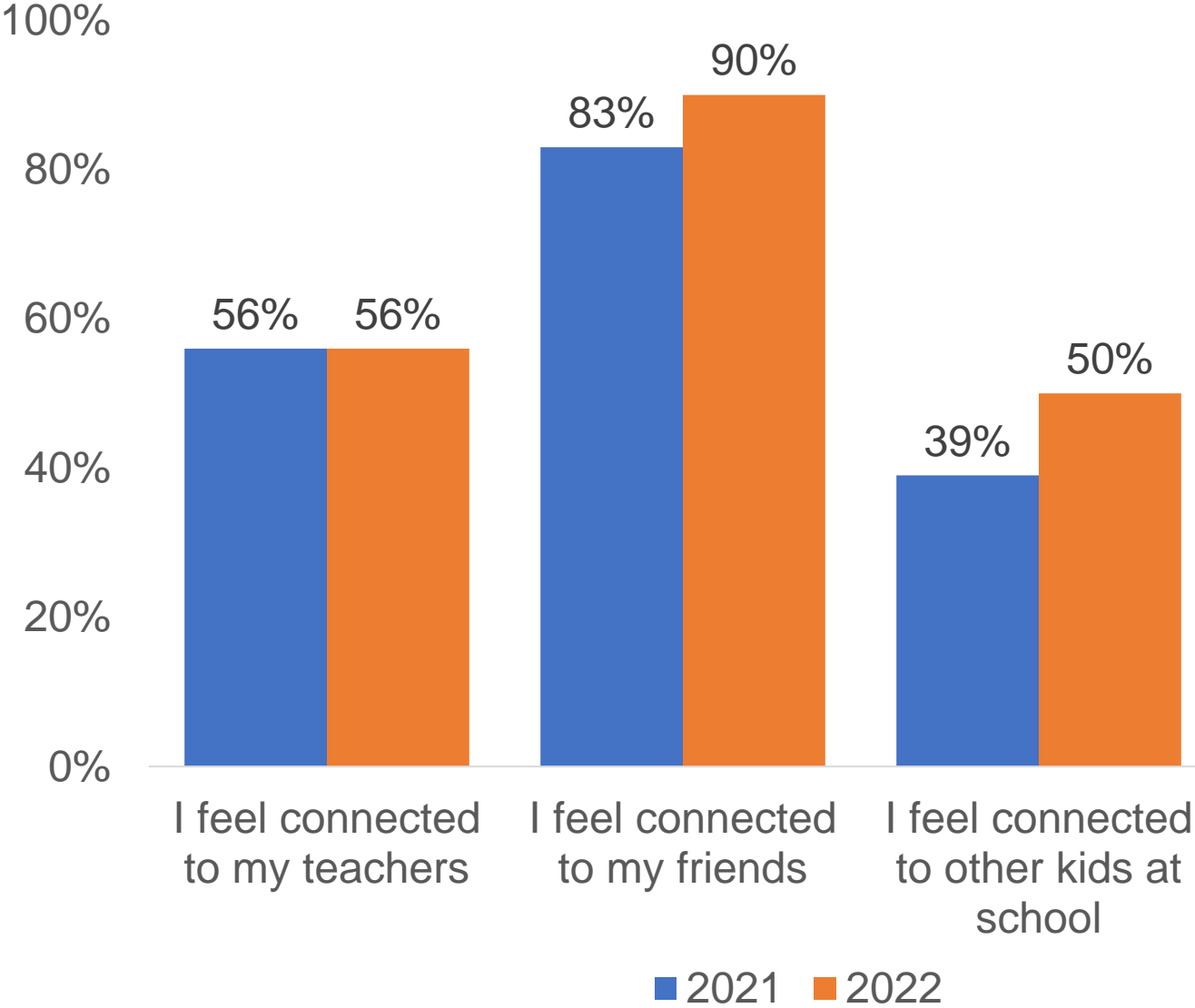
NPS Youth Weekly Hours of Extracurricular Involvement, 2022

% NPS Students Spending Time on Extracurriculars



- HS males reported spending less time than females volunteering, taking care of someone at home, and doing chores.
- HS Black youth were less likely than White youth to work at a paying job.
- Black or Hispanic youth were less likely than Whites to volunteer.
- HS Black and Hispanic youth were more likely to spend time taking care of someone at home.
- MS MLLs were more likely to work as a volunteer.

Connectedness to Teachers, Friends and Peers among NPS Students, 2021 vs 2022

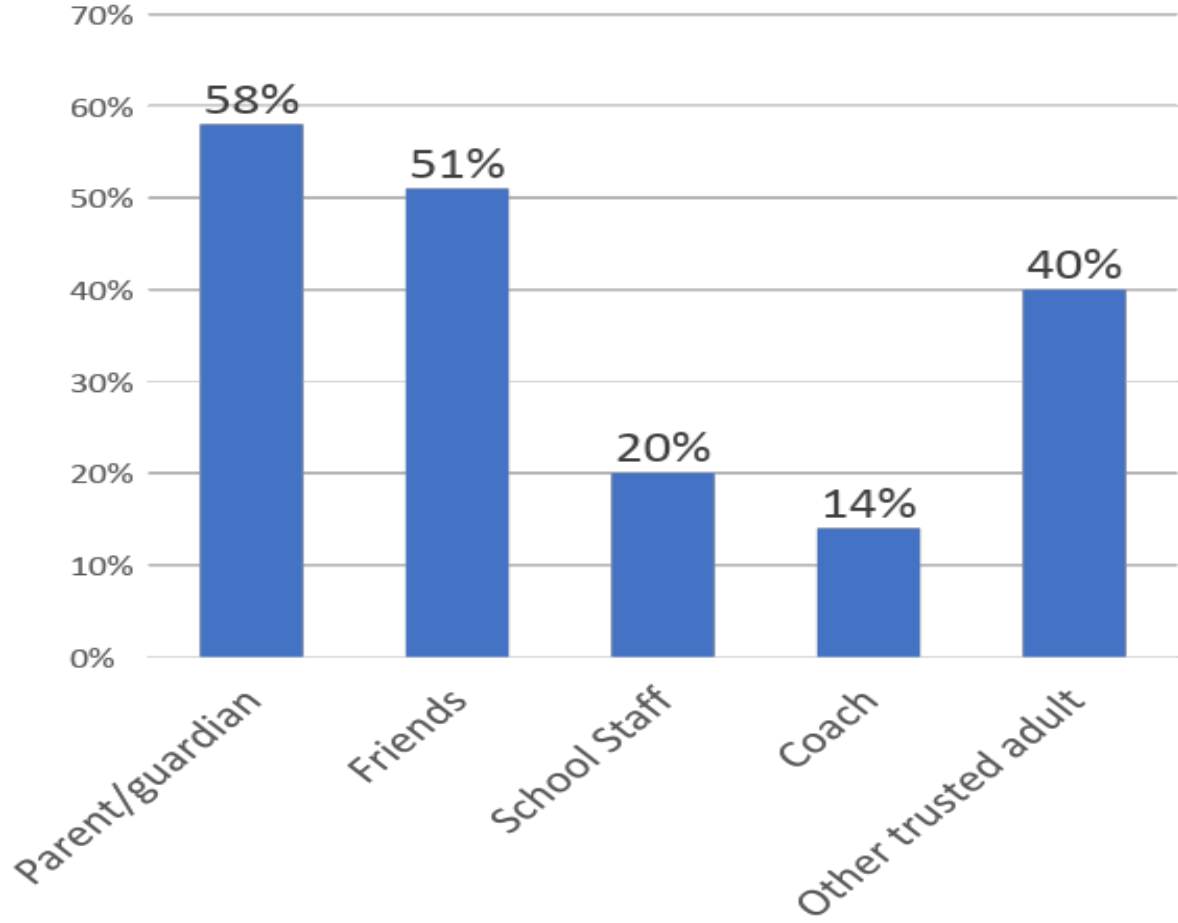


2022 survey finds the following groups report statistically significant higher levels:

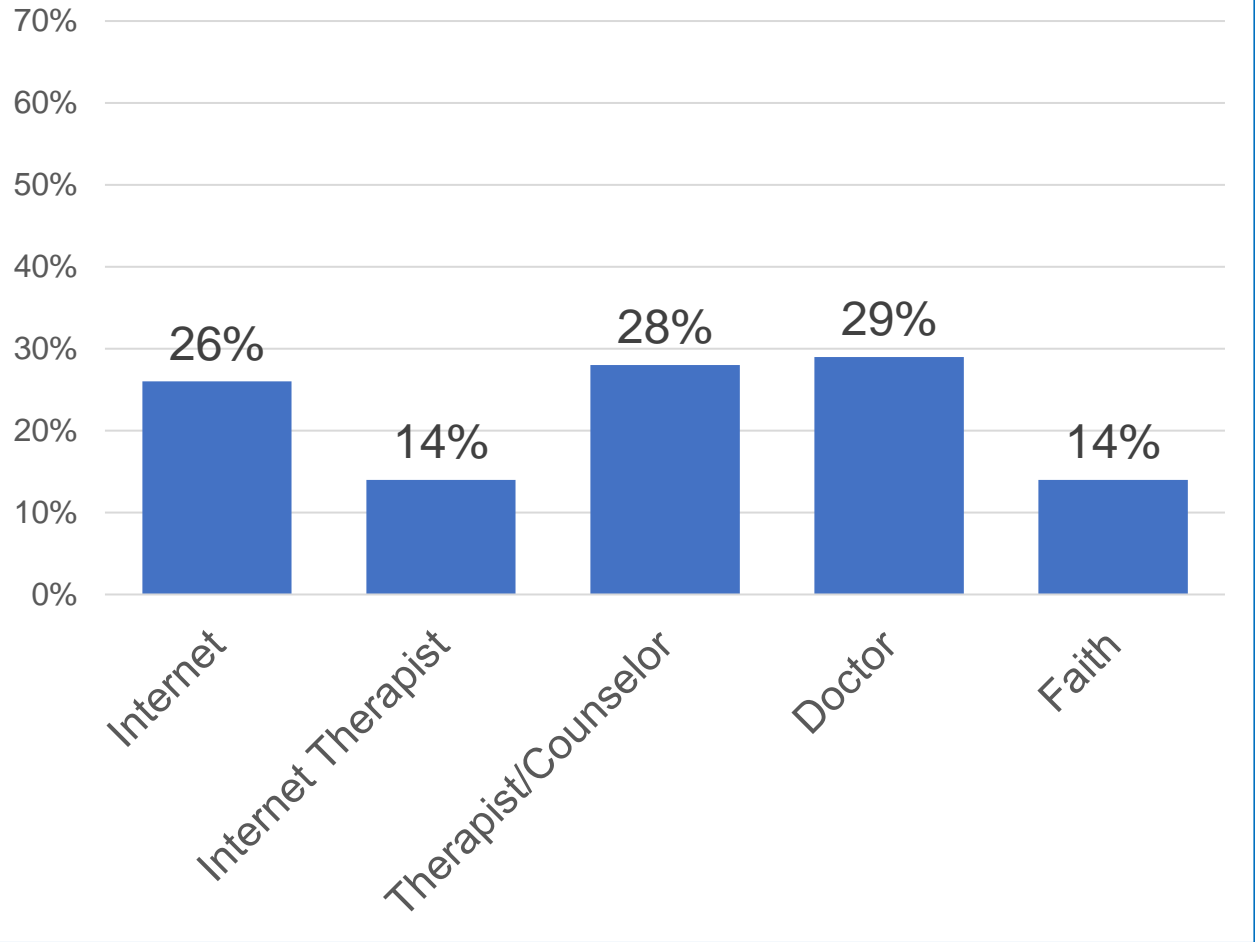
- **Females** were less likely to report feeling connected to teachers and other students at school.
- **LGBTQ youth** were less likely to report feeling connected to other students at school.
- **Non-White youth** were less likely to feel connected to their teachers, their friends and other youth at school.

Where NPS Students Would Seek Help If They Had a Problem, 2022

Family & School



Community & Internet



NPS Student Interest in Seeing the 2022 Survey Results

