

# Findings from the 2024 Norwalk Youth Survey










Conducted Oct. 2024 using Youth Voices Count™ Tool

Summary of Youth Survey Findings & Trends Compared with Past Surveys  
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# Content Areas in Full Survey

Today's presentation will focus on demographics, lifestyle, risk factors, protective factors, substance use, and mental health.

<p><b>About the Survey:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Background</li><li>-Analysis</li><li>-Response Rate</li></ul>		<p><b>Lifestyle:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Extracurriculars</li><li>-Physical activity</li><li>-Sleep</li><li>-Unsupervised time on weekdays</li></ul>		<p><b>Risk Factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Household</li><li>-Discrimination</li><li>-Violence &amp; Bullying</li><li>-Disconnectedness</li></ul>	
<p><b>Protective Factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-In Community</li><li>-At School</li><li>-View of Future</li></ul>		<p><b>Mental Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Anxiety</li><li>-Depression &amp; Suicidality</li><li>-Other: Self-Harm, Disordered Eating, Loneliness</li></ul>		<p><b>Substance Use:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Past-Month &amp; Lifetime use</li><li>-Perceptions</li><li>-Reasons for non-use</li><li>-Access</li><li>-Location of use</li><li>-Role of family</li><li>-DUI behaviors</li></ul>	
<p><b>Sexual Activity among HS Aged Youth</b></p>		<p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Age of Access, Daily Hours</li><li>-Personal Impacts from Social Media &amp; Gaming</li><li>-Beliefs about Cellphones at School</li><li>-Personal Experiences with Cell Phones</li></ul>		<p><b>Gambling</b></p>	

# About the Survey:

- Background
- Analysis
- Response Rate



# Background & Analysis

During the last week of October into the first week of November 2024, we conducted the 4<sup>th</sup> biannual Norwalk Youth Survey to gather data on teen perceptions & practices related to mental health, substance misuse, and risk and protective factors.

- The “Youth Voices Count” survey tool was administered to students in grades 7-12, following two parent communications to ensure consent. The survey was completely anonymous; no identifying information was collected. All NPS middle and high schools participated for a very robust overall response rate of 70%.
- The survey was funded by [Positive Directions](#) through the CDC Drug-Free Communities grant, which supports [The Norwalk Partnership \(TNP\)](#). Additional post-survey analysis was funded through a grant from the City of Norwalk.
- The data tables provided by the Youth Voices Count survey company are available at [TheNorwalkPartnership.org/resources](https://TheNorwalkPartnership.org/resources). Tables and graphs may be used; please cite “2024 Norwalk Youth Survey by The Norwalk Partnership.”
- For further analyses, please address questions to Margaret Watt, [mwatt@positivedirections.org](mailto:mwatt@positivedirections.org).

# Response Rate, 2024 Norwalk Youth Survey

Sample Response Rates	Sample Count	Population Count	Response Rate (%)
Grade 7	709	844	84.00%
Grade 8	670	796	84.17%
Grade 9	784	936	83.76%
Grade 10	677	1083	62.51%
Grade 11	606	955	63.46%
Grade 12	543	1080	50.28%
Grades 7-8	1379	1640	84.09%
Grades 9-12	2610	4054	64.38%
Grades 7-12	3989	5694	70.06%

\*11 students did not choose a grade and are not included in the table above.

### Prior survey responses

2018: 1967 respondents in grades 7,9,11. 2021: 2452 respondents. 2022: 3969 respondents.

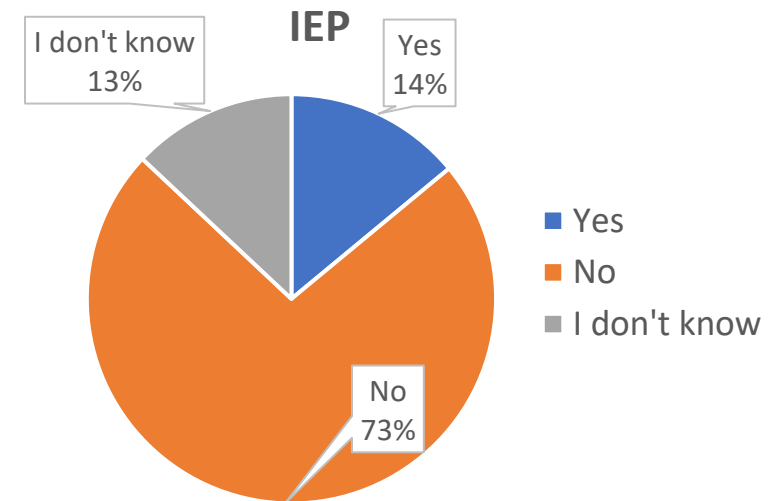
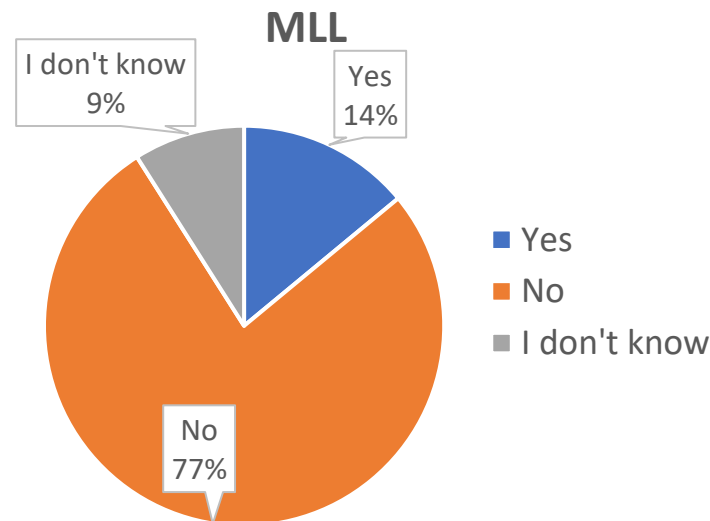
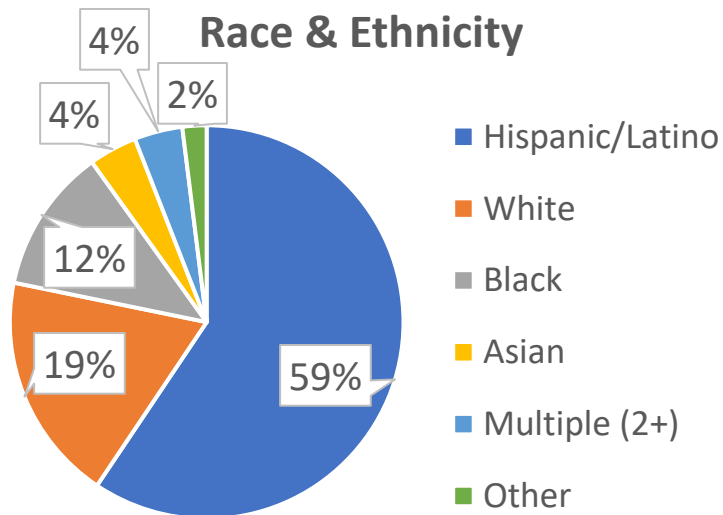
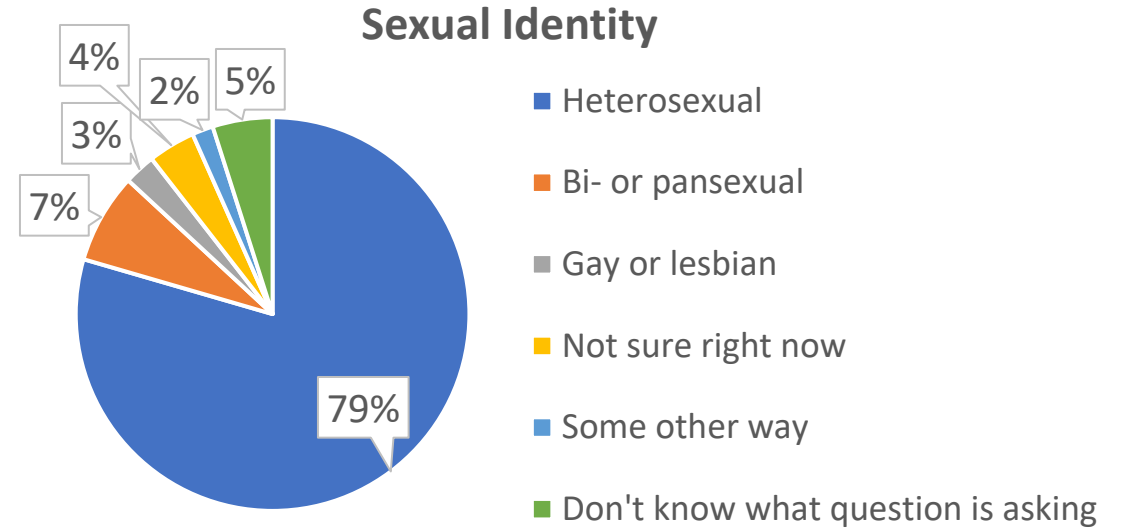
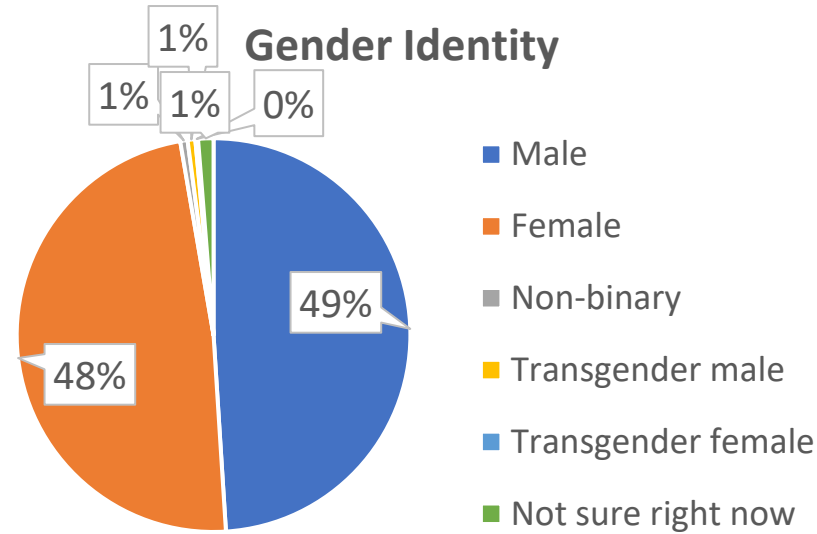


# About Norwalk Youth

Demographics, Lifestyle, Underlying Risk  
Factors & Protective Factors

# Demographics Reported by Norwalk Youth, 2024

N=3989 youth in grades 7-12, 70% response rate



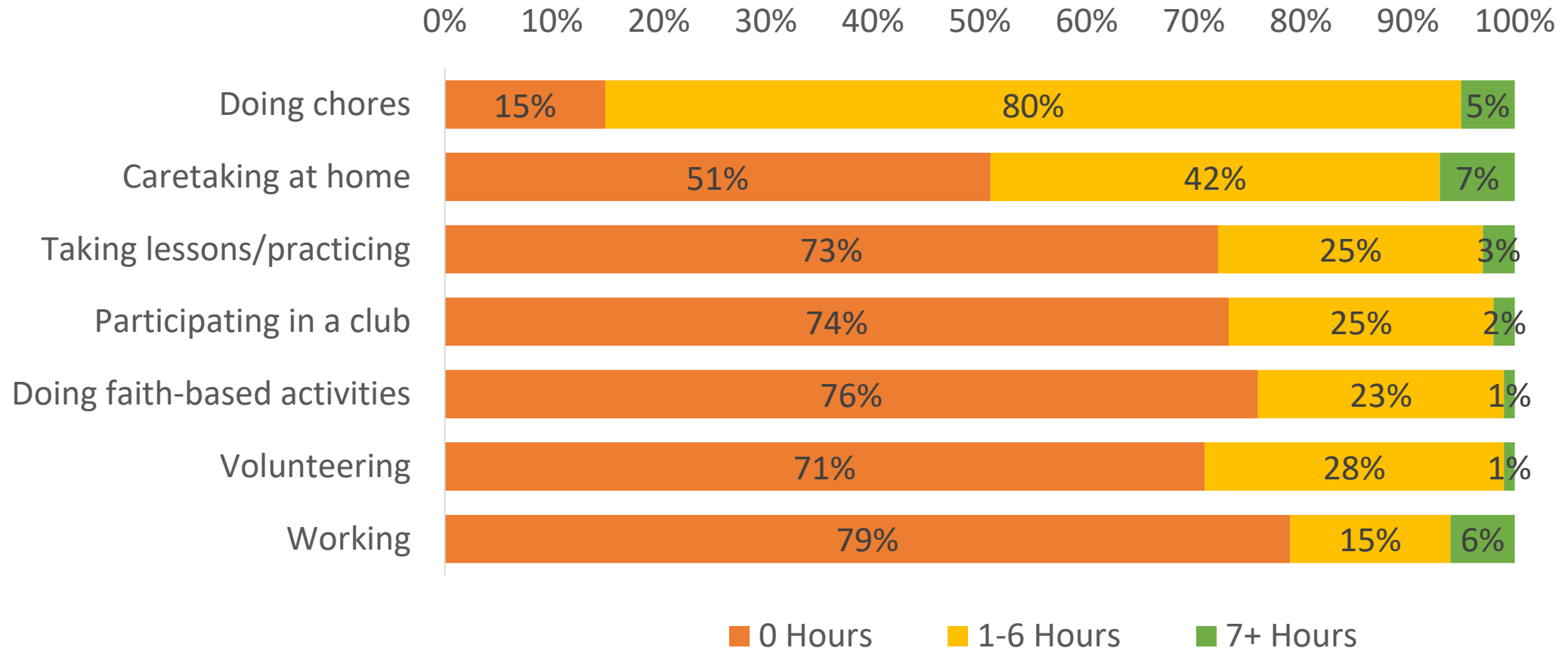
## Lifestyle:

- Extracurriculars
- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Unsupervised time on weekdays



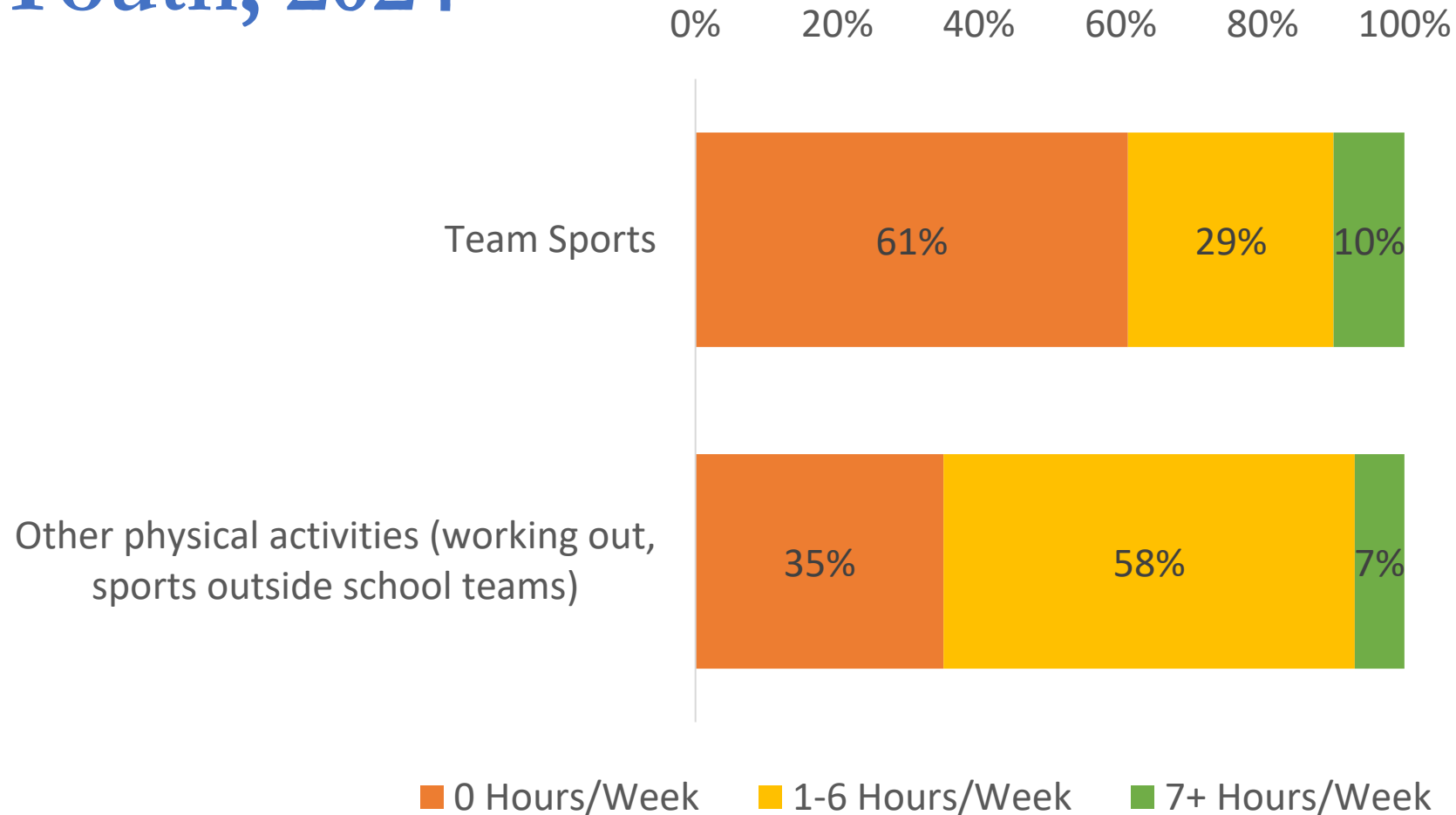


# Weekly Hours of Extracurricular Involvement among Norwalk Youth, 2024



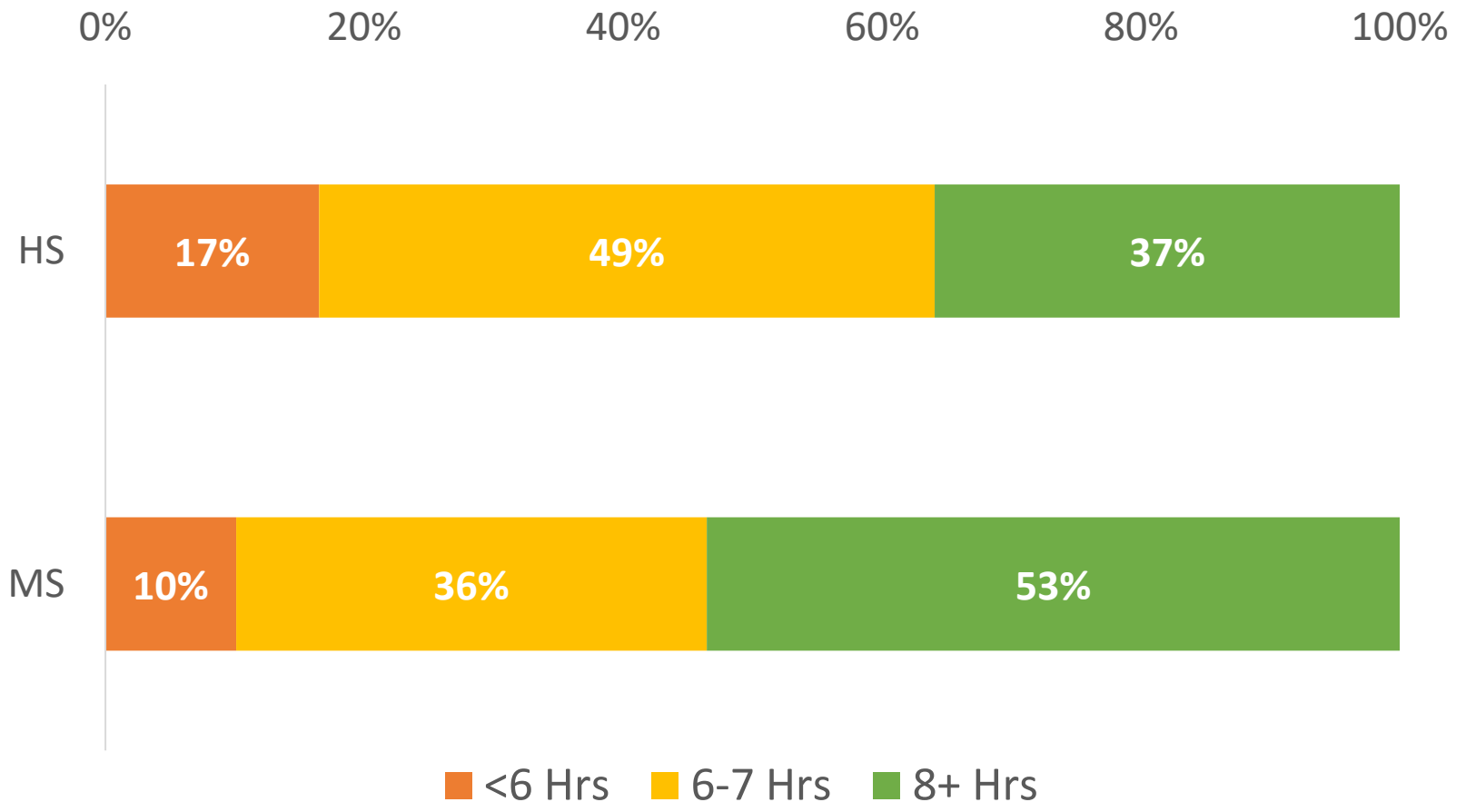
Compared with 2022, fewer youth report participating in clubs (27% now vs 32%) and taking lessons (28% now vs 34%) in 2024.

# Weekly Hours of Physical Activity by Norwalk Youth, 2024



Compared with 2022, fewer youth report participating in team sports (39% now vs 43.5%) in 2024.

# Weeknight Hours of Sleep by Norwalk Youth, 2024, by Middle and High School



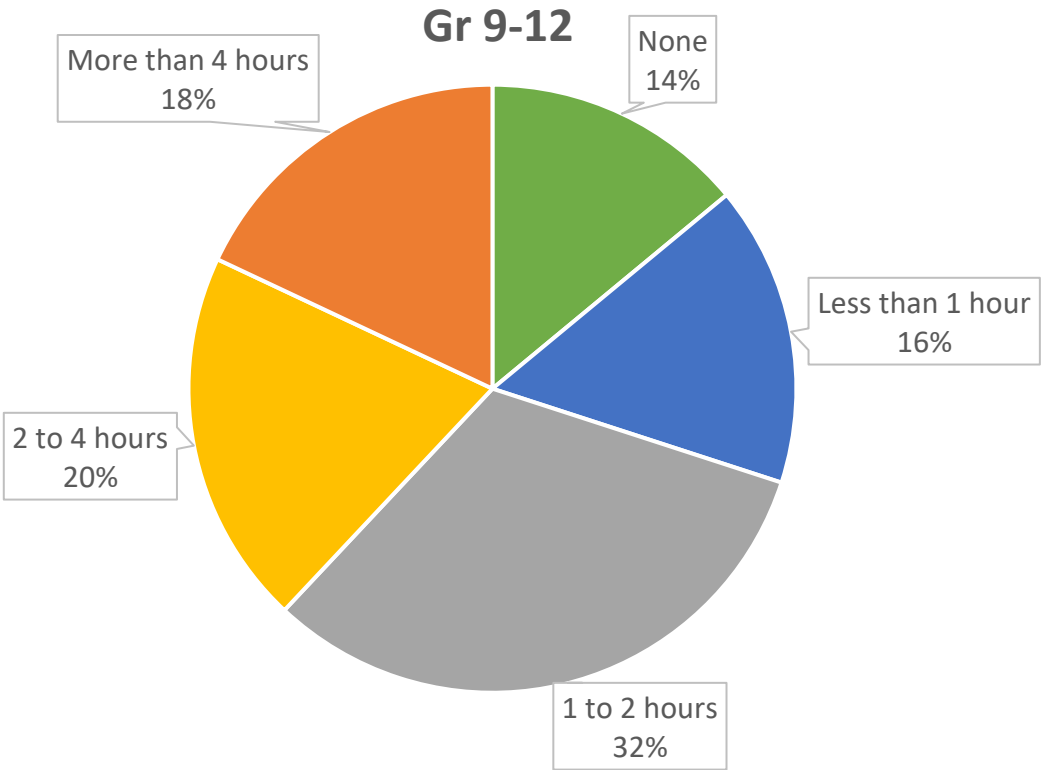
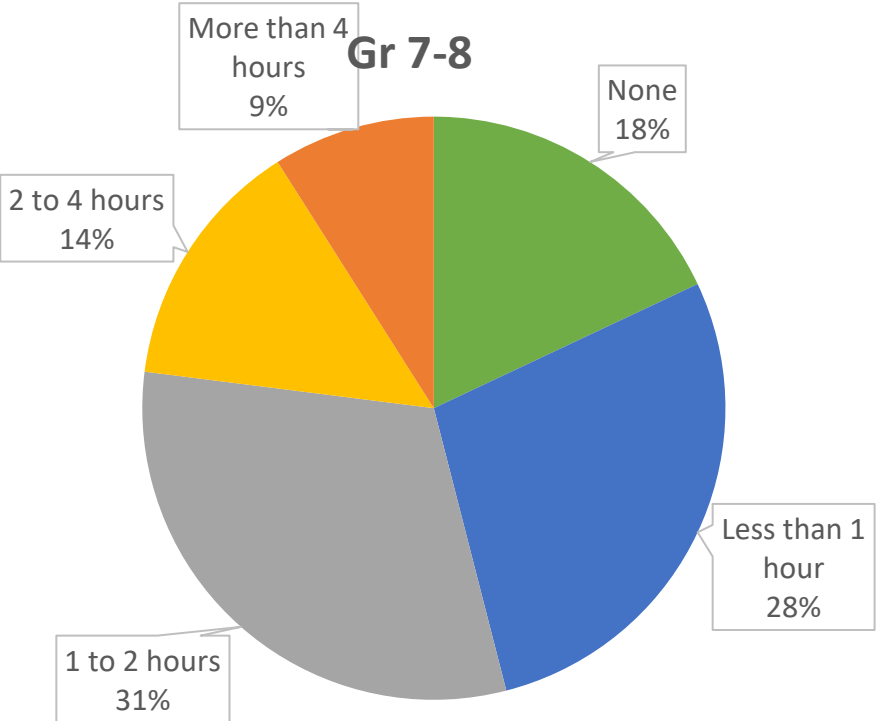
CDC recommends that 13- to 18-year-olds should average 8-10 hours of sleep a night.

Groups reporting statistically significant lower levels of sleep:

- Females, LGBTQ, Hispanic, Black, All Other Races/Ethnicities

# Unsupervised Daily Hours during the School Week among Norwalk Youth, 2024

Males report statistically significant higher levels of being unsupervised on weekdays compared to females.



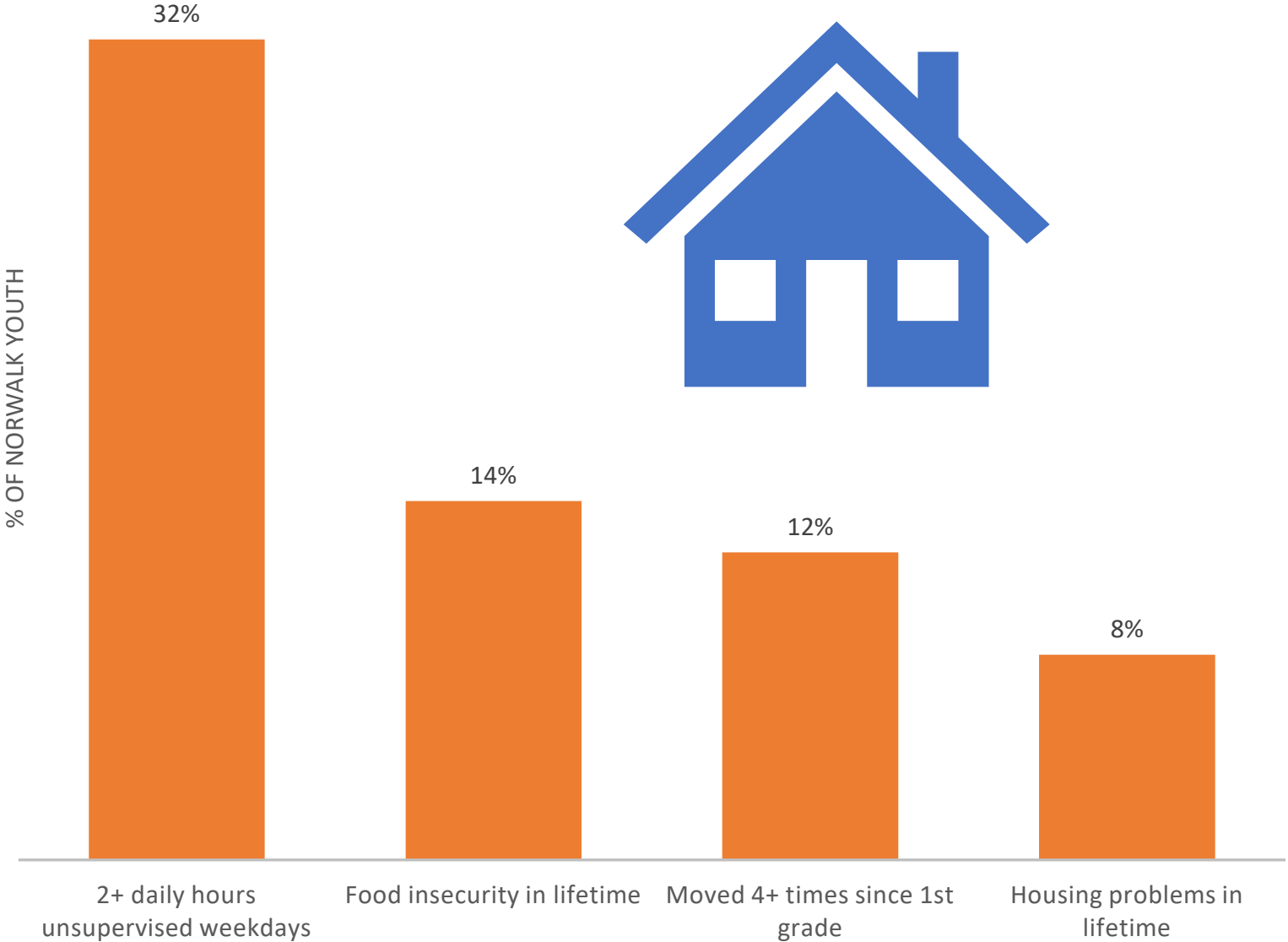
Compared with 2022, Norwalk youth report fewer unsupervised hours in 2024.

## Risk Factors:

- Household
- Discrimination
- Violence & Bullying
- Disconnectedness



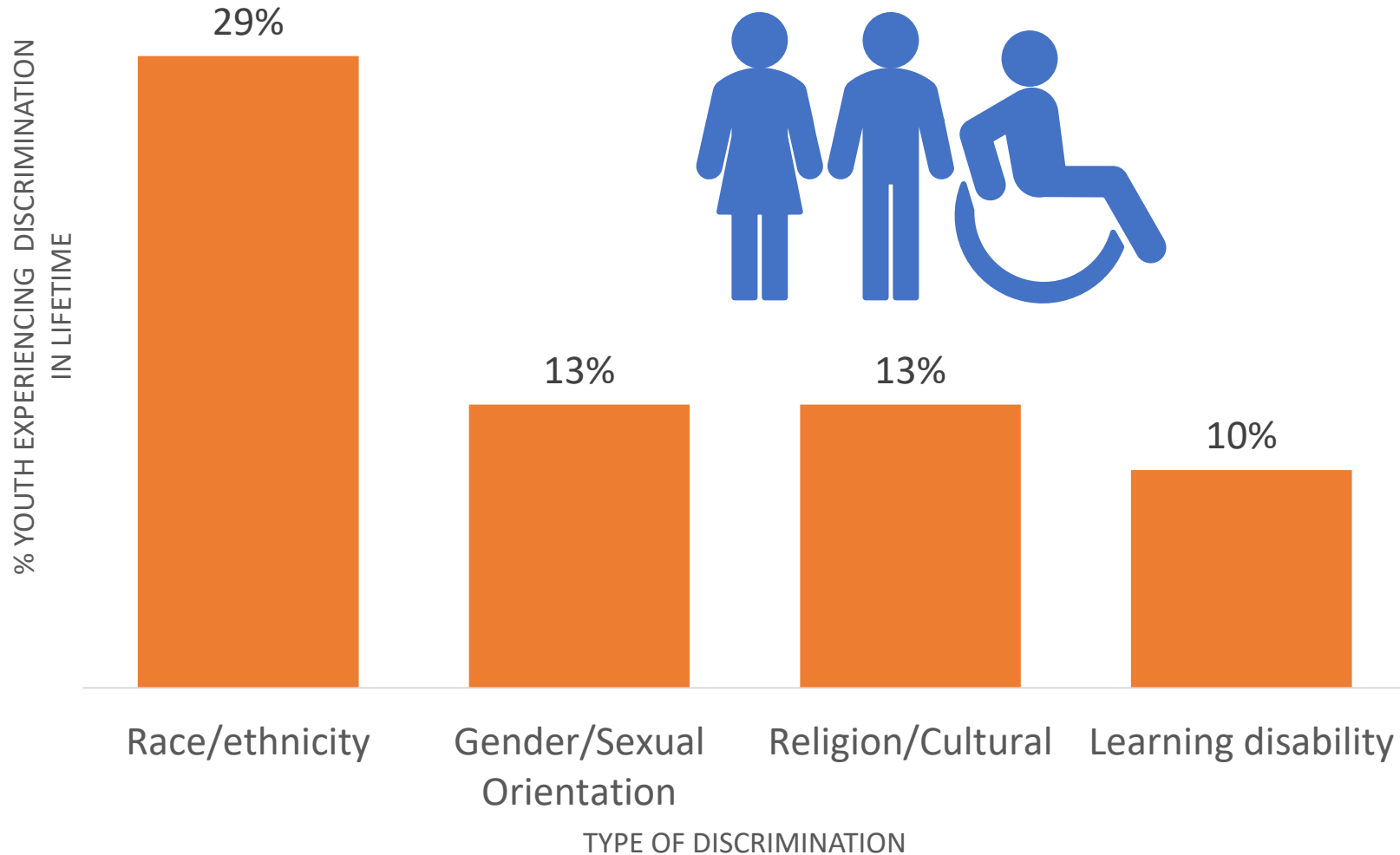
# Household Factors affecting Norwalk Youth, 2024



### Groups reporting statistically higher levels:

- **Unsupervised time on weekdays:** Males
- **Food:** LGBTQ, Hispanic and Black
- **Move 4+ times:** IEP, MLL
- **Housing:** LGBTQ, Hispanic and Black

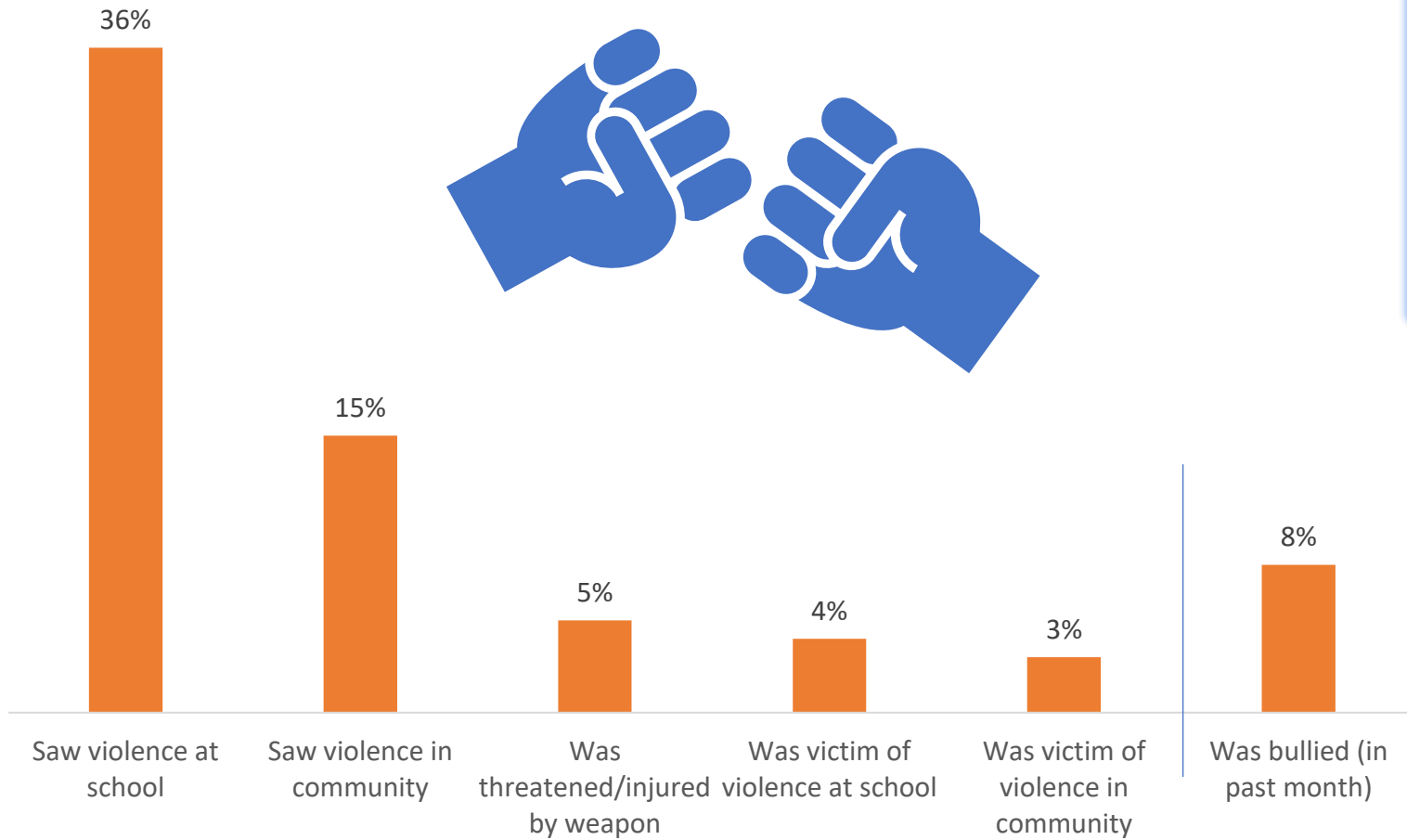
# Discrimination Experienced by Norwalk Youth, 2024



## Groups reporting statistically higher levels of discrimination:

- **Racial:** Females, LGBS, Hispanic, Black and All Other Races/Ethnicities
- **Gender:** Females, LGBTQ, IEP
- **Religious:** Females, LGBTQ, Hispanic, Black and All Other Races/Ethnicities
- **Learning disabilities:** LGBTQ, IEP

# Violence & Bullying affecting Norwalk Youth, 2024



Norwalk Youth Reporting Past-Year Experiences of Violence



In the past year:

- 11% youth report that they **physically hurt someone** once or more
- 6% youth report that they **carry a weapon**, such as a knife or gun, for protection

Groups reporting statistically higher levels of violence:

- **Saw School Violence:** LGBS, White
- **Saw Neighborhood Violence:** LGBTQ, Hispanic
- **Threatened or Injured:** Males, IEP, MLL
- **Victim of School Violence:** Males, LGBTQ, IEP
- **Victim of Neighborhood Violence:** Females, LGBTQ, IEP
- **Cause physical harm:** Males, IEP, MLL
- **Carry a weapon:** IEP, MLL

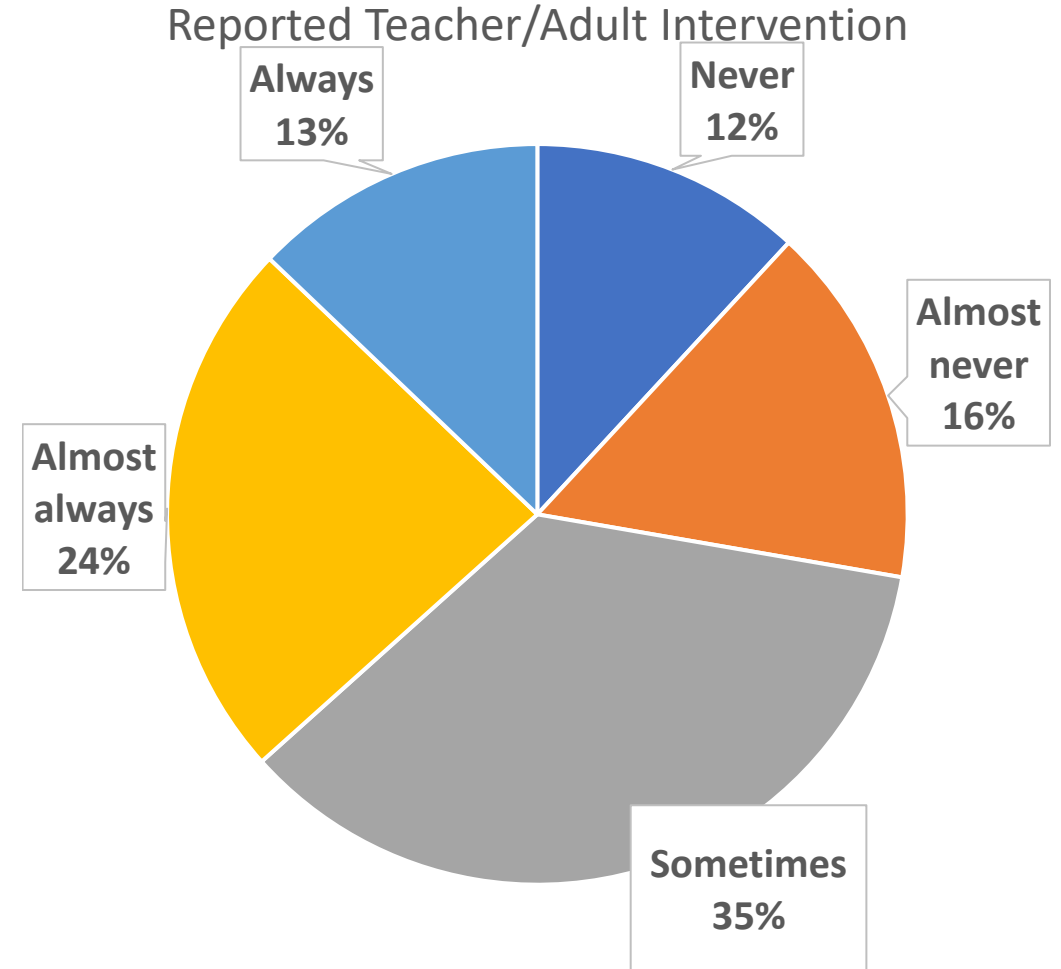


# Bullying Experienced by Norwalk Youth, 2024

- 52% of Norwalk youth report they have NEVER been bullied.
- Since 2022, past-month bullying decreased by 11% (from 9% to 8%).
- Since 2022, reported teacher intervention increased (from 35% to 37%).
- Bullying is most commonly reported to occur at school, especially in classrooms and hallways.

## Groups reporting statistically higher levels of bullying:

- Females, LGBTQ, IEP, White, and All Other Races/Ethnicities



# Types & Locations of Bullying of Norwalk Youth, 2024

## Types of bullying

73% - Mean names/comments

58% - Left out/excluded

56% - Lies/rumors spread

16% - Threatened

16% - Physically hurt

14% - Money/things taken

## Locations of bullying

**64% - Classroom**

47% - Hallways

41% - Online\*

39% - Lunch

24% - After school\*

19% - Gym

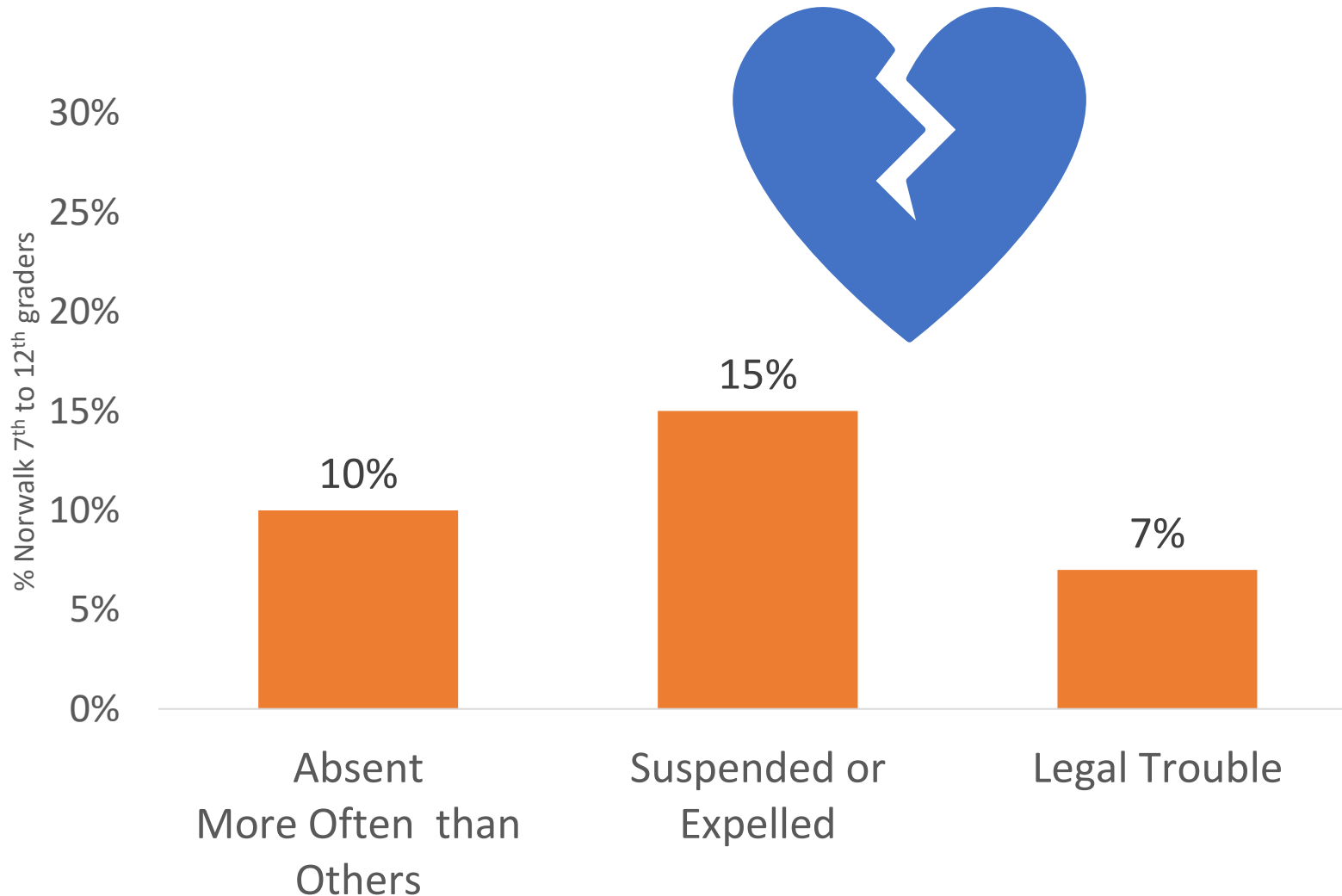
18% - School Bus

14% - Bathroom

13% - Walking to school\*

*\*Locations outside NPS purview*

# Disconnectedness among Norwalk Youth, 2024



Groups that are significantly more likely to:

- **Be frequently absent:** - Trans & Nonbinary, IEP, MLL
- **Be suspended/expelled:** Males, IEP, MLL
- **Report legal trouble:** Males, MLL

# Protective Factors:

- In Community
- At School
- View of Future



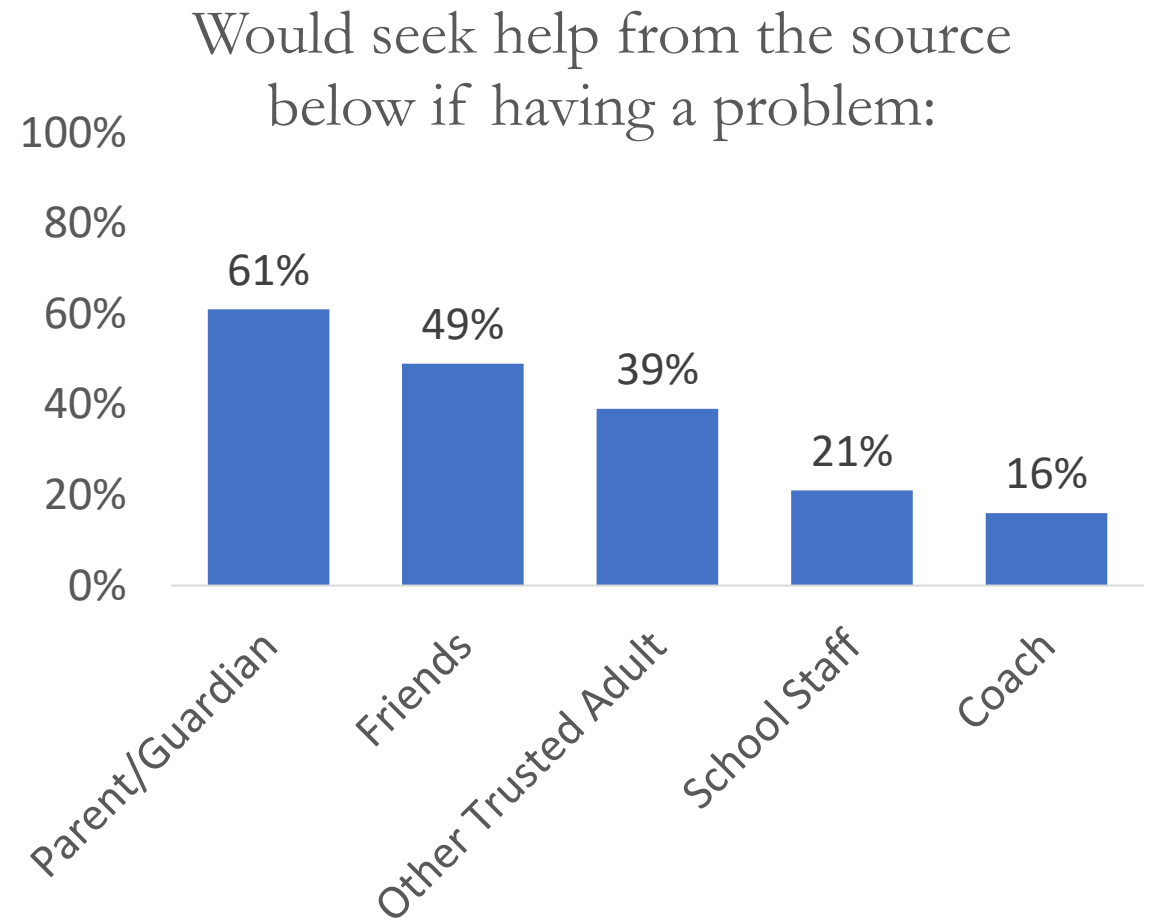
# Community Support among Norwalk Youth, 2024

- **88%** have at least 1 trusted adult to share thoughts & feelings with
- **84%** have a friend or peer to talk openly with
- **83%** feel safe in the community
- **80%** have needed support from adults in their life, outside school, to graduate

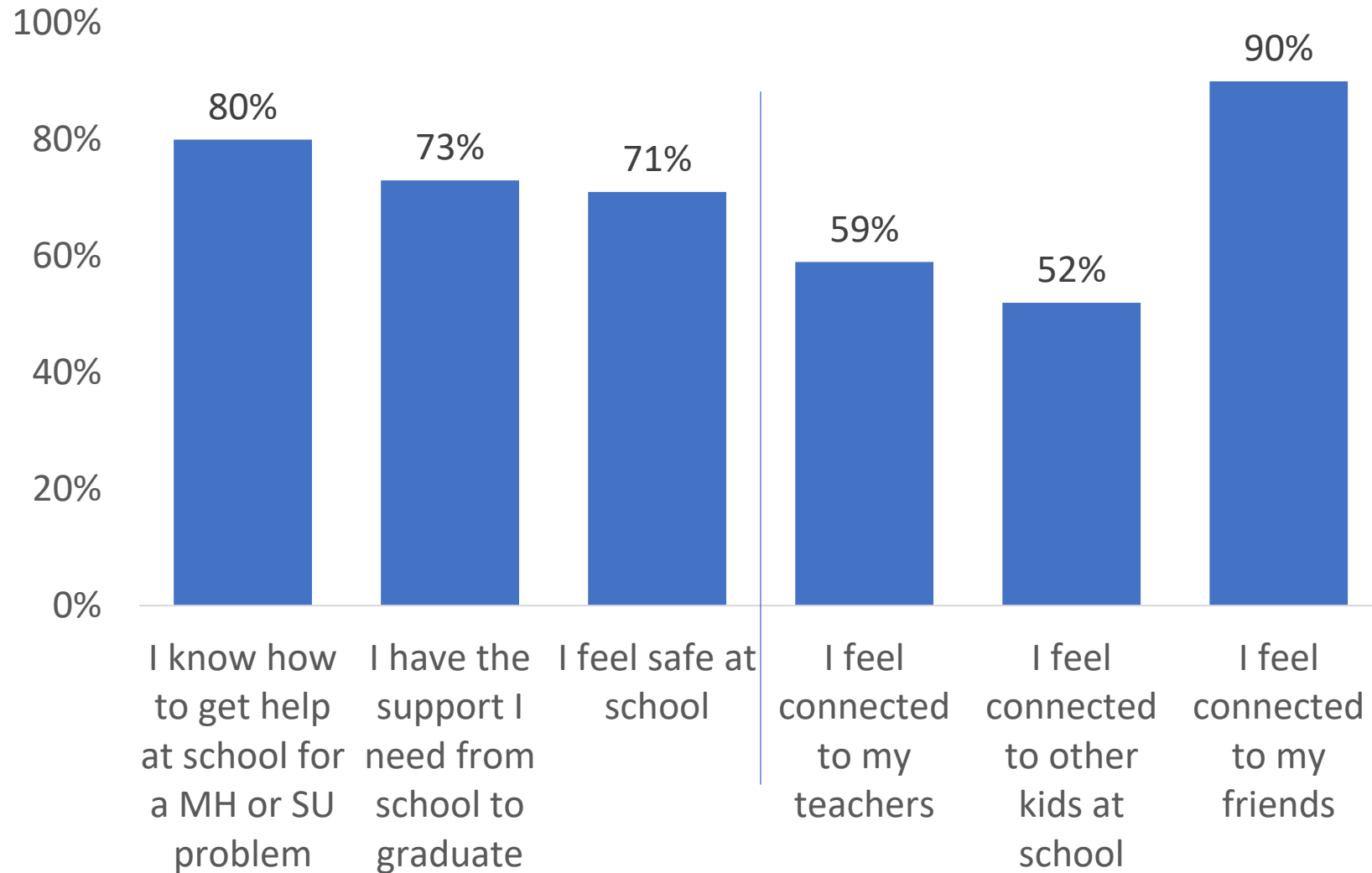
Feel safe in community decreased, esp. in MS.  
Seek help from school staff or coach increased.

Groups that are significantly less likely to:

- **Have a trusted adult:** LGBTQ, Hispanic and Black
- **Have a trusted peer:** LGBS, Hispanic
- **Feel safe in community:** Females, LGBTQ, MLL, Hispanic and Black
- **Have need adult support outside school:** LGBS, MLL



# School Supports among Norwalk Youth, 2024



Feel safe at school decreased from 74% in 2022. Feel connected to teachers increased from 56% in 2022.

The following groups report statistically significant lower levels:

- **LGBS youth** were less likely to feel connected to teachers and other peers, to know how to get help, and to feel safe at school.
- **Transgender, Nonbinary, or Unsure** youth were less likely to report feeling connected to friends and other peers at school and to have the school supports to graduate
- **IEP & MLL** youth were less likely to report feeling connected to friends
- **Females** were less likely to know how to get help and to feel safe.

# View of Future among Norwalk Youth, 2024

73%

I feel confident I will have a job and/or go to college or a trade school when I complete high school

64%

I feel my life is going in a positive direction

Groups that are significantly less likely to feel:

- **Life is moving in a positive direction:** LGBTQ, IEP
- **Confident I will have a job and/or go to school after HS:** Males, LGBS, IEP

# Pause for Discussion: lifestyle, risk factors, protective factors

Examples of TNP's response:

- Conduct biannual survey and share data throughout the community to shine a light on these issues
- Use our data to identify the most at-risk groups and advocate for / help provide support (e.g., LGBTQ awareness, support groups, Spanish-language supports)
- Teen Nights Out initiative to support youth connectedness and increase access to fun, safe, sober activities for high school students
- Videos (including teen-created videos for each HS) and resource guides that are regularly updated and disseminated to help youth and parents know where to get help.
- Day of Training initiative, developed by Social-Emotional Health (SEH) leadership team to provide semiannual conferences with multiple workshops to provide adults who work with youth with skills that directly relate to youth needs identified in our survey





# Behaviors:

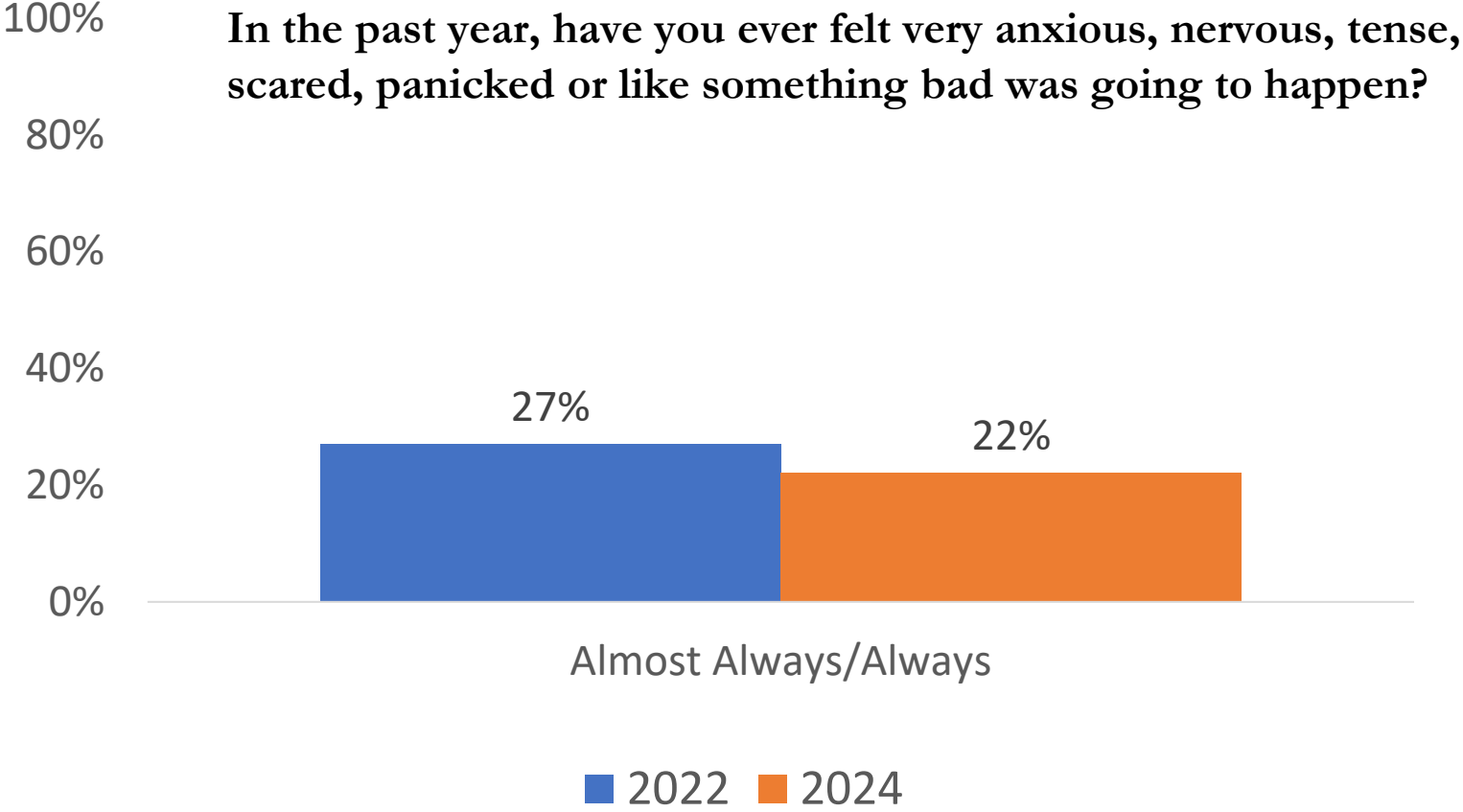
Mental Health, Substance Use, Sexual  
Activity, Technology, Gambling

## Mental Health:

- Anxiety
- Depression & Suicidality
- Other: Self-Harm, Disordered Eating, Loneliness



# Trend in Acute Anxiety in Norwalk Youth



Good news: In 2024, youth reporting “almost always or always” being anxious dropped by almost a quarter.

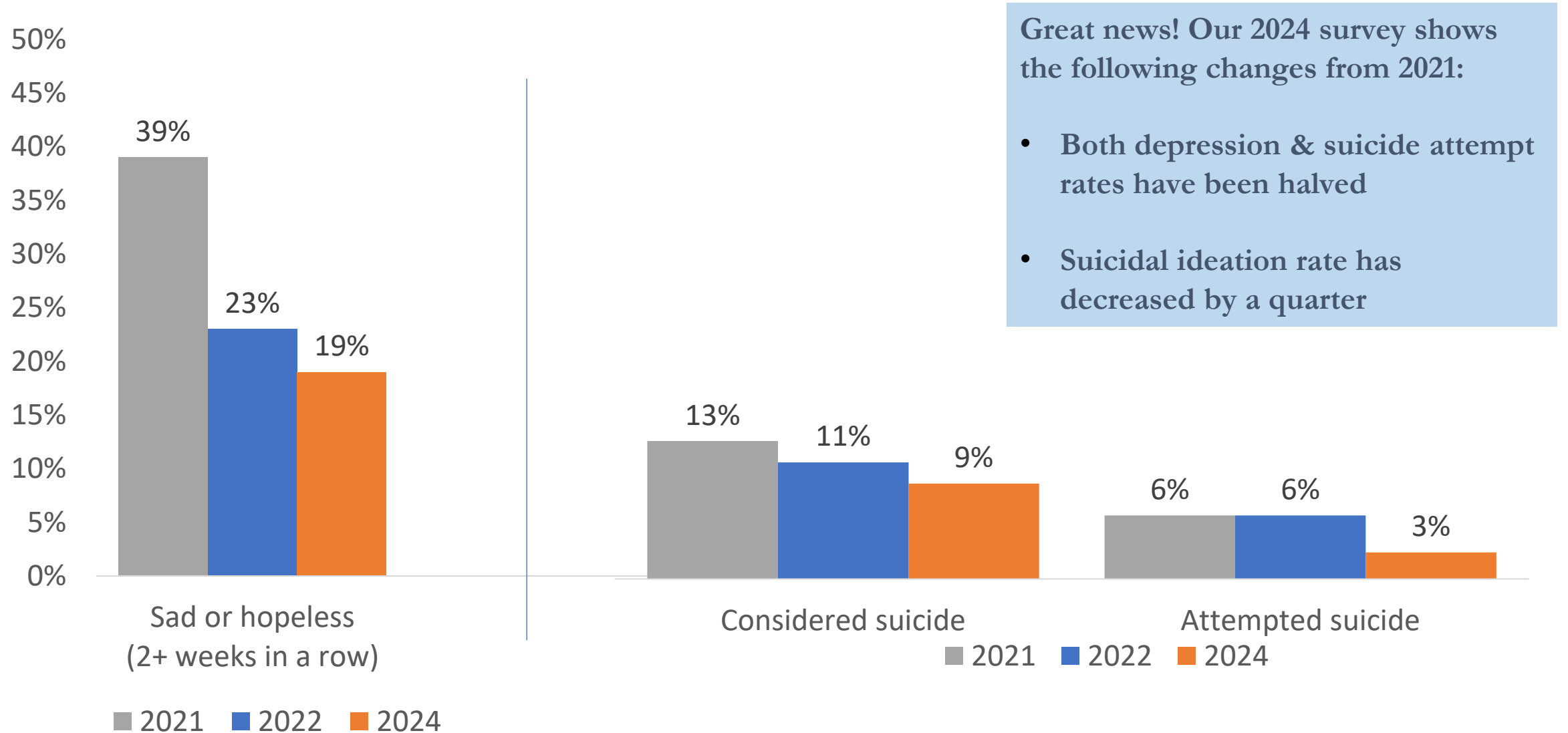
The following groups report statistically significant higher levels of Anxiety (Almost always/Always):

- Females
- LGBTQ

Top 3 sources of acute anxiety, in descending order:

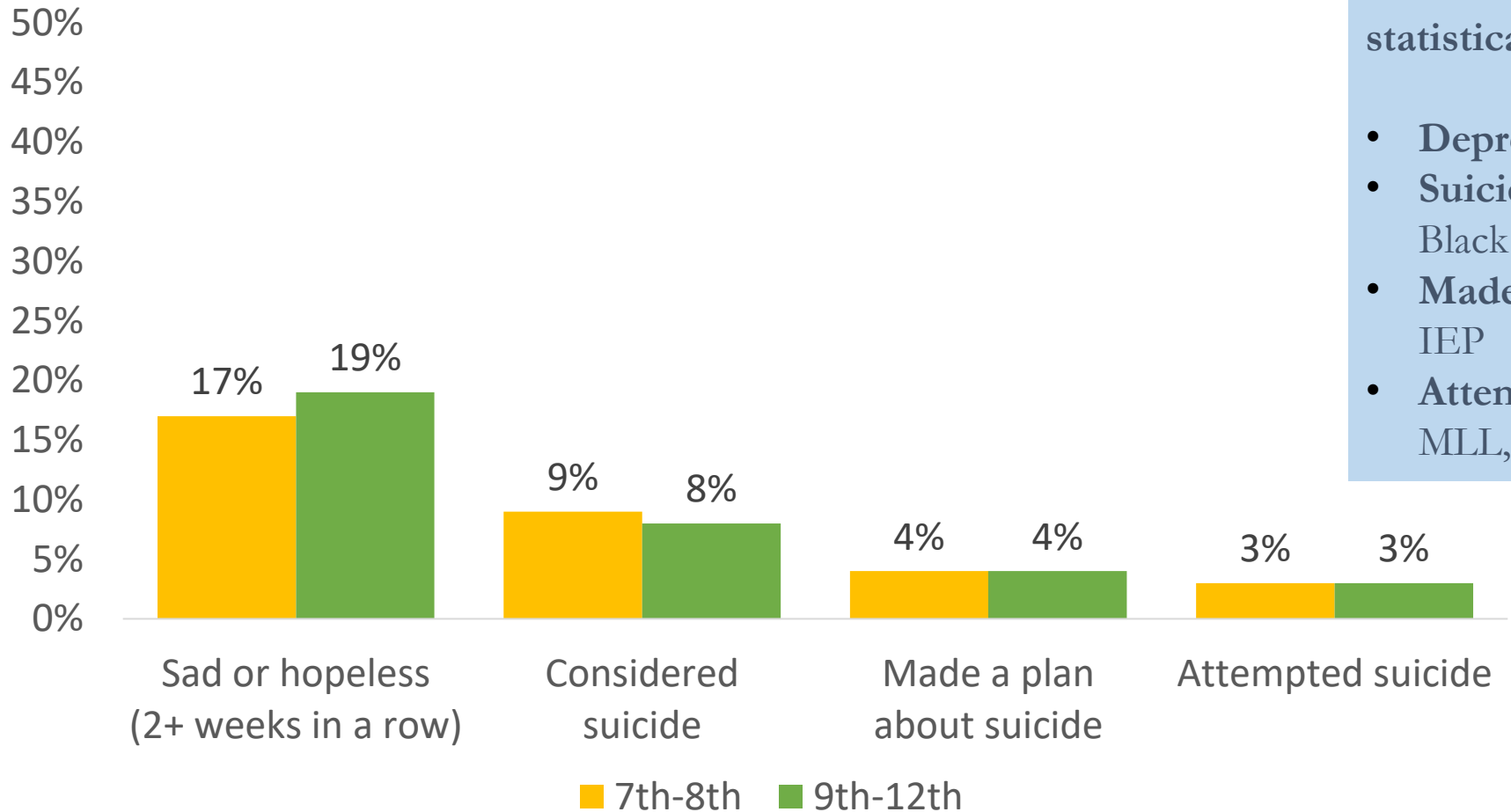
- In HS: academics, post-HS plans, schedule
- In MS: academics, post-HS plans *tied with* peers

# Trend in Depression & Suicidality in Norwalk Youth



# 2024 Rates of Depression and Suicidality in Norwalk Youth, Middle and High School

Past-Year Depression & Suicidality in Norwalk Youth

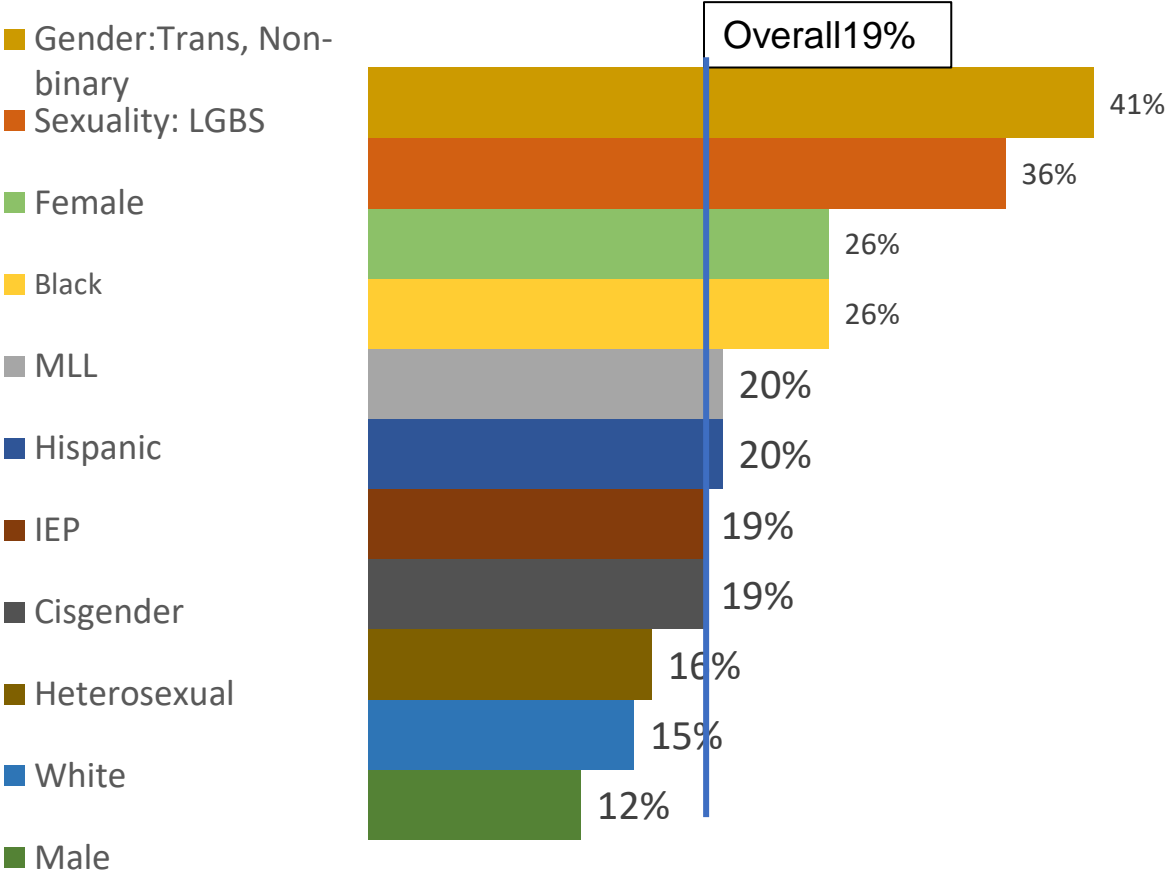


The following groups report statistically significant higher levels of:

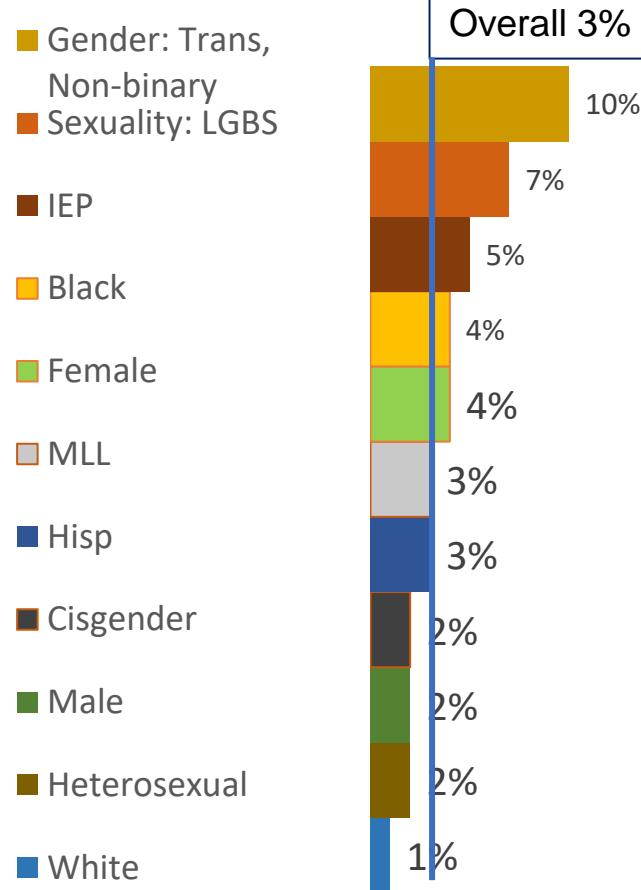
- **Depression:** Females, LGBTQ
- **Suicidal ideation:** Females, LGBTQ, Black
- **Made a plan:** Females, LGBS, Black, IEP
- **Attempted suicide:** Females, Black, MLL, IEP

# 2024 Rates of Depression and Suicide Attempt in Norwalk, by Demographic Group, HS Only

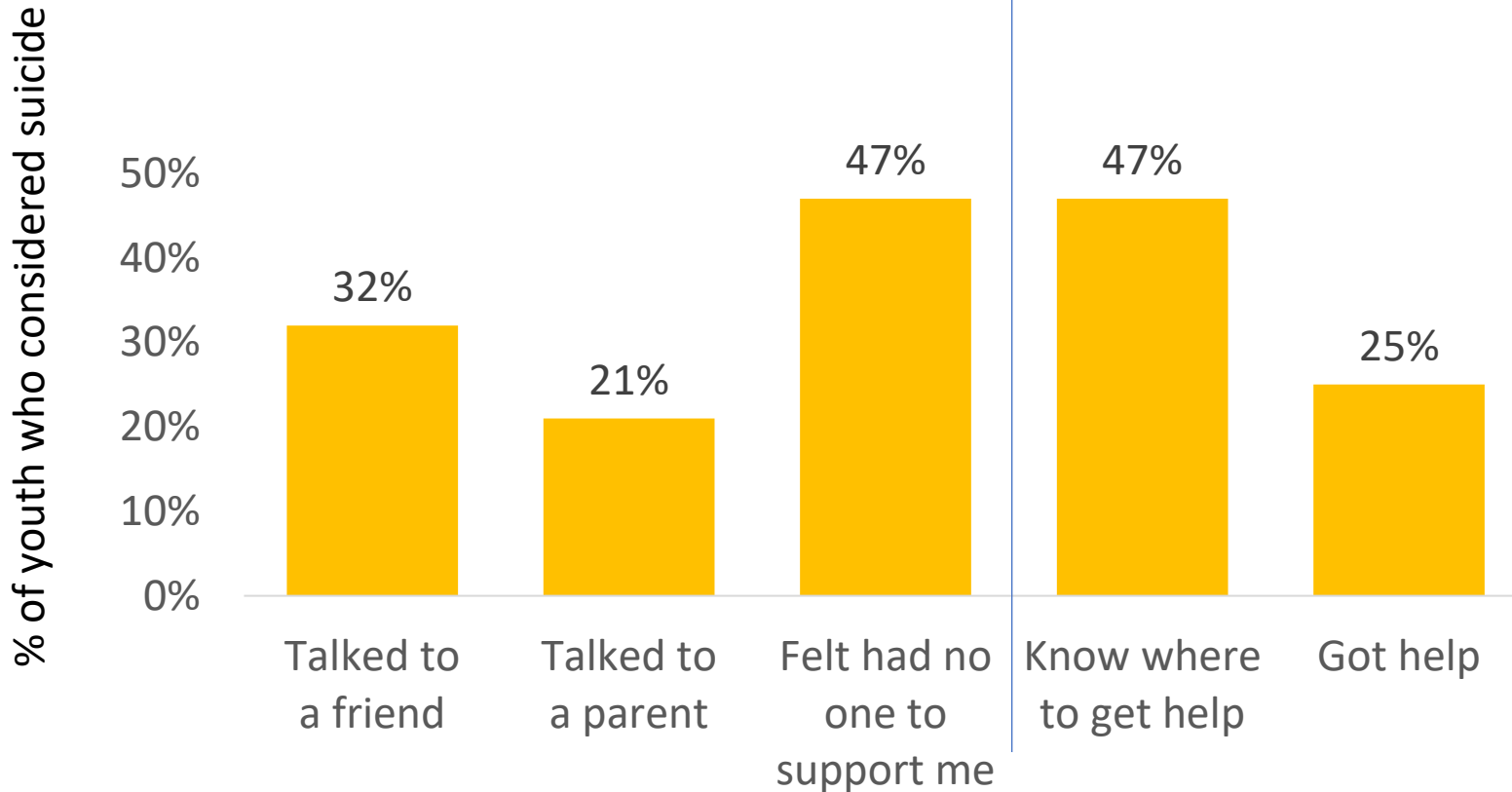
Self-Reported Depression  
(Persistent sadness / hopelessness)



Self-Reported Attempted Suicide



# Sources of Support for Norwalk Youth Reporting Suicidal Ideation, 2024

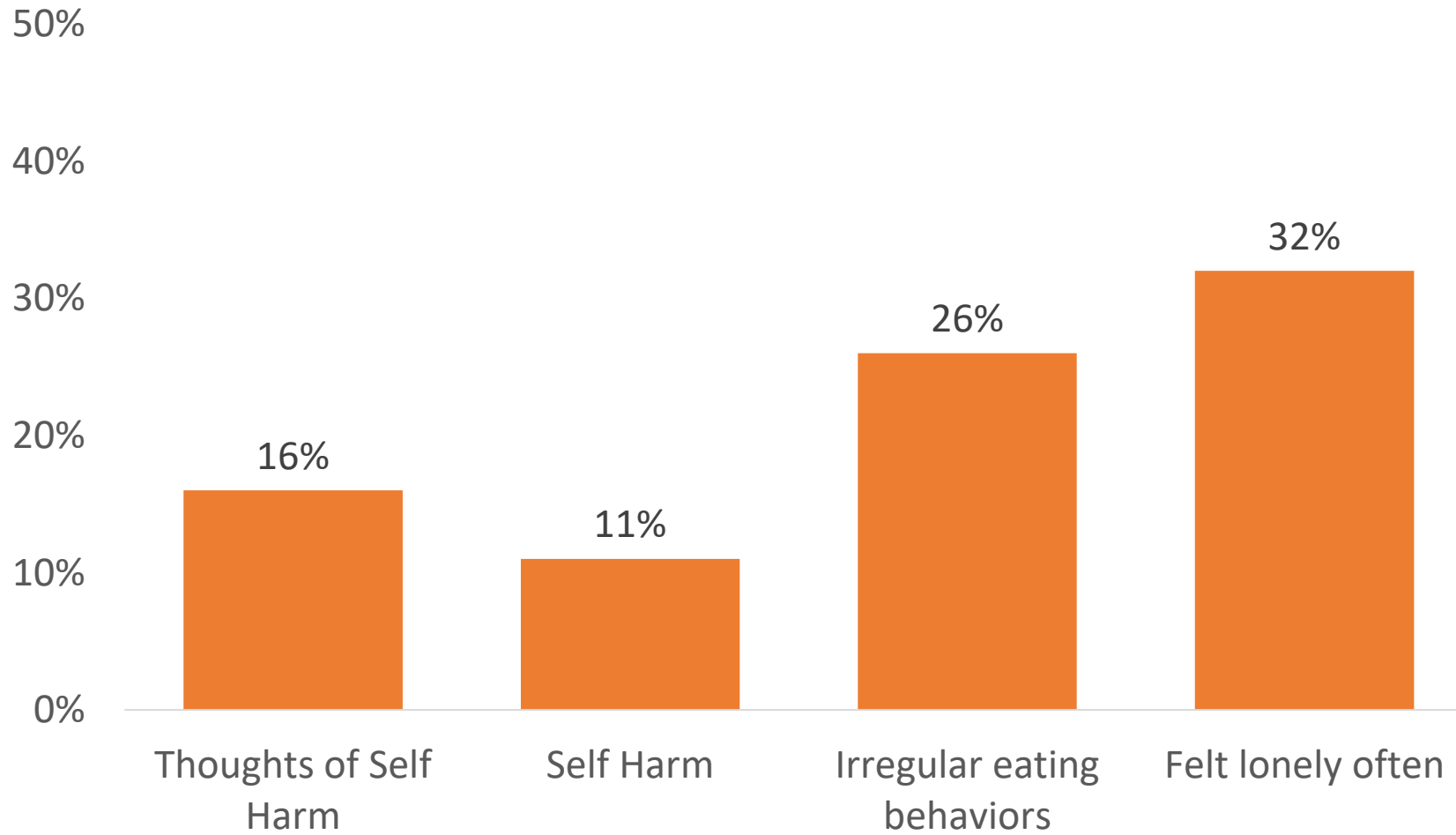


Just under half of suicidal youth know where to get help.

Significant differences between middle and high school students:

- **Knowing where to get help:** 35% of MS vs 55% HS
- **Getting help:** 21% MS vs 28% HS

# Other Emotional Health in Norwalk Youth in 2024



Loneliness is a new question. All other measures have improved since 2022.

The following groups report statistically significant higher levels of:

- **Irregular eating behaviors:** Females, LGBTQ, IEP, MLL
- **Thoughts of self-harm and of self-harm:** Females, LGBTQ, IEP
- **Lonely:** Females, LGBTQ



# Pause for Discussion: mental health

Examples of TNP's response:

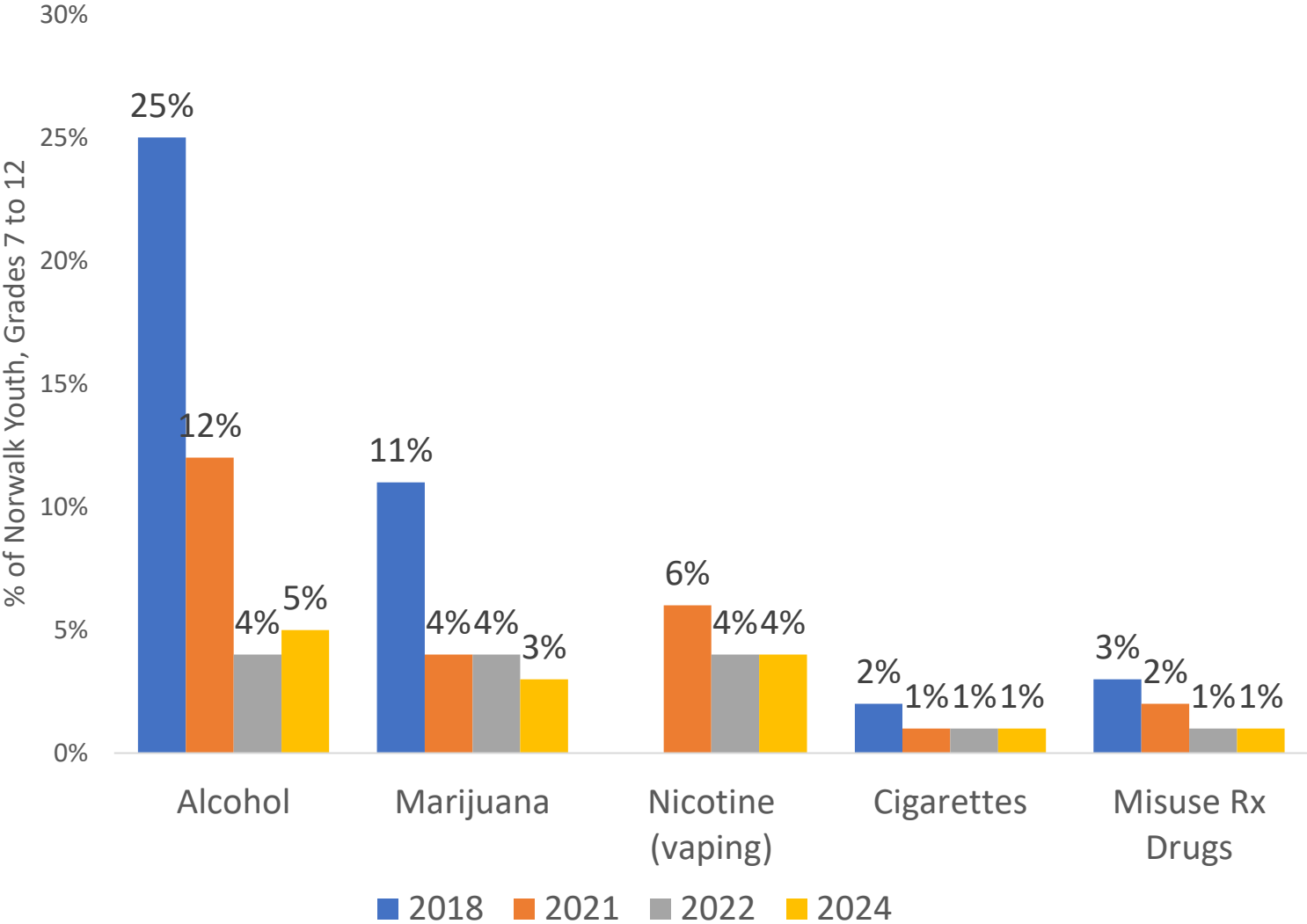
- Collaborative planning and leadership with Norwalk ACTS Social-Emotional Health (SEH) leadership team to ensure coordination of mental health and substance initiatives
- Raise awareness of resources (videos, resource guides, Freshman Forum)
- NorWALK for Mental Health: Walk + Wellness Fair, Wellness Fairs at high schools
- Question-Persuade-Refer suicide prevention trainings
- Day of Training for adults working with youth to receive training to support youth mental wellness

## Substance Use:

- Past-Month & Lifetime use
- Perceptions
- Reasons for non-use
- Access
- Location of use
- Role of family
- DUI behaviors



# Trend in Past-Month Substance Use among Norwalk Youth: 2018 to 2024



**Good news:** Substance use has stayed very low since COVID. The vast majority of youth are making the healthy choice to avoid substance use.

However, past-month reported alcohol use has increased by a quarter since 2022.

# Age of Initiation among Youth Substance Users in Norwalk, 2024

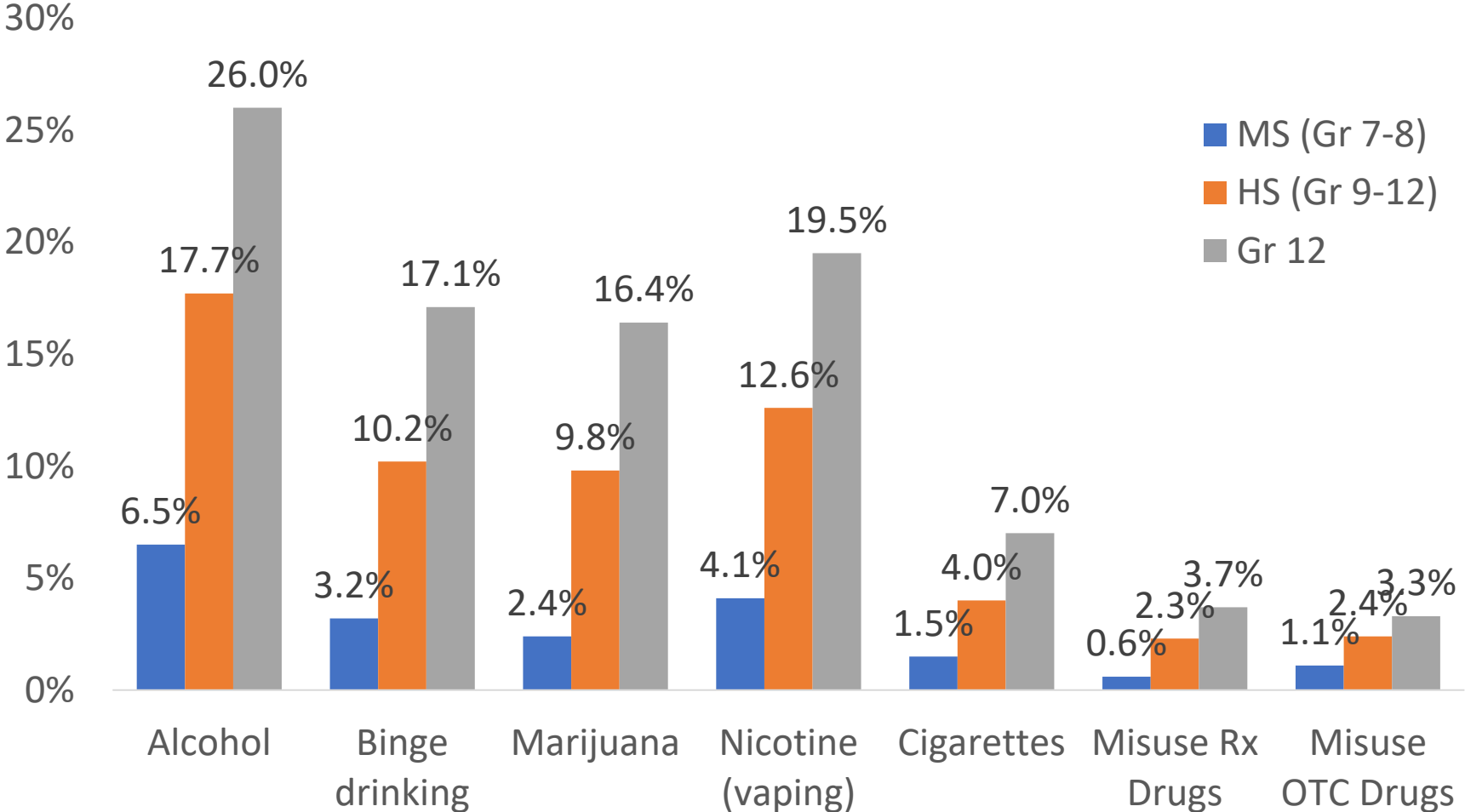
13

Average age at 1<sup>st</sup> use of alcohol or vapes

14

Average age at 1<sup>st</sup> use of marijuana

# Lifetime Substance Use among Norwalk Youth, 2024, by MS, HS, and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (lifetime=ever used)

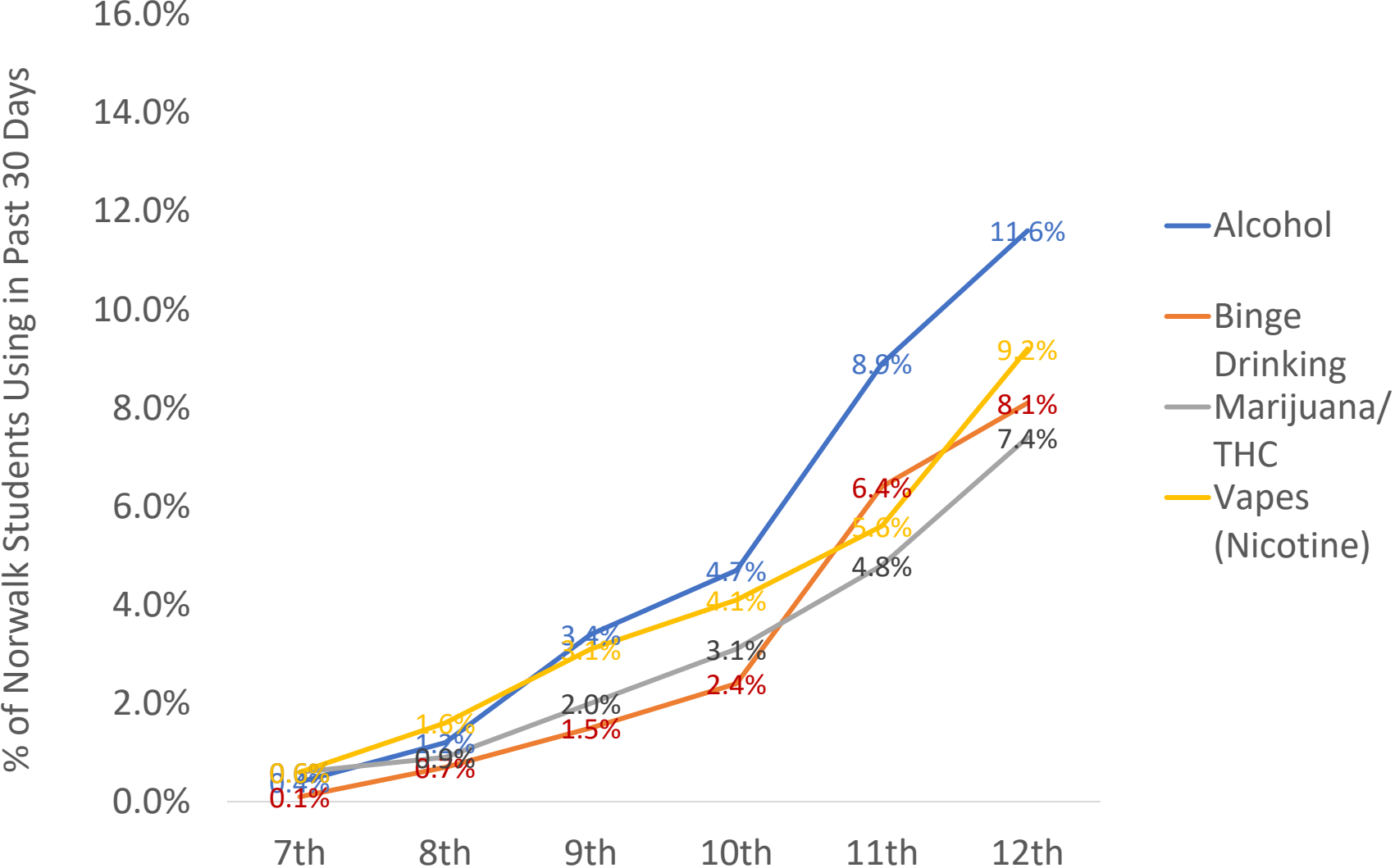


Compared with the overall 2022 rates for all grades, lifetime use of alcohol and vaping nicotine increased slightly in 2024.

**Statistically significant higher rates in 2024:**

- **LGBS:** Vaping & Marijuana Use
- **Trans, Non-Binary:** Binge Drinking and Cigarette Use
- **Hispanic:** Vaping, Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking
- **IEP:** Cigarette Use

# 2024 Rates of Past-Month Substance Use among Norwalk Youth, by Grade

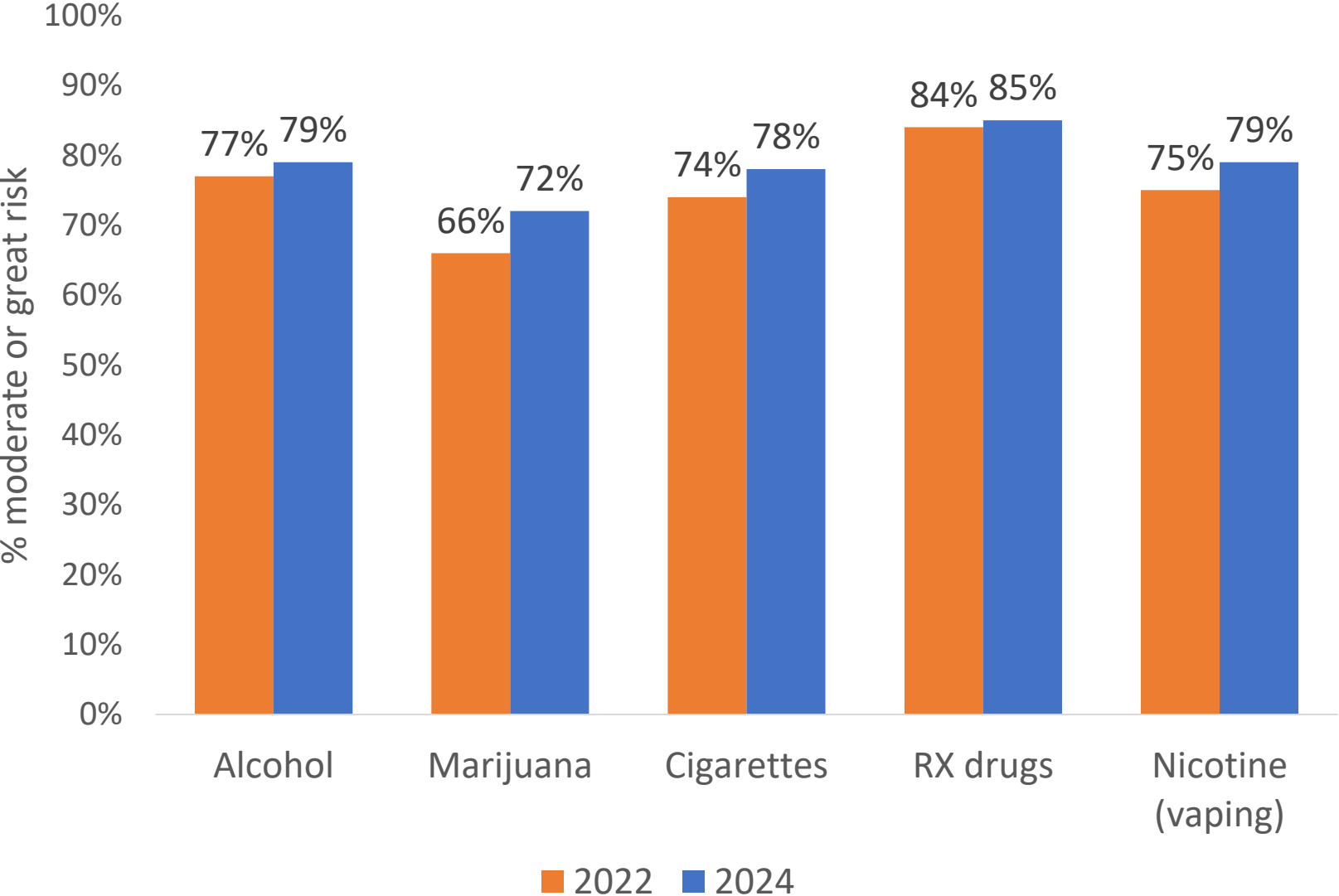


Alcohol remains the most-used substance, with 1 in 8 seniors reporting drinking in the past month.

**Statistically significant differences:**

- Use of alcohol, marijuana, vaping, and cigarettes is about twice as high among girls than boys.
- More boys report using oral nicotine pouches and tobacco than girls.

# Perception of Harm from Substance Use among Norwalk Youth, 2022 and 2024



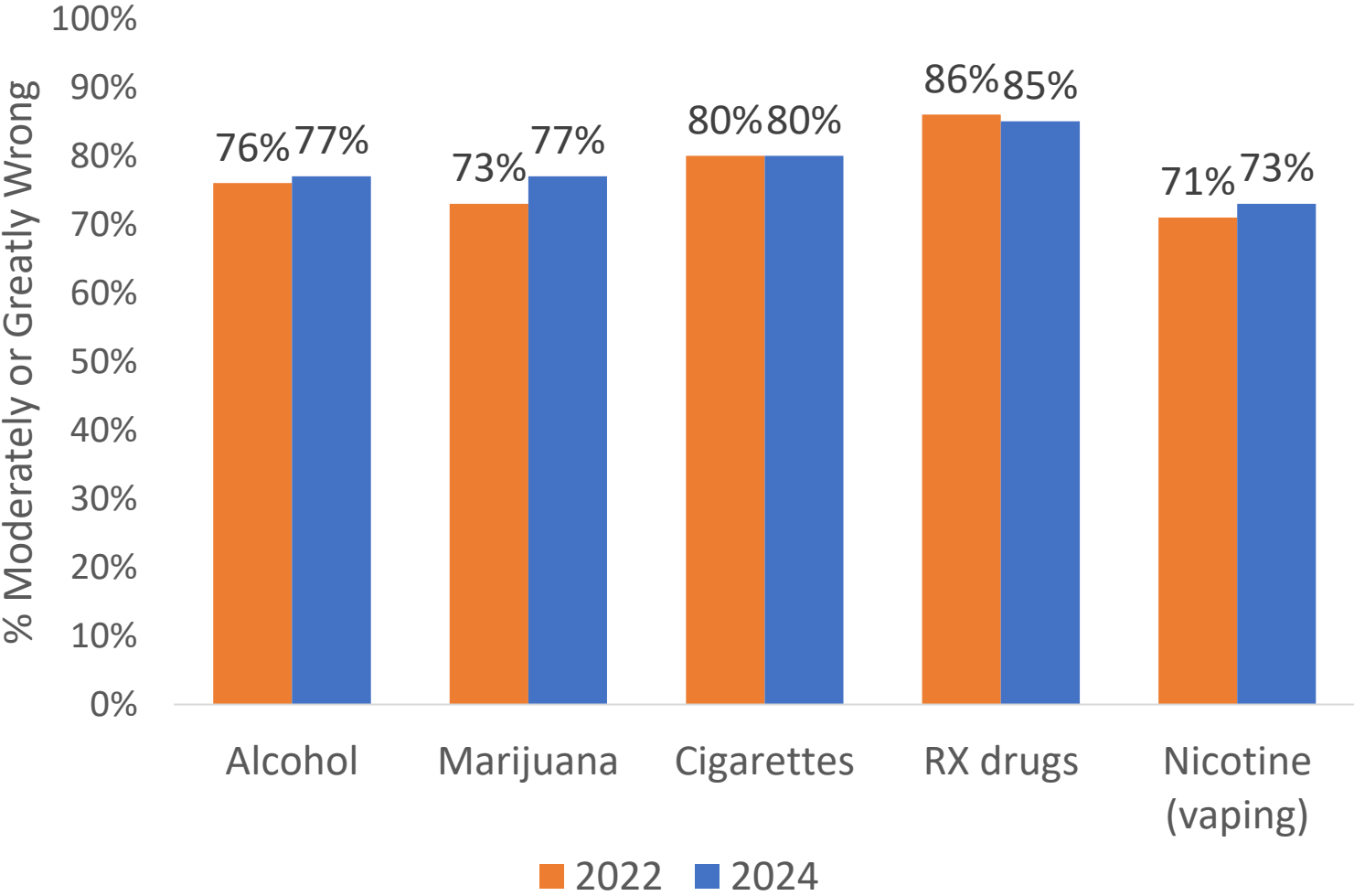
Good news! There has been an increase in youth awareness of risks for all substances, with the biggest increase related to marijuana use.

The majority of youth recognize the risks of different substances. However, about 1 in 5 youth still do not perceive harm.

Marijuana is seen as least harmful, and perception of harm decreases with age:

- 7<sup>th</sup> grade: 82% perceive marijuana as harmful
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade: 64% perceive marijuana as harmful

# Perception of Peer Disapproval of Substance use among Norwalk Youth, 2022 and 2024



Perception of peer disapproval is trending in the right direction around alcohol, marijuana and vaping.

Most Norwalk youth believe that their friends feel it would be wrong for them to use these substances.

However, anywhere from 1 in 4 to 1 in 5 youth do not feel their peers would disapprove.



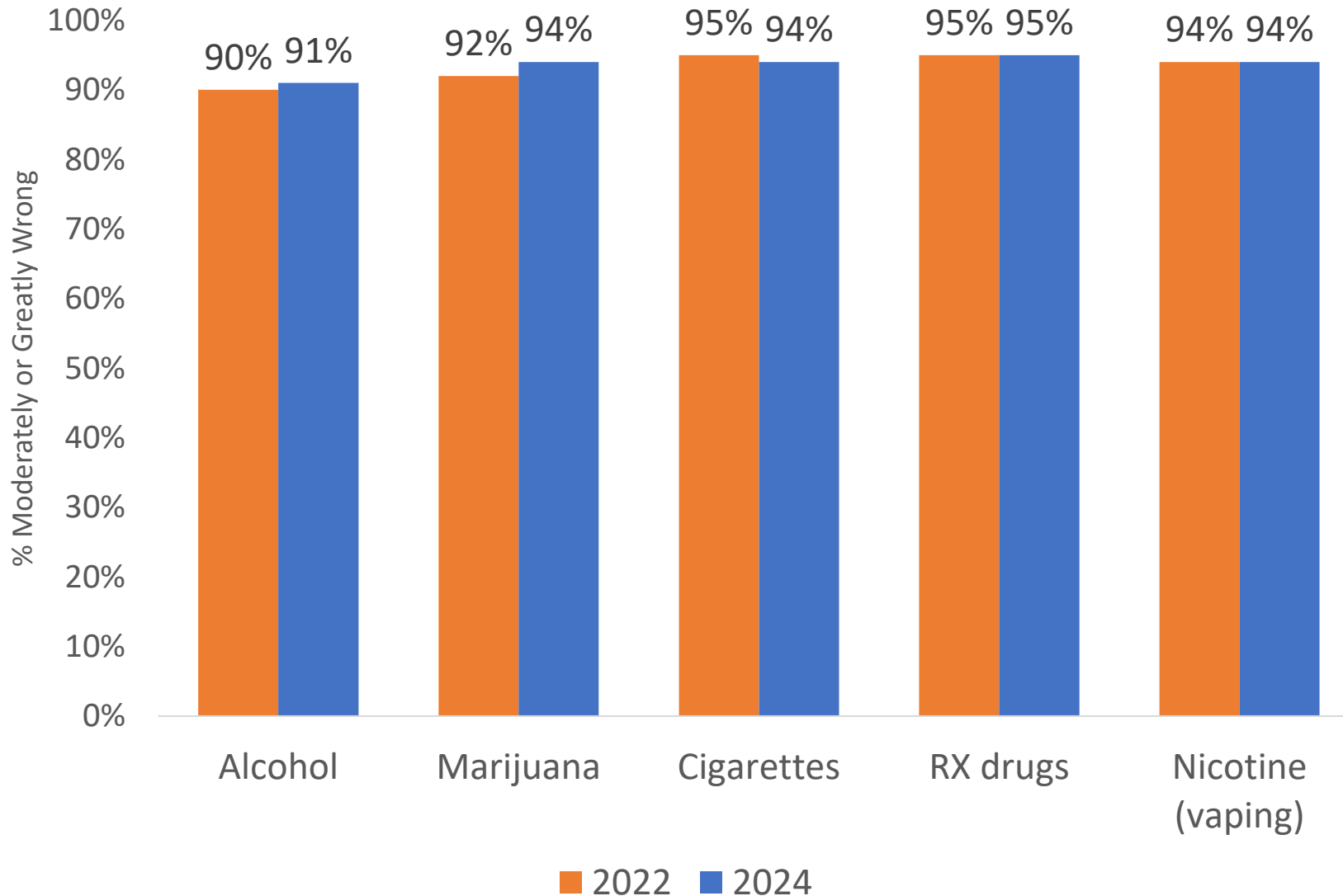
# Perception of Peer Substance Use among Norwalk Youth, 2024



There are many Norwalk youth who think substance use is more popular than it is:

- Many youth (43%) believe that “most” or “almost all” of their peers vaped in the past month. The actual number is only 4% across all middle and high schoolers.
- Some youth (29%) believe that “most” or “almost all” their peers drank in the past month. The actual number is only 5% of all middle and high schoolers.
- Some youth (27%) believe that “most” or “almost all” their peers used marijuana in the past month. The actual number is only 3% of all middle and high schoolers.

# Perceptions of Parent Disapproval Related to Substance Use in Norwalk Youth, 2022 and 2024



Good news! Perception of parental disapproval is trending in the right direction around alcohol and marijuana. Overall, parent disapproval rates around substance use are high! Research shows that youth who feel their parents disapprove of underage substance use are **much less likely** to engage in that behavior compared to their peers who do not feel their parents disapprove.

Lower rates of perception of parent disapproval around marijuana use are found among MLL, IEP & LGBTQ+

# Reasons for Not Using Substances Reported by High School Youth in Norwalk, 2024

Rank Order	Vapes with Nicotine	Marijuana/THC	Alcohol
1	<b>Physical health</b>	<b>Physical health</b>	Underage
2	<b>Don't want to lose control</b>	<b>Don't want to lose control</b>	<b>Physical health</b>
3	I don't approve	Underage	<b>Don't want to lose control</b>
4	Underage	I don't approve	School work
5	School work	School work	Fear of police consequences
6	Environmental impacts	Fear of parent consequences	I don't approve
7	Fear of parent consequences	Environmental impacts	Fear of parent consequences
8	Fear of school consequences	Fear of police consequences	Fear of school consequences
9	Fear of police consequences	Fear of school consequences	Environmental impacts
10	Friends don't approve	I don't know how to get it	Friends don't approve
11	I don't know how to get it	Friends don't approve	I don't know how to get it

All reasons above were cited by half or more of youth. 80%-82%% of youth identified physical health and 74%-78% of youth identified loss of control as top-3 reasons for non-use. The environmental impacts of vaping & THC were cited by 2/3 of youth.

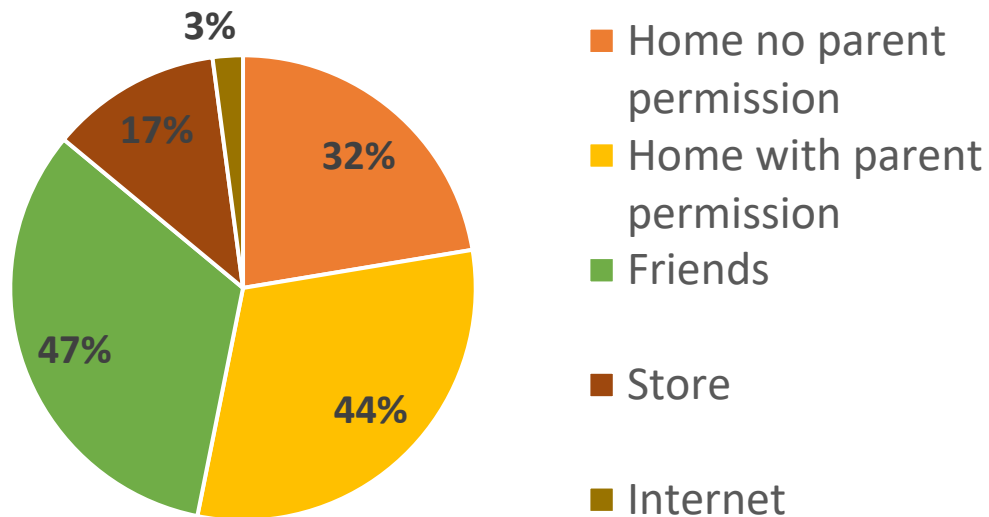
# Access to Substances Reported by Norwalk Youth, 2024

Percent of youth reporting substance as **very or sort of hard** to get:

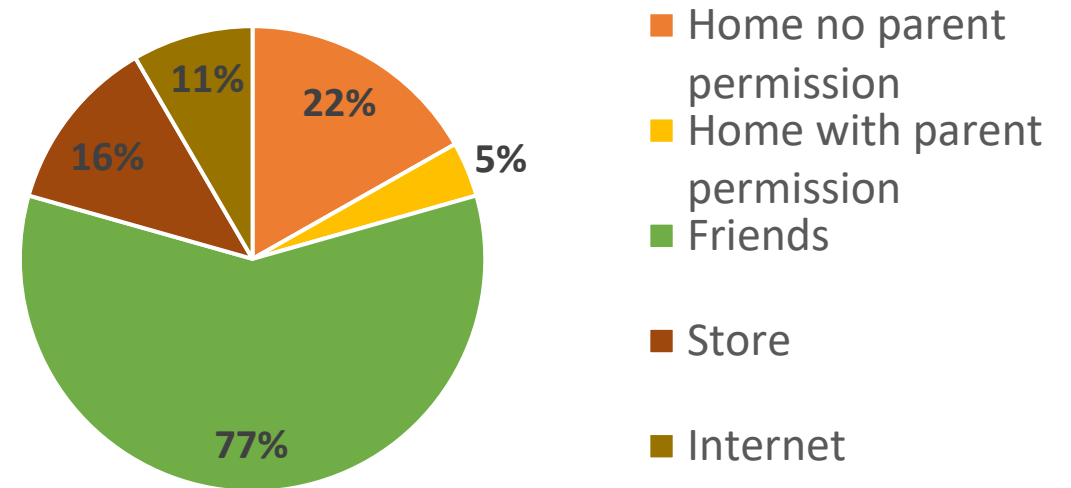
- 87% - Rx drugs for purpose of getting high
- 81% - tobacco
- 78% - marijuana
- 72% - nicotine vapes
- 68% - alcohol

Compared with 2022, there is a small decrease in youth reporting that it's hard to access alcohol.

Alcohol – Where acquired most often



Marijuana – Where acquired most often



# Location of Use of Substances Reported by Norwalk Youth, 2024

## Alcohol

- At a party – 48%
- At home with a parent/guardian present – 40%
- At home alone – 23%

## Marijuana

- With friends at someone's home – 60%
- Outside space (woods, park, beach) – 38%
- At home alone – 41%
- In a car – 23%

## Vaping nicotine

- With friends at someone's home – 56%
- At home alone – 49%
- At a party – 33%

# Driving & Riding Under the Influence among Norwalk Youth, 2024

In 2024, less than 1% of all juniors and seniors reported driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana in the past year. These rates represent a decrease from 2022.

Youth were more likely to report being the *passenger* of an underage driver under the influence of:

Alcohol – 3%

Marijuana – 2%

Rates have decreased from 2022.



# Pause for Discussion: substance misuse

Examples of TNP's response:

- Increase education and awareness among youth (TNP Teens clubs), parents (education programs, awareness campaigns e.g., Social Host Law), health teachers, community members – media campaigns, materials dissemination, presentations, trainings
- Substance and recovery counselor in both HS buildings
- NorWALK for Mental Health: Wellness Fair, Fresh Check Day at NCC, Red Ribbon Week, Open Choice nights at schools, National Night Out, No Vape November, Narcan trainings, drunk goggles, awareness tables at schools, HS assembly for middle schoolers, films like Screenagers Under the Influence, programs like Courageous Parenting 101, Today's Marijuana: What Families Should Know, Hidden in Plain Sight, etc.
- Environment & Enforcement Committee: Ensure restorative, supportive consequences for youth found using substances; Narcan distribution boxes in community
- Address access to substances (Liquor Stickers campaigns, smoke shops...)
- Legislative forum/advocacy to tighten laws

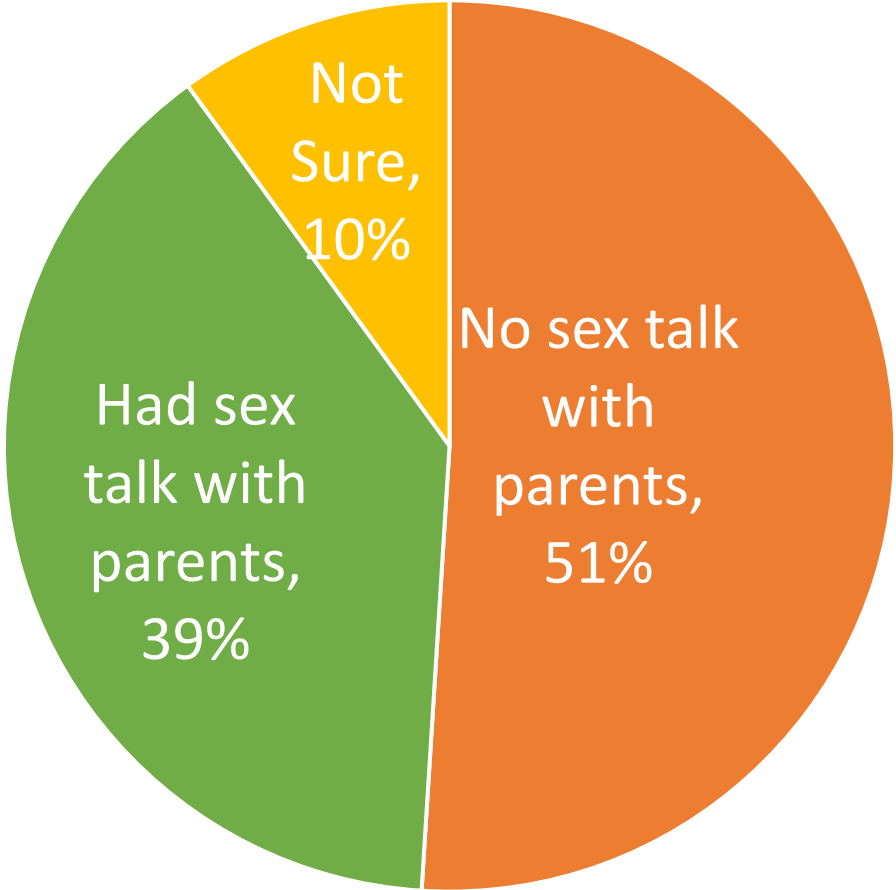
# Sexual Activity among HS Aged Youth





# Norwalk Youth Reporting Having Had Sex Talk with Parents, 2024

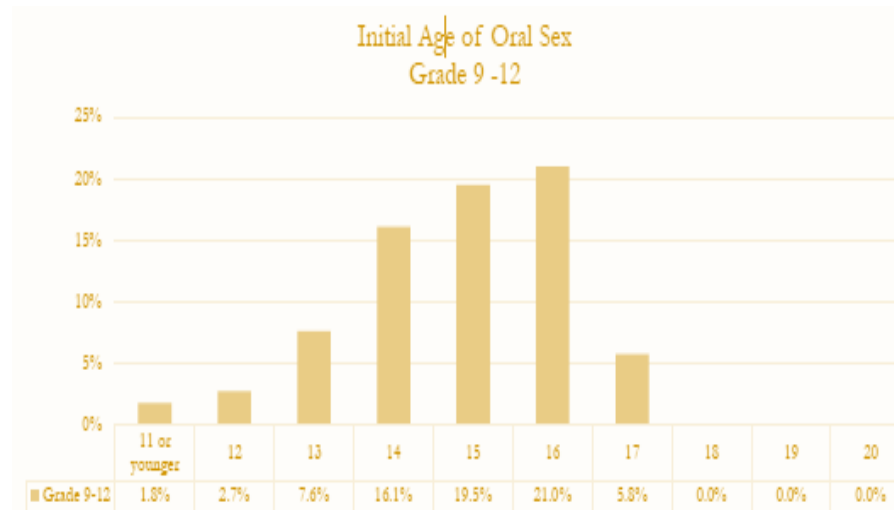
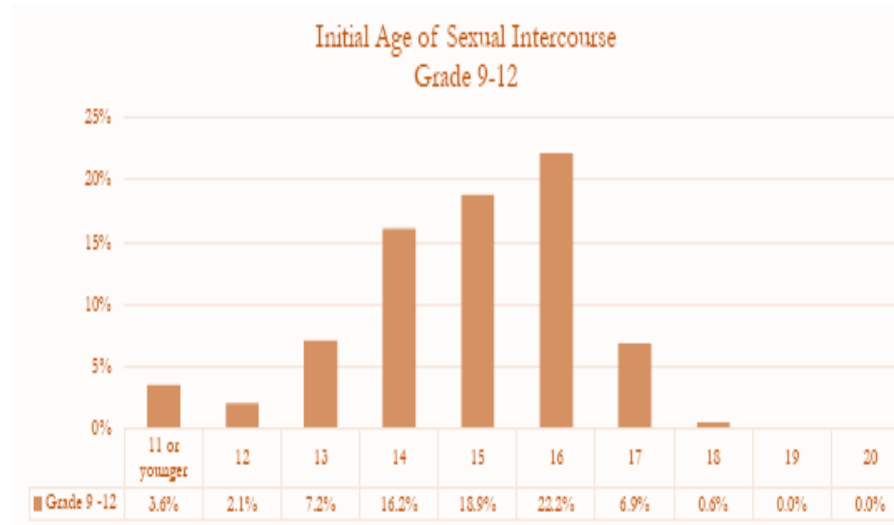
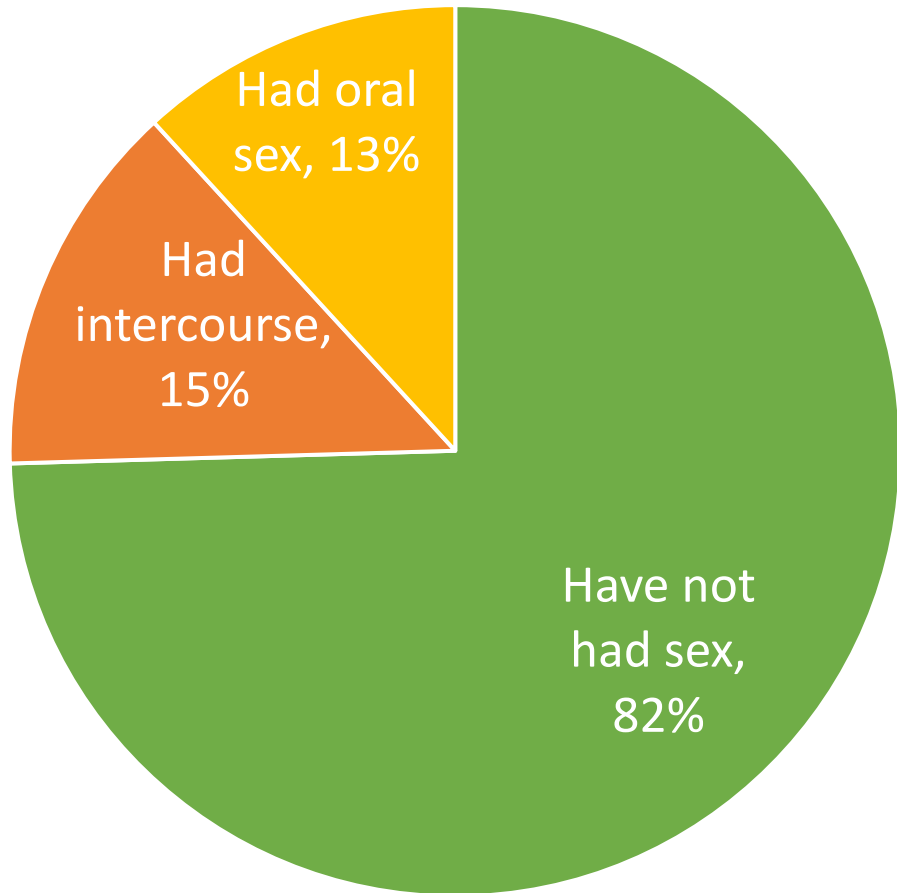
(Birth Control, Risks of STIs, Delaying Pregnancy)



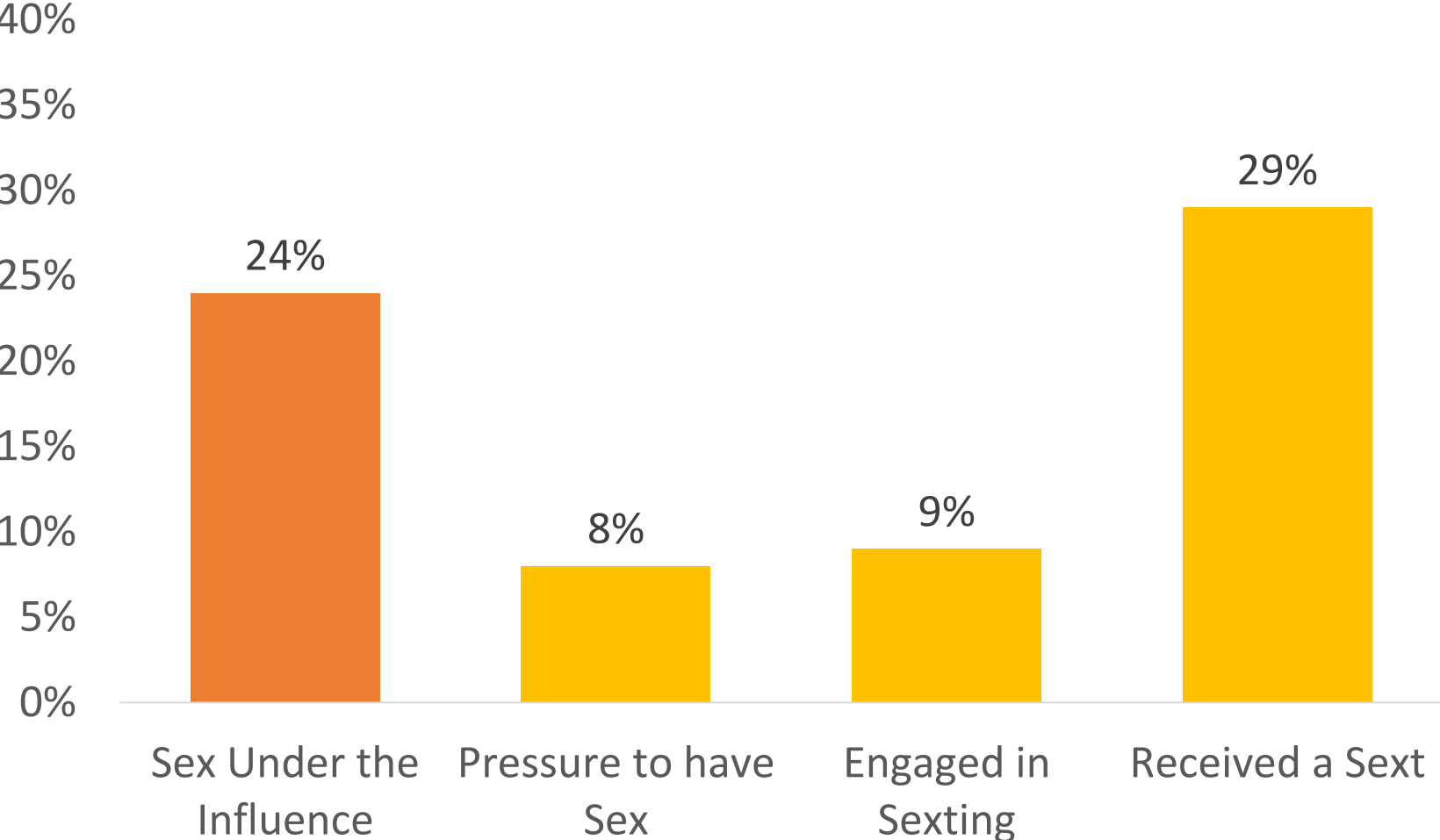
The following groups were statistically less likely to have talked with their guardian about sex, STIs, delaying pregnancy:

- Males
- Heterosexual youth
- Black and All Others

# HS Youth in Norwalk Reporting Having Had Sex, 2024



# Risky Sexual Behaviors among Norwalk Youth, 2024

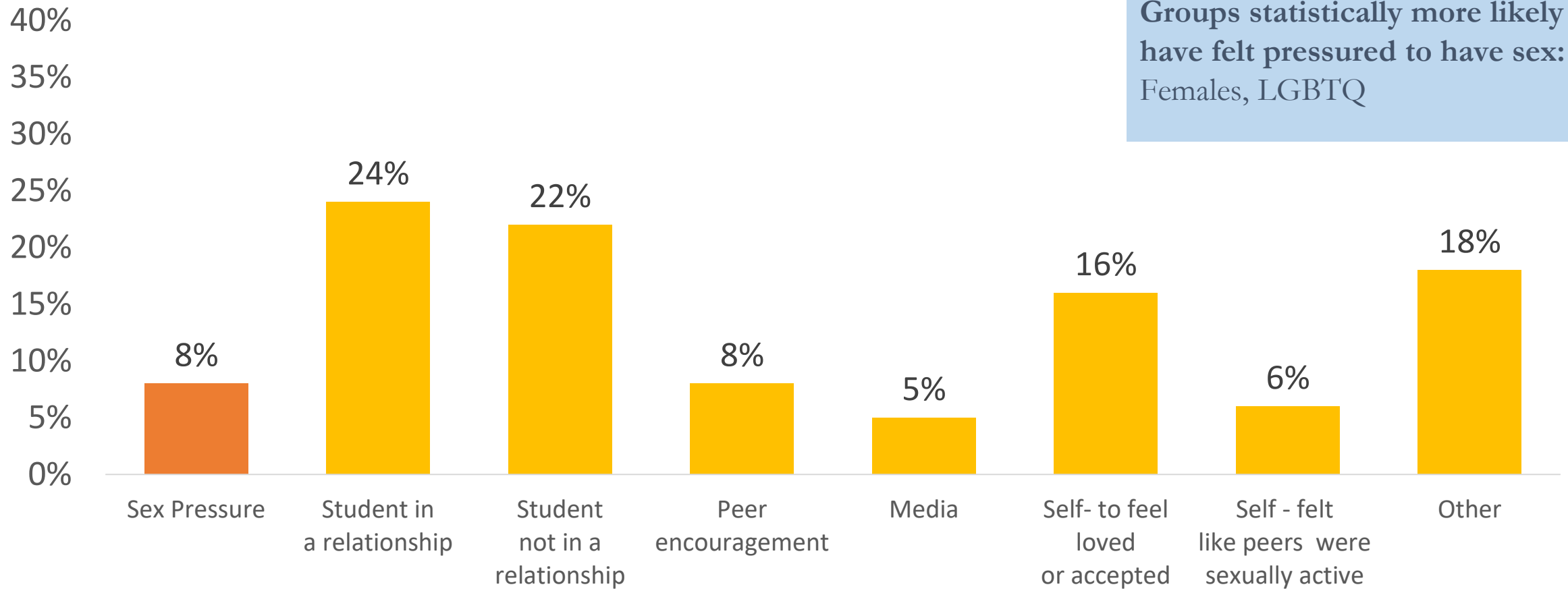


% of students reporting sexual activity

% of all high school respondents

- Groups statistically more likely to have engaged in risky sexual behaviors:
- **Felt pressured to have sex:** Females, LGBTQ
  - **Engaged in sexting:** Females, LGBTQ
  - **Received sext:** Females, LGBTQ

# Sources of Pressure for Sexual Behaviors among Norwalk Youth, 2024



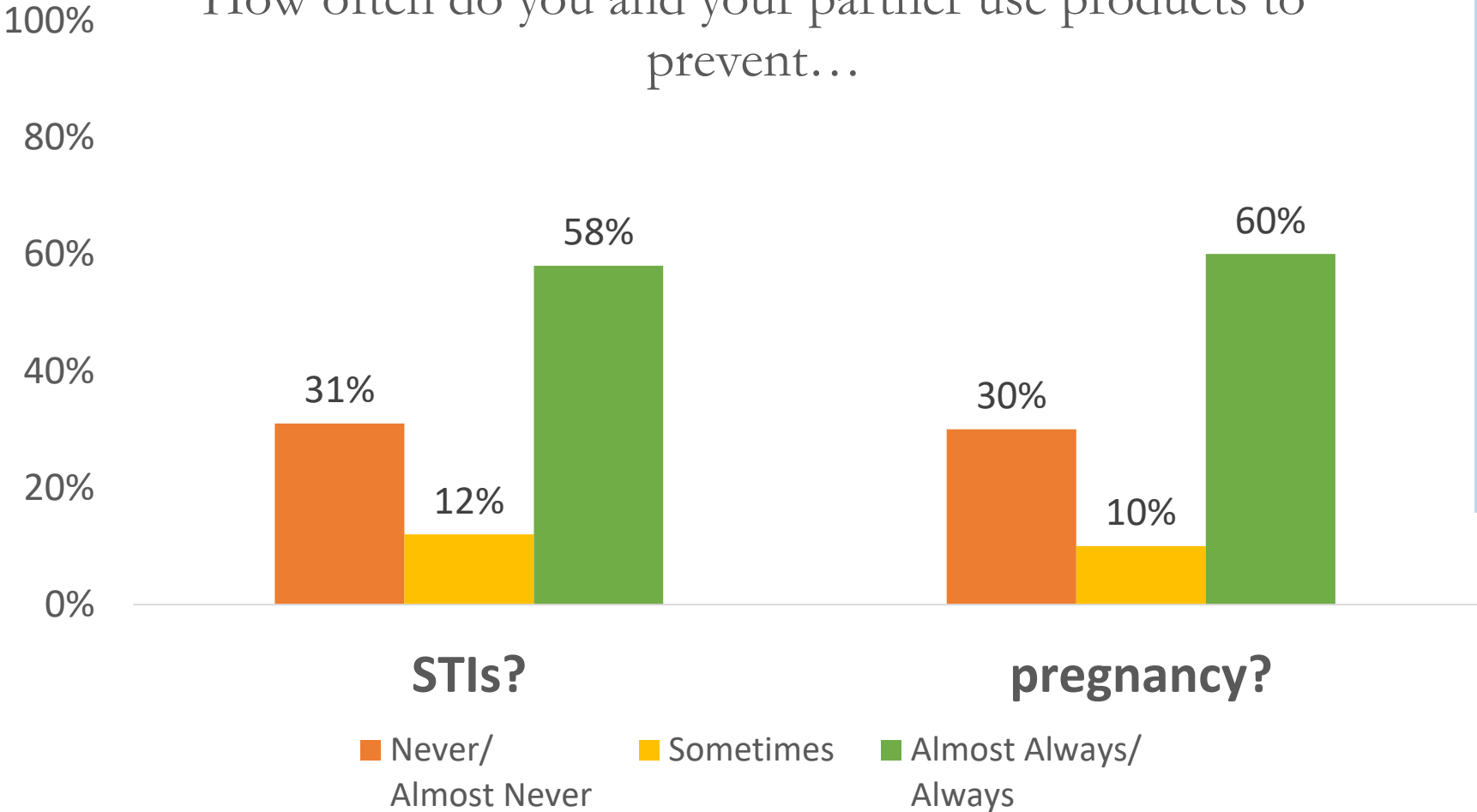
Groups statistically more likely to have felt pressured to have sex:  
Females, LGBTQ

% of all HS respondents

% of those who answered yes to sex pressure

# STI & Pregnancy Prevention among Sexually Active HS Youth in Norwalk, 2024

How often do you and your partner use products to prevent...



**Groups statistically more likely to have never used products to prevent**

**STIs:** Females, LGBS, Black and All Other Races/Ethnicities

**Pregnancy:** LGBS, Black and All Other Races/Ethnicities

# Barriers to Practicing Safer Sex Perceived by HS Youth in Norwalk, 2024, by Biological Sex



# Technology

- Age of Access, Daily Hours
- Personal Impacts from Social Media & Gaming
- Beliefs about Cellphones at School
- Personal Experiences with Cell Phones



# Technology Reported by Norwalk Youth, 2024: Age of Access & Daily Hours Spent



- 97% have their own smartphone
- 92% have a social media account

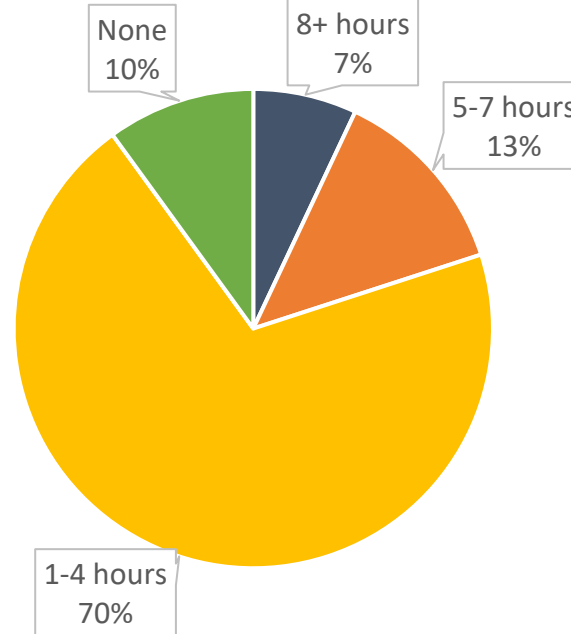
10.5

Median age of getting  
1<sup>st</sup> smartphone

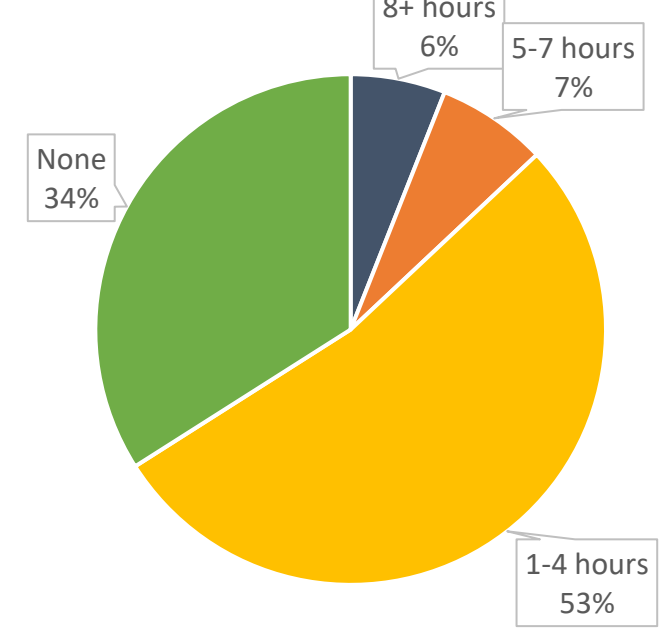
11.5

Median age of getting  
1<sup>st</sup> social media account

### Daily Hours on Social Media



### Daily Hours Gaming

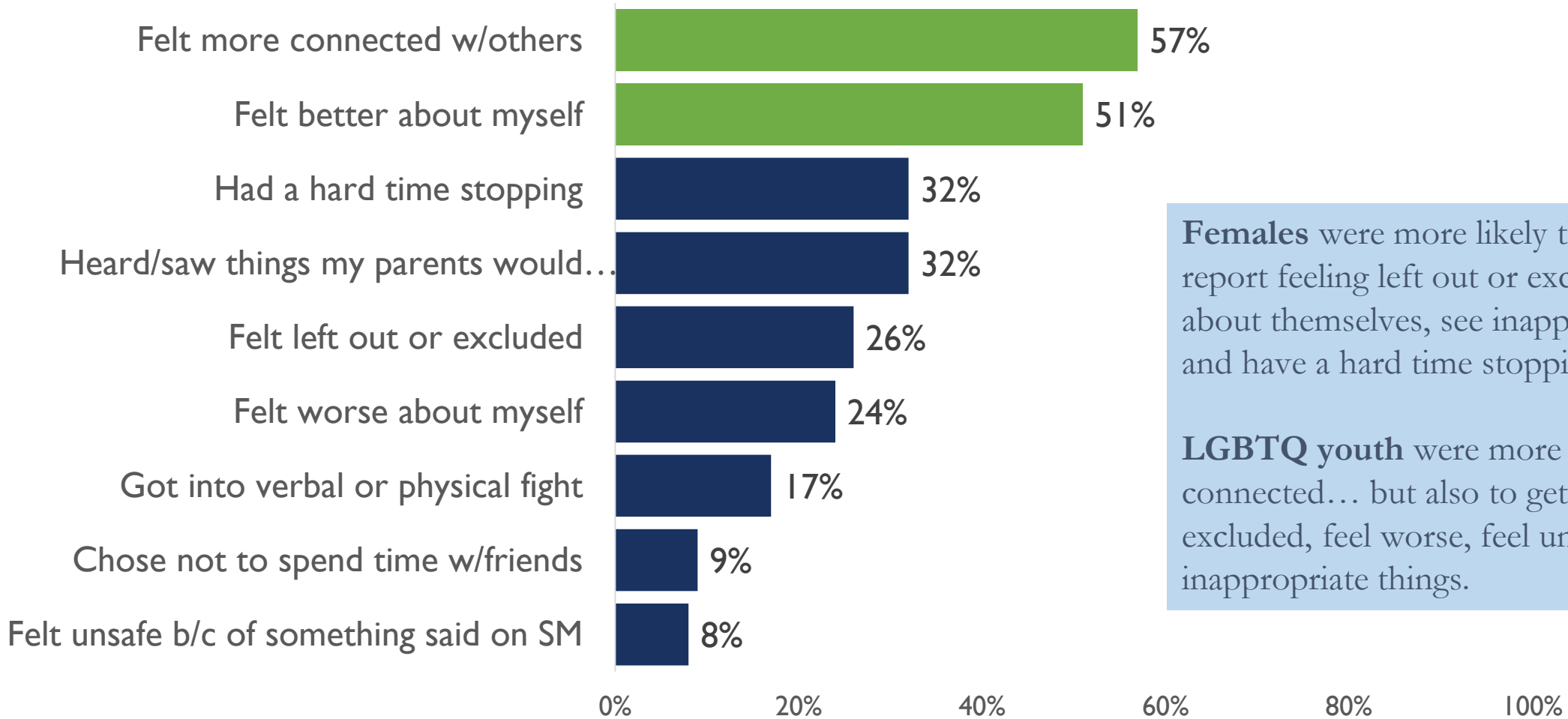


### Differences between MS and HS:

- 66% of MS vs 72% of HS spend 1-4 daily hours on social media
- 59% of MS vs 50% of HS spend 1-4 daily hours gaming



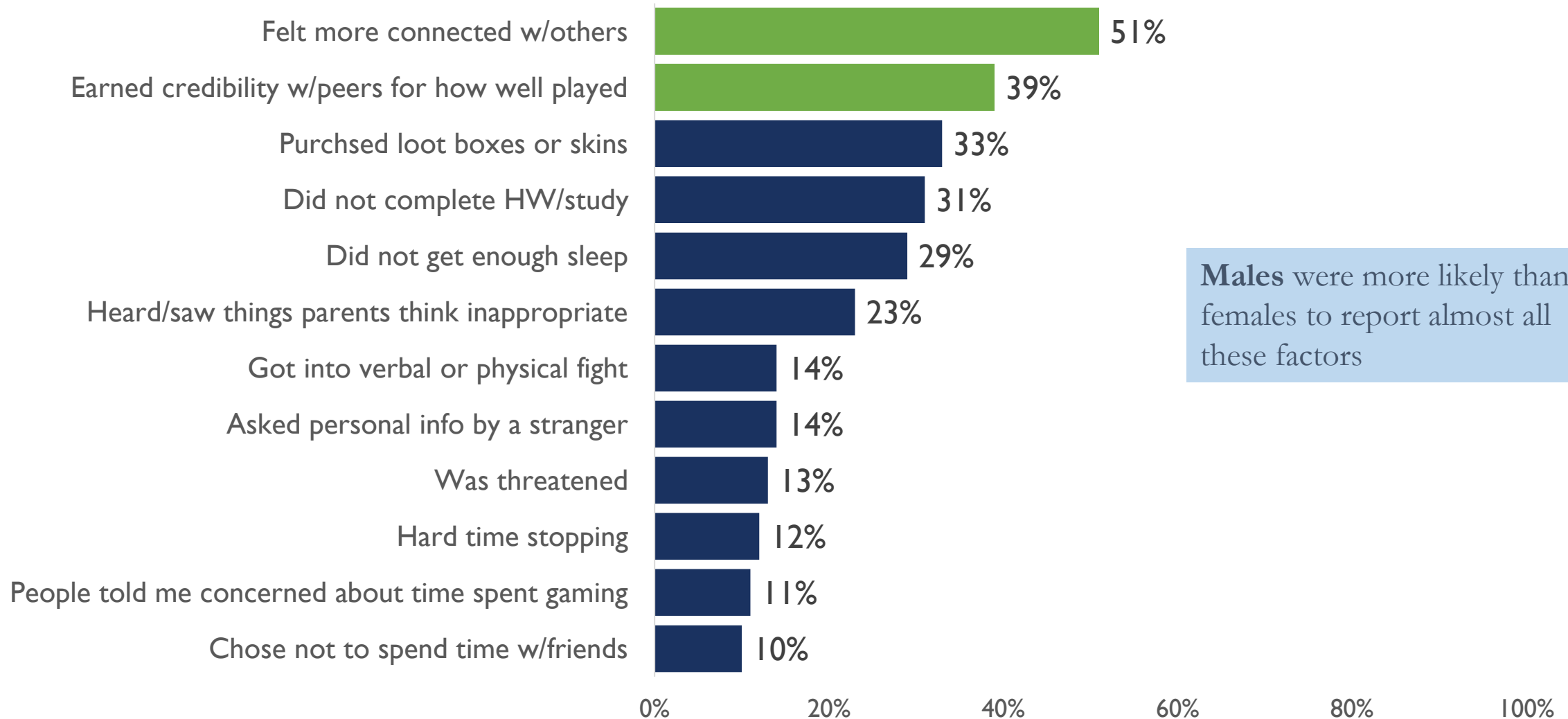
# Technology Use by Norwalk Youth, 2024: Personal Impacts from Social Media Use



**Females** were more likely than males to report feeling left out or excluded, feel worse about themselves, see inappropriate things, and have a hard time stopping.

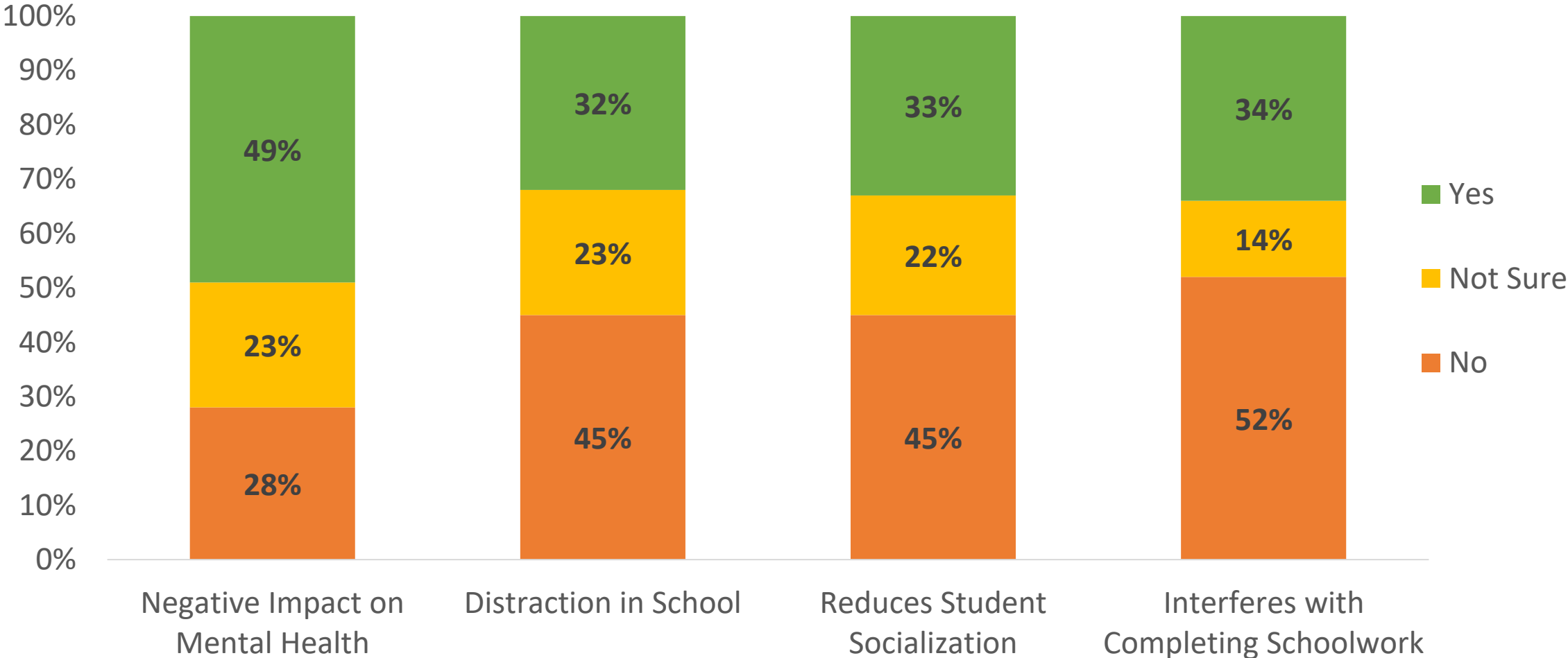
**LGBTQ youth** were more likely to feel *more* connected... but also to get into fights, feel excluded, feel worse, feel unsafe, and see inappropriate things.

# Technology Use by Norwalk Youth, 2024: Personal Impacts from Video Gaming

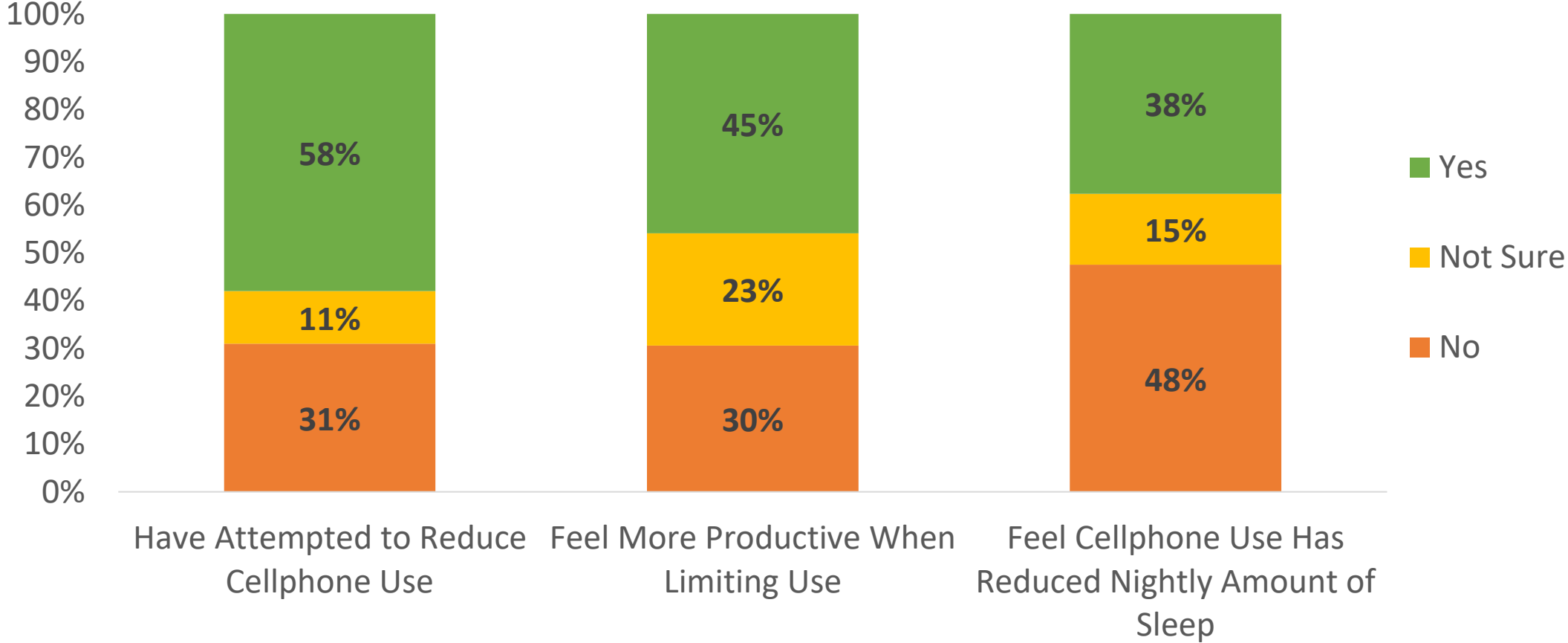


# Technology Use by Norwalk Youth, 2024:

## Beliefs about Impact of Cell Phone Use at School



# Technology Use by Norwalk Youth, 2024: Personal Experiences Related to Cell Phone Use





# Gambling, Behaviors & Perceptions among Norwalk Youth, 2024

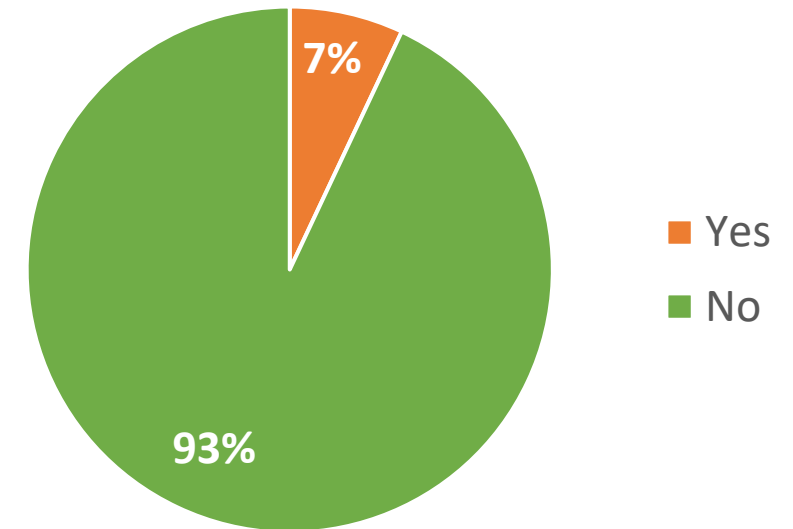
## Youth Gambling

- 2% of high schoolers reported gambling in the past month & 7% in their lifetime
- 2% of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported gambling in the past month & 5% in their lifetime
- Rates are higher among males and increase by grade level
- Average age of first-time gambling is **11.4** years old

## Problems Tied to Gambling (7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade)

- 10% of youth reported that someone in their family has gambled enough that it has created problems

% of 7th-12th graders who gambled in their lifetime



Reported rates from 2022 to 2024 have increased among MS and HS youth.

# Gambling, Behaviors & Perceptions, 2024

## Youth Perceptions of Gambling (7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade)

- 67% of youth reported that their family had **clear rules or expectations** discouraging them from gambling  
(67% in 2022)
- 71% of youth **perceive risk or harm** from gambling something of value once a week or more  
(69% in 2022)
- 88% perceive **parental disapproval** of gambling  
(88% in 2022)
- 70% perceive **peer disapproval** of gambling  
(73% in 2022)

Perceptions around gambling have changed very little from 2022 to 2024.

# Norwalk Youth Interest in Seeing the 2024 Survey Results

