



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH: FINDINGS FROM 2021 FAIRFAX COUNTY YOUTH SURVEY

Fairfax County Youth Survey

- Comprehensive
- Anonymous
- Voluntary



Behaviors



Experiences

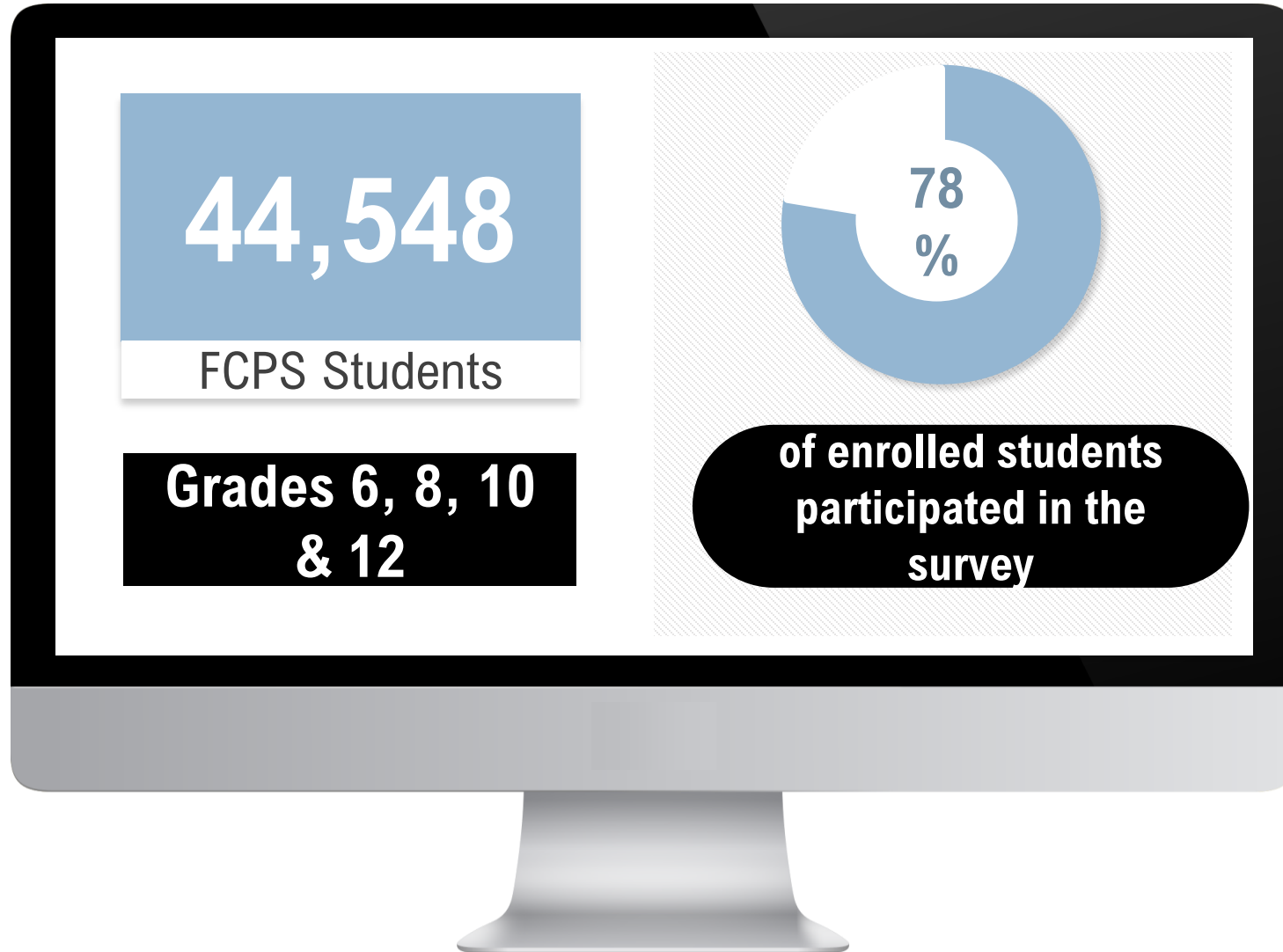


Risk and
Protective
Factors



Questions are based on the **Monitoring the Future Survey** (NIH) and **Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey** (CDC)

2021 Fairfax County Youth Survey Participation



Youth Survey was administered electronically this year



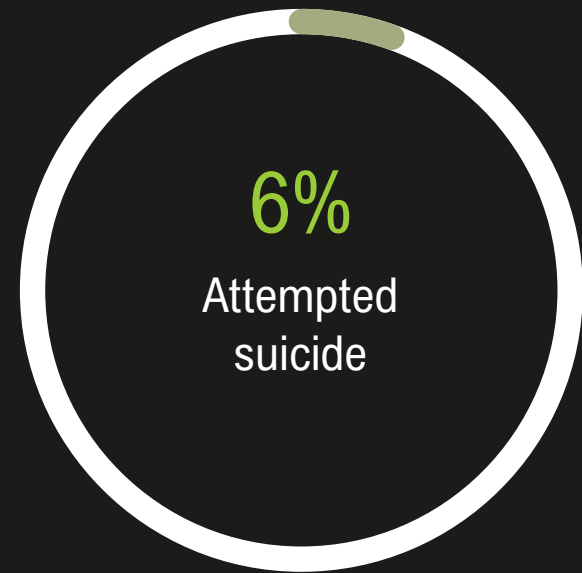
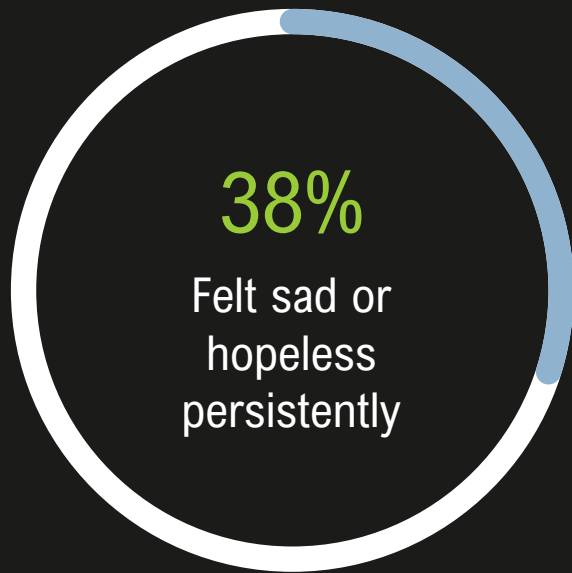
Youth Survey was available in the 8 official languages of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) for the first time this year





Mental Health Concerns Arise For Youth

Percent reporting past year mental health challenges by students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades

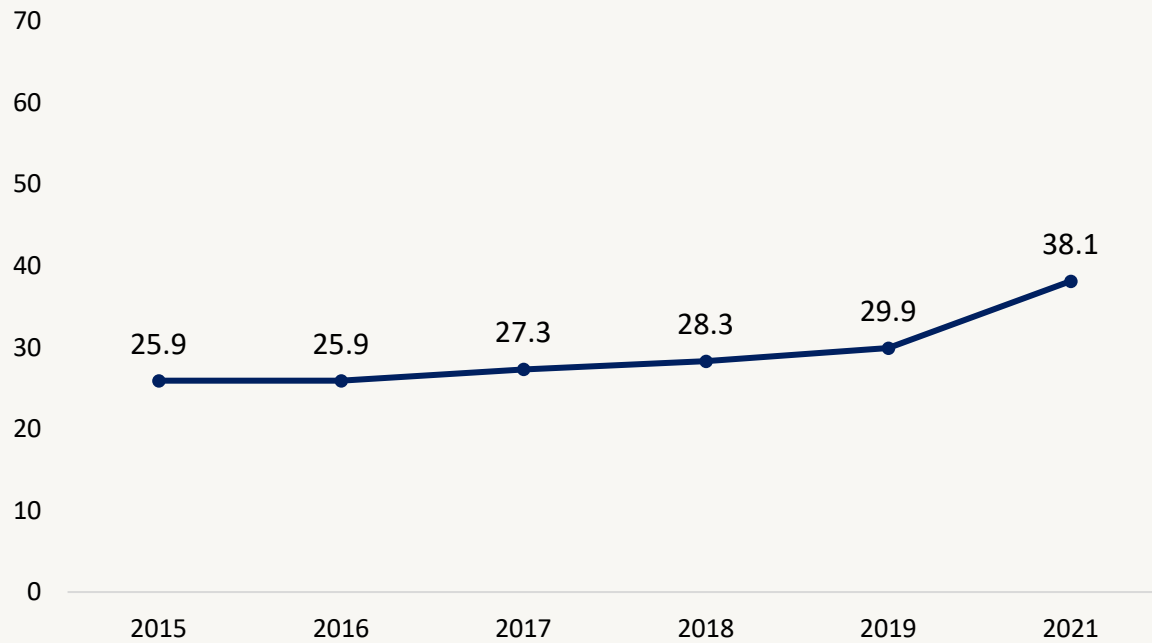


One in three (33%) 6th grade students reported feeling so sad or hopeless that they stopped engaging in regular activity for two or more weeks in the past year.

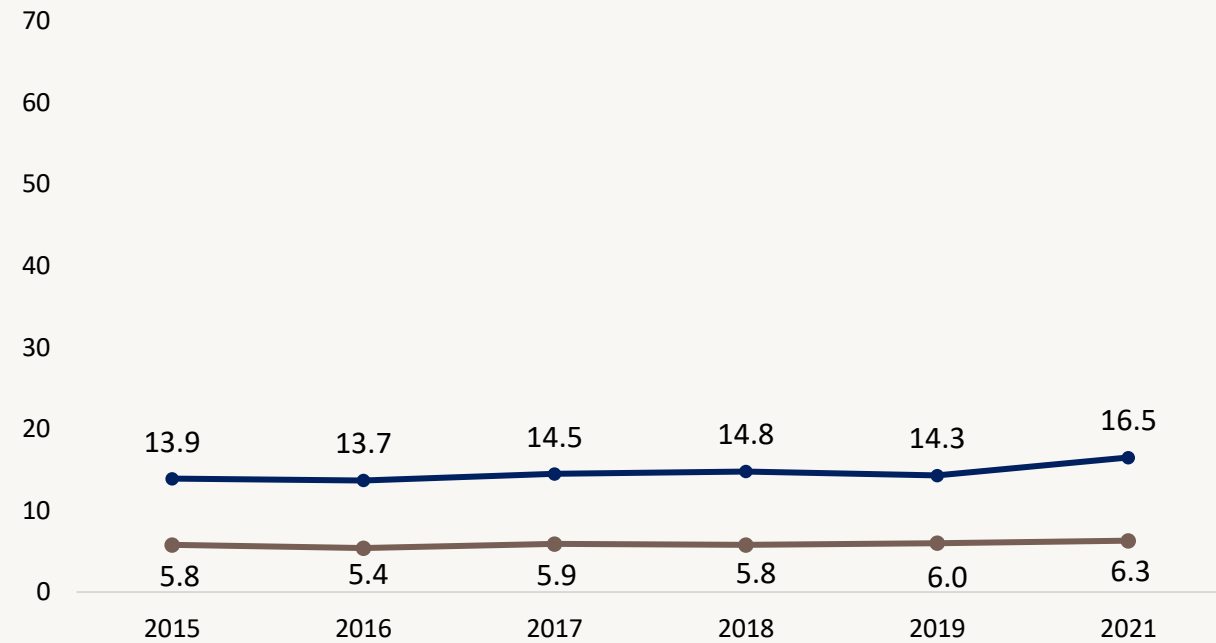


Mental Health Data Trends: 2015-2021

PERCENT OVERALL 8TH, 10TH & 12TH GRADE PERSISTENT SADNESS OR HOPELESSNESS PAST YEAR, FAIRFAX 2015-2021



PERCENT OVERALL 8TH, 10TH & 12TH GRADE SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR PAST YEAR, FAIRFAX 2015-2021



Despite the increase this year, **Fairfax County youth** had **consistently lower rates** of persistent sadness/hopelessness, considered attempting suicide, and attempted suicide **compared to their national peers** (based on the CDC's Adolescent Behaviors and Experience Survey)

Sociodemographic Factors that Disproportionately Affect Youth Mental Health

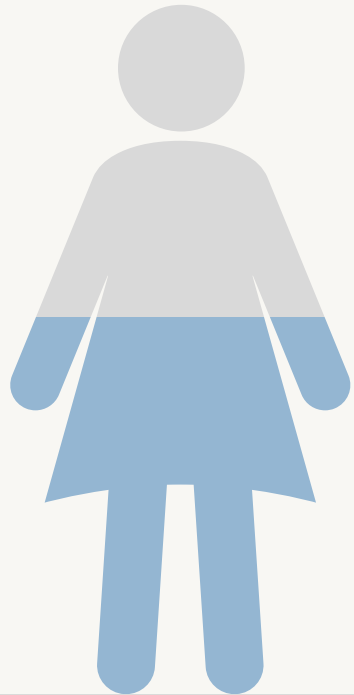
Female students are at a greater risk

48%
Female

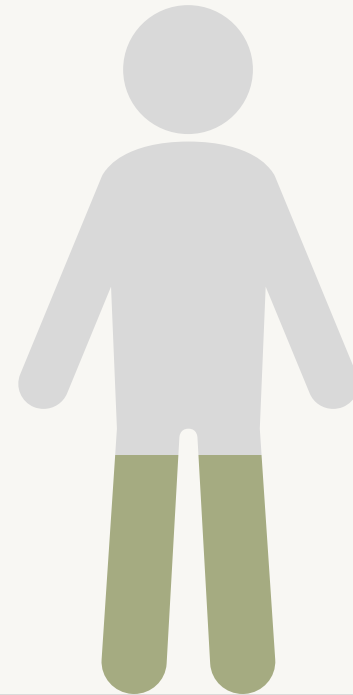
Reported persistently
feeling sad or hopeless

21% reported **suicidal
thoughts**

8% reported **suicide
attempts**



Vs



27%
Male

Reported persistently
feeling sad or hopeless

11% reported **suicidal
thoughts**

4% reported **suicide
attempts**

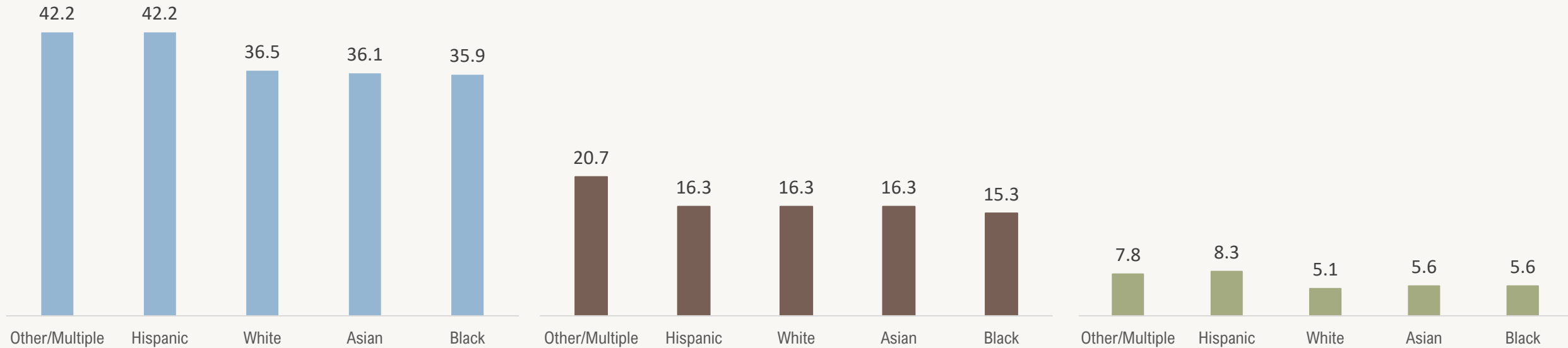
Race & Ethnicity Matters

Percent reporting mental health challenges by race/ethnicity

Persistent
sadness/hopelessness

Considered suicide

Attempted suicide



Transgender Students Are at a Greater Risk

75%

Of transgender students reported **feeling persistent sadness/hopelessness** compared to **36% of non-transgender students**

61%

Of transgender students **considered attempting suicide** compared to **14% of non-transgender students**

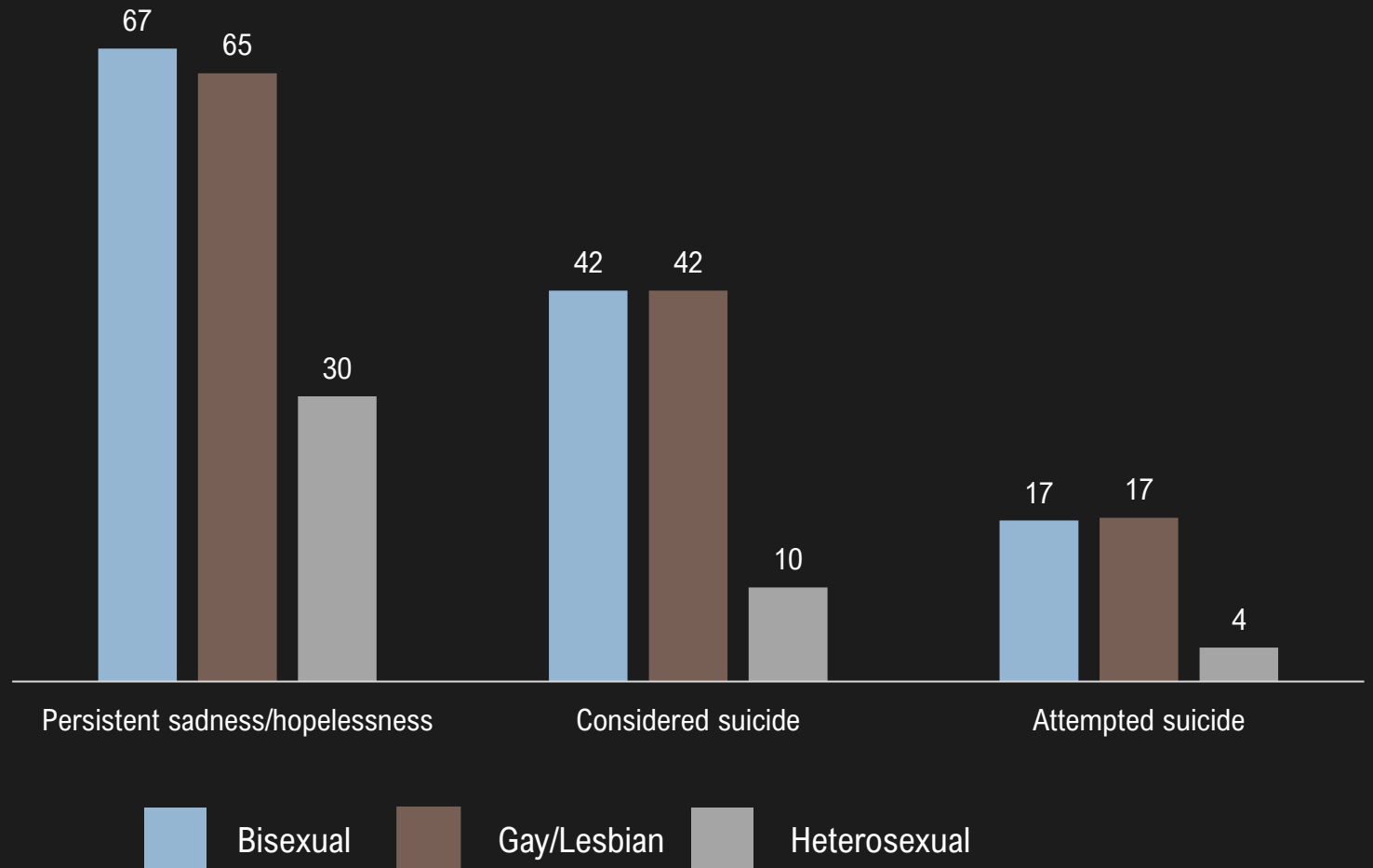
24%

Of transgender students **attempted suicide** compared to **5% of non-transgender students**

Students Who Identify as Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Are at a Higher Risk

Students who identify as **gay, lesbian or bisexual** reported **higher rates of feelings of persistent sadness/hopelessness, suicidal ideations and suicide attempts** than heterosexual students.

Percent mental health challenges past year by sexual orientation

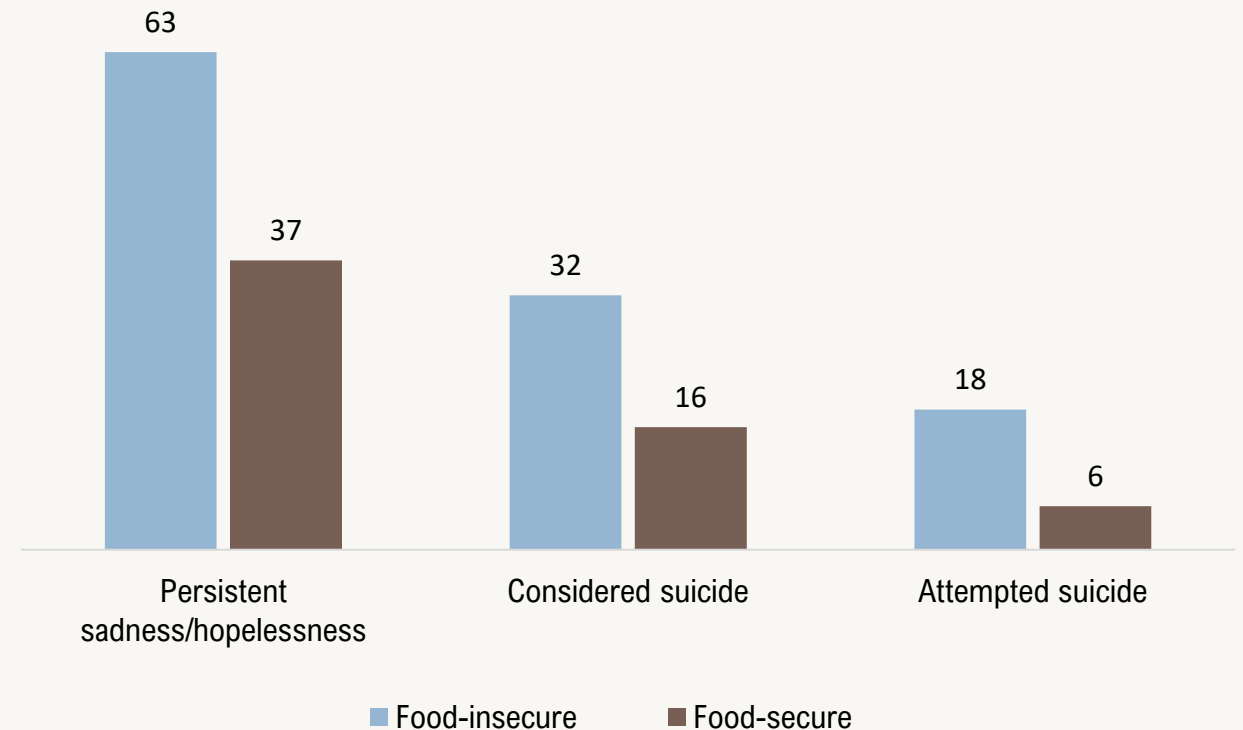


Students From Food-insecure Homes May Be at a Greater Risk

Students who reported **going hungry due to a lack of food** in their home were more likely to report **feeling persistently sad or hopeless, and suicidal thoughts and actions** than students from food secure homes.

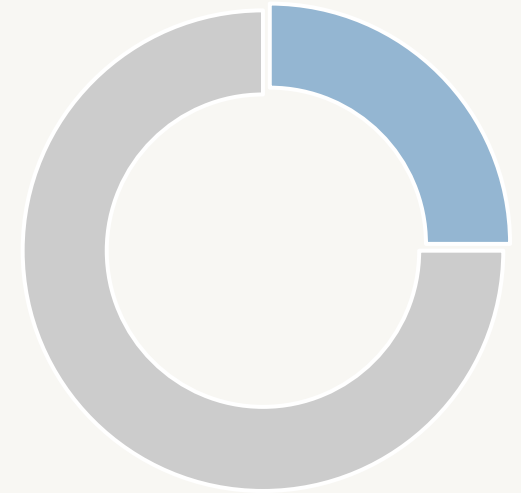
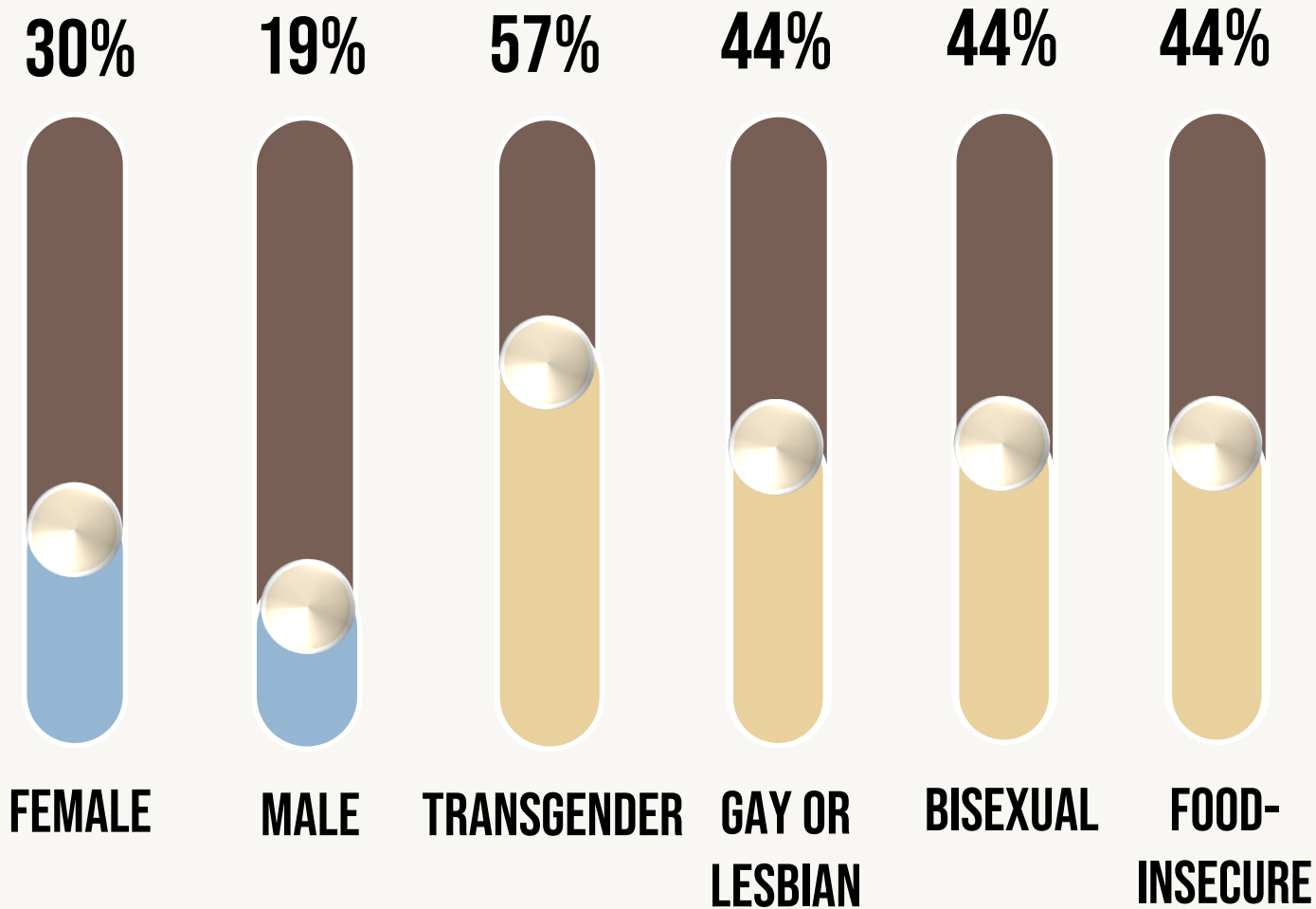
Nearly seven percent of the 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students reported going hungry in the past month due to a lack of food in the home. Incidence of hunger due to a lack of food in the home varied by race/ethnicity, ranging from 3% of white students to 12% of Hispanic students.

Percent mental health challenges by food security status





Emotional Abuse at Home

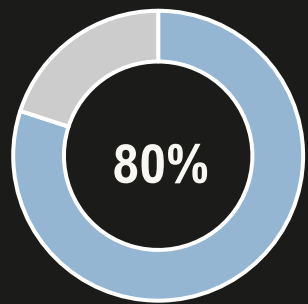
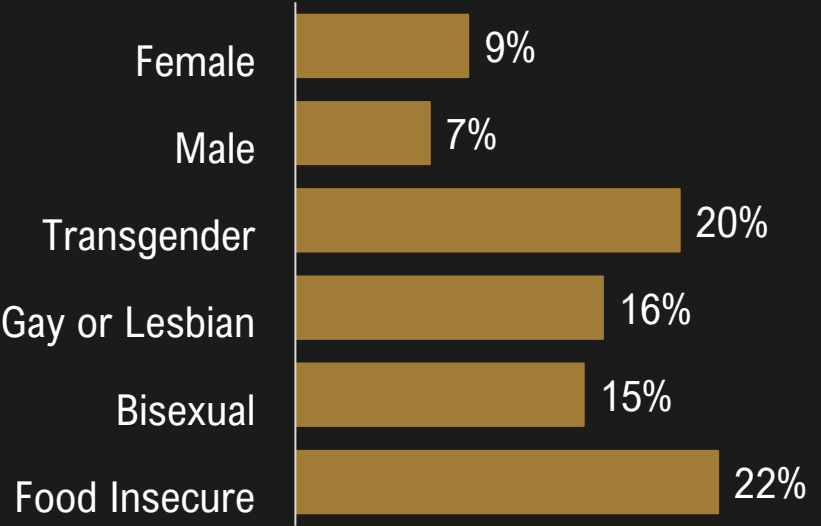


25% OF FAIRFAX COUNTY YOUTH

Reported having been bullied, taunted, ridiculed, or teased by a parent or other adult in their household in the past year (highest in the past 6 years).

Physical Abuse at Home

Percent physical Abuse by a parent or adult past year



Nearly 80% of the students who reported physical abuse also responded that they were emotionally abused by a parent or adult in the past year.

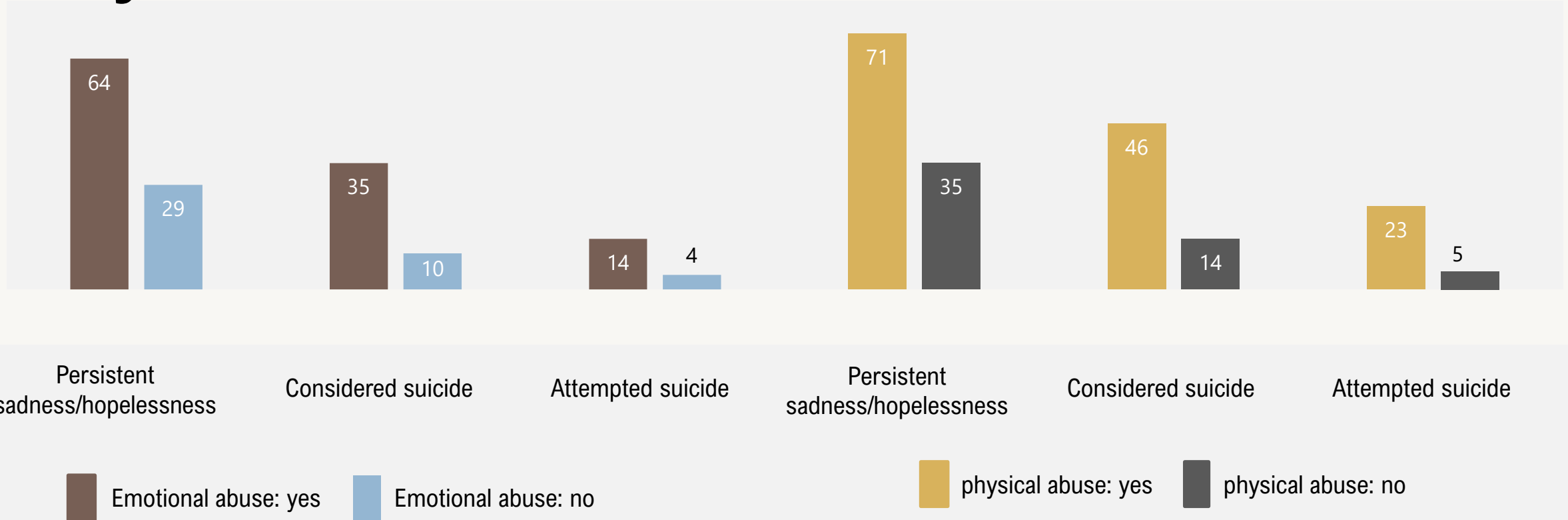
8% Of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students

Reported having been hit, kicked or physically hurt by a parent or adult in the past year.

12% Of 6th grade students

Reported having been hit, kicked or physically hurt by a parent or adult in the past year.

Mental Health Challenges by Emotional and Physical Abuse Status



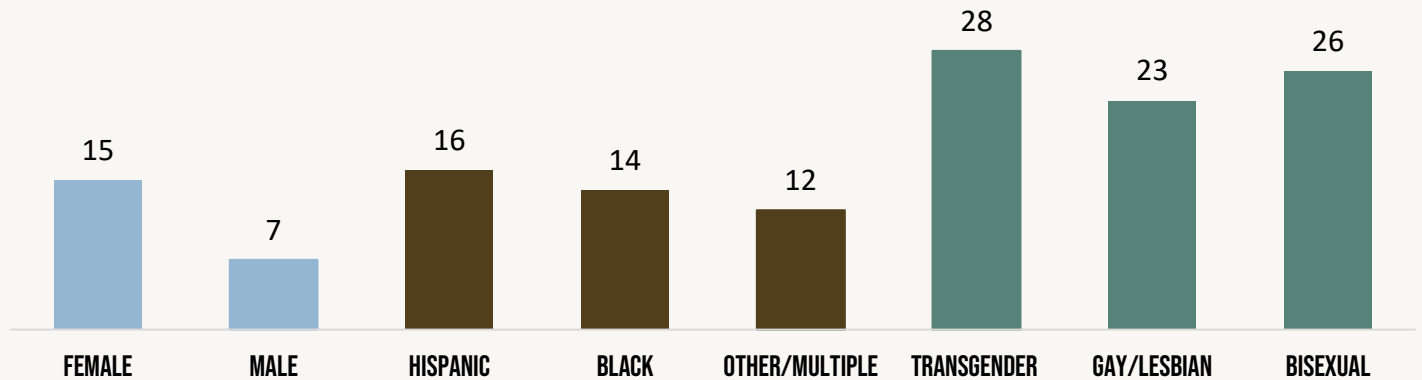
Students who reported emotional or physical abuse at home are more likely to report mental health challenges

FASTING TO LOSE WEIGHT

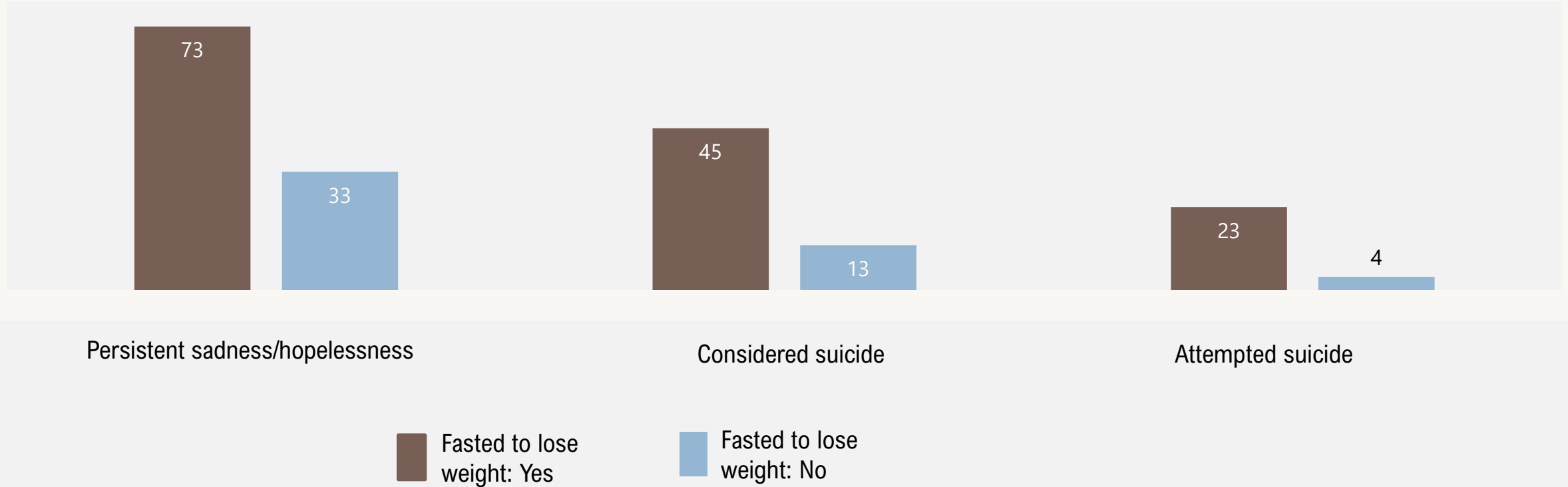


More than one in ten (11%) reported going without eating for 24 hours or more in the past month in order to lose weight or keep from gaining weight in the past month.

Percent fasted to lose weight past month



Mental Health Challenges by Fasted to Lose Weight Status

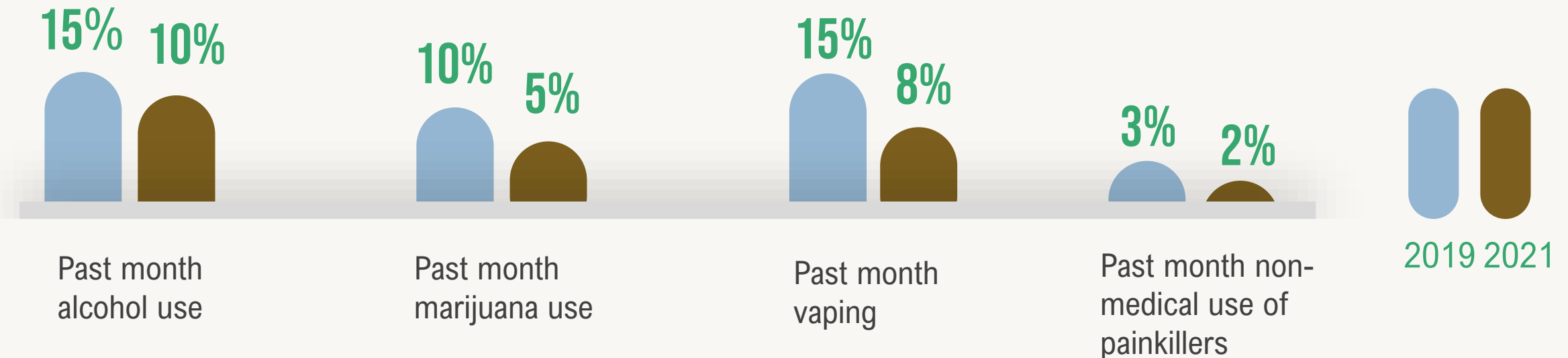


Students who reported fasting to lose weight are more likely to report mental health challenges



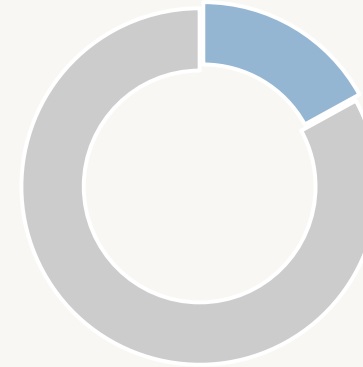
Decrease in Substance Use: 2019 vs. 2021

In 2021, overall, Fairfax County youth reported **lower rates of substance use**, compared to 2019, including past month use of alcohol, marijuana, vaping any substance, and prescription painkillers.

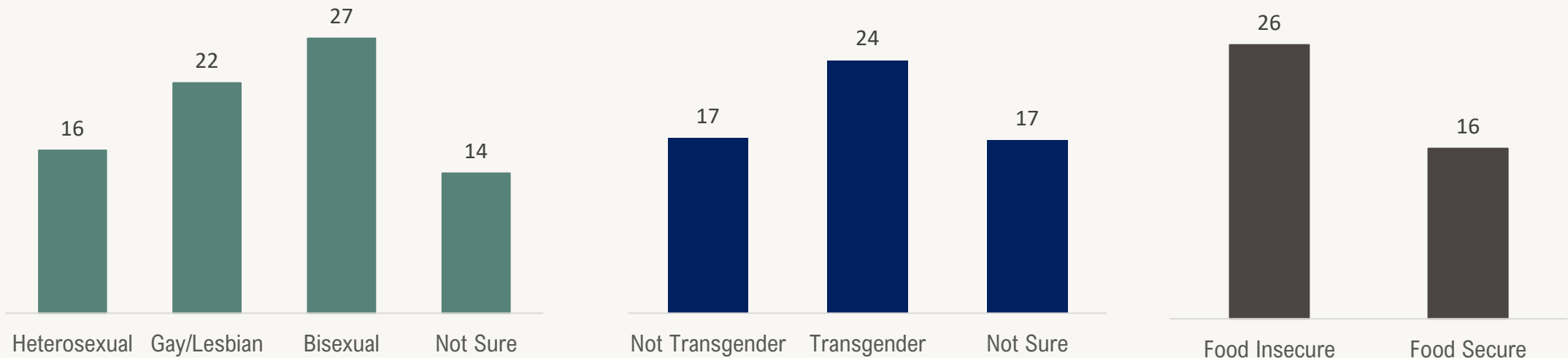


Any Substance Use (30 days) by Demographics

Gay/Lesbian, bisexual and transgender students are more likely to report alcohol or substance use in the past 30 days. Students from food insecure homes are also more likely to report substance use.



17% of Fairfax county youth reported alcohol/substance use in the past 30 days

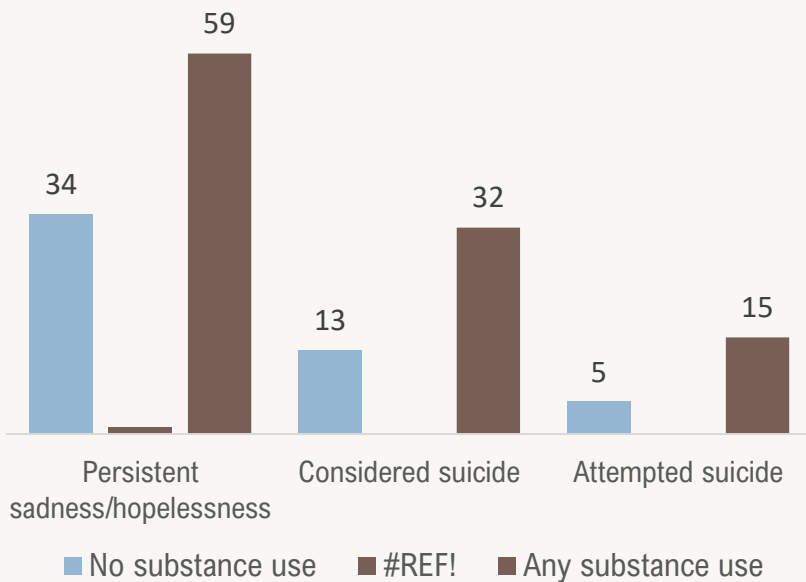




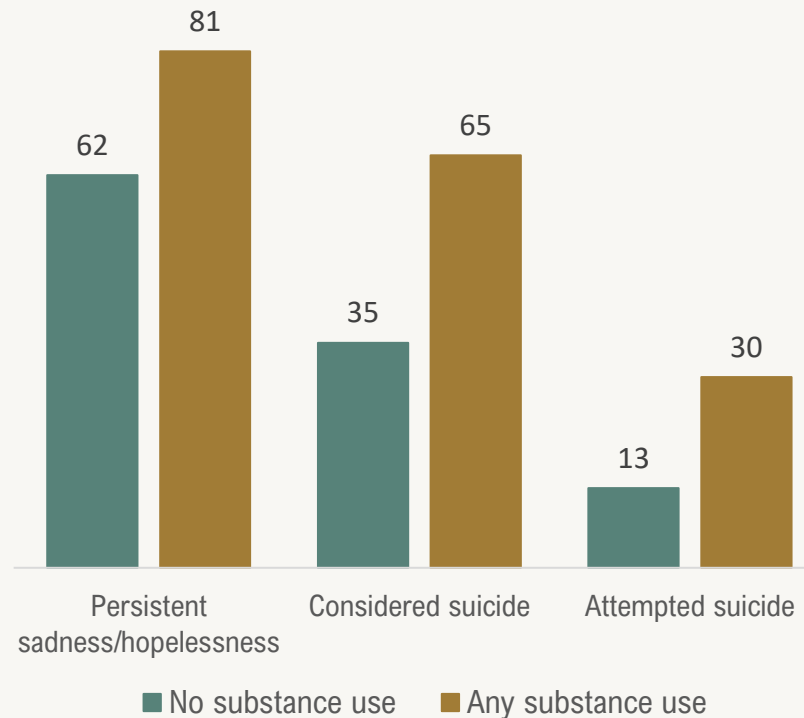
Mental Health Challenges by Substance Use

Percent overall mental health challenges past year by substance use past month

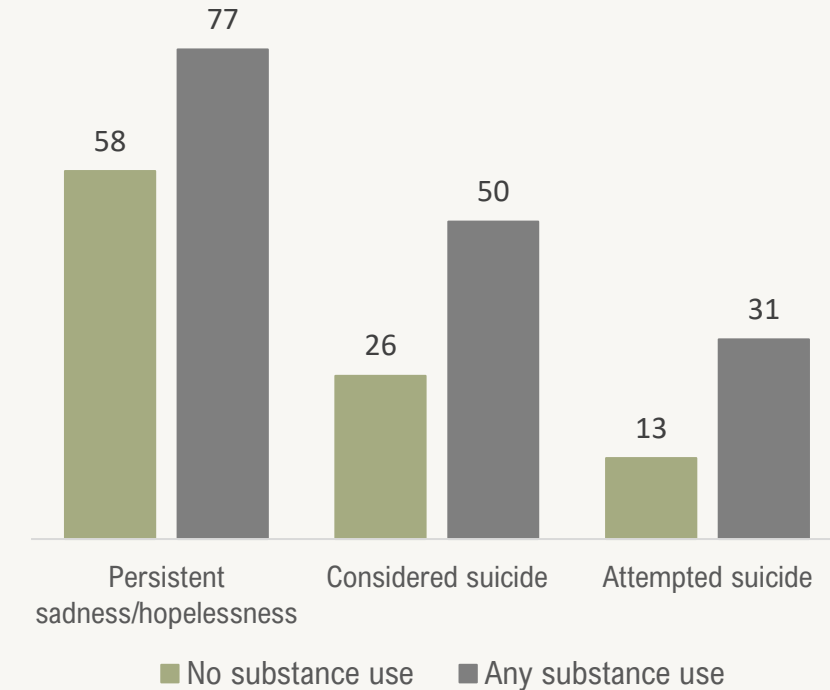
All students



LGBTQ students

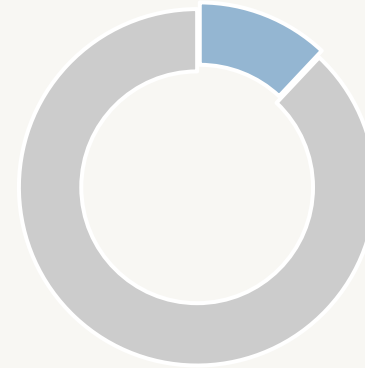


Students from food-insecure homes

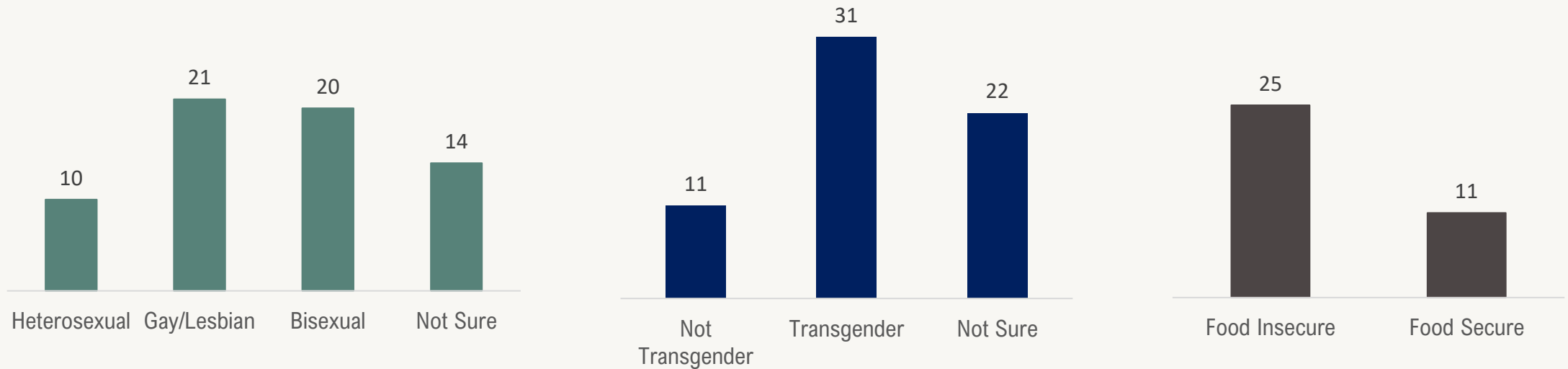


Bullied by Demographics

Gay/Lesbian, bisexual and transgender students are more likely to report being a bully victim. Students from food insecure home are also more likely to report being bullied.



12% of Fairfax county youth reported being bullied in the past 12 months

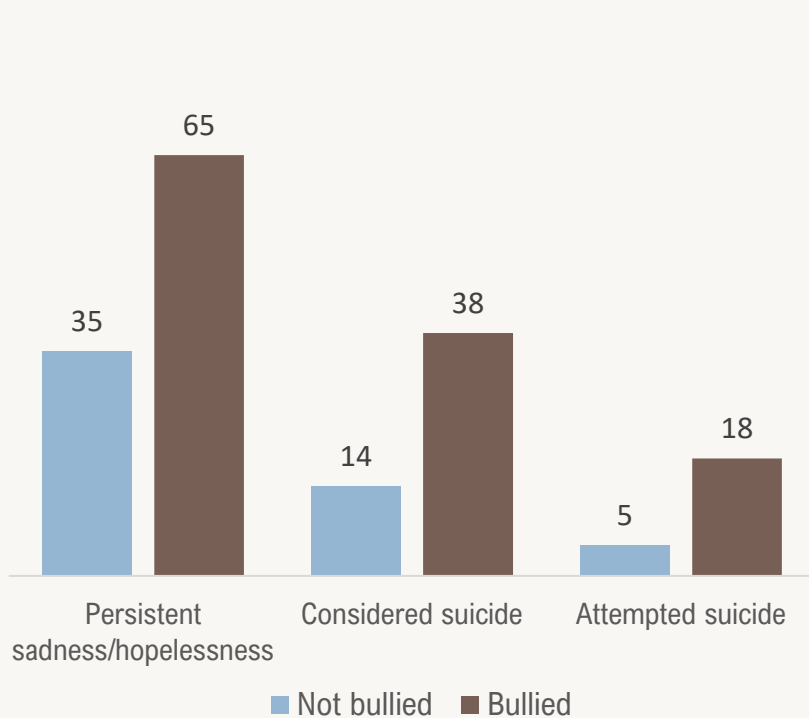




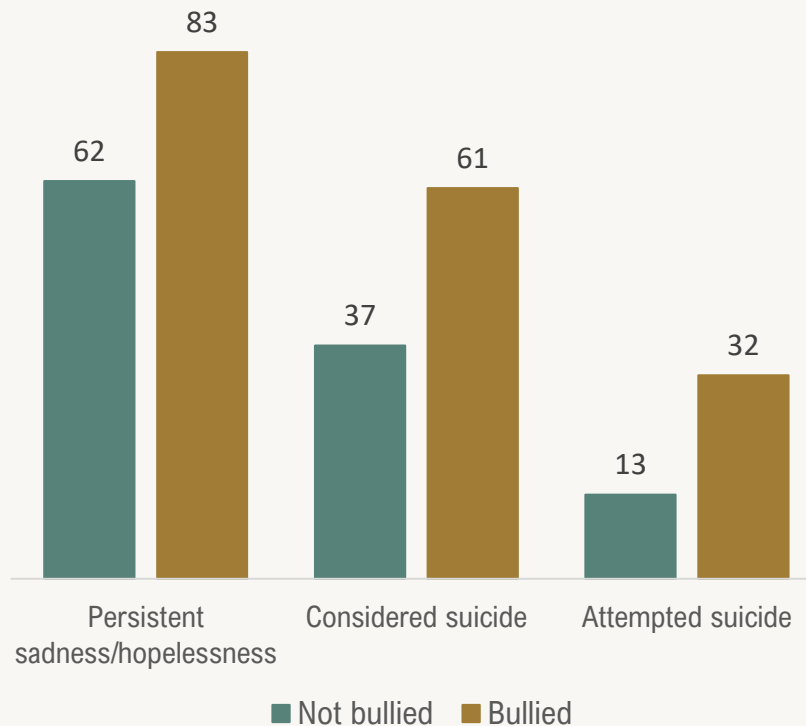
Mental Health Challenges by Bullying Status

Percent overall mental health challenges past year by bully victim status (past year)

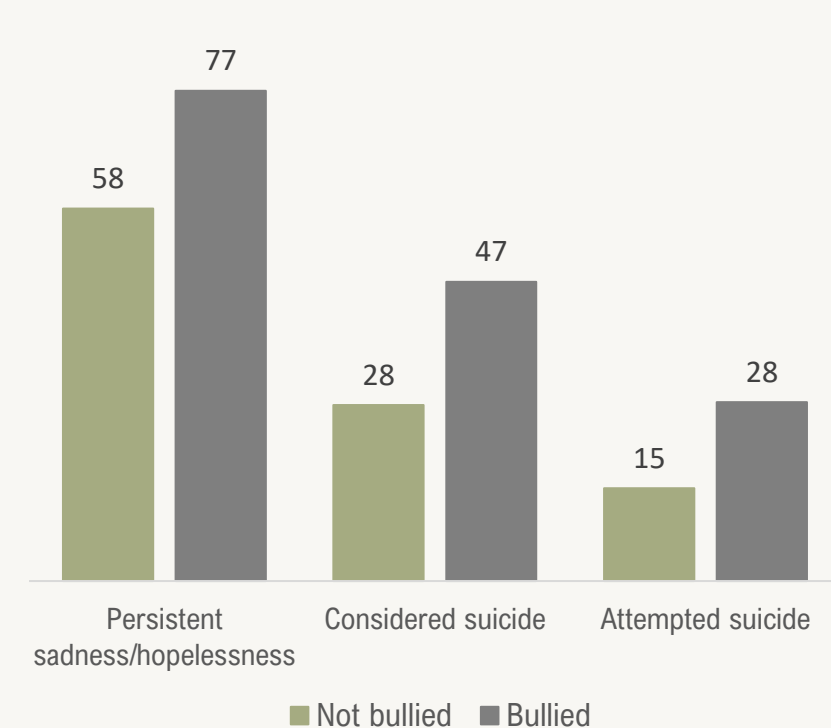
All students



LGBTQ students



Students from food-insecure homes



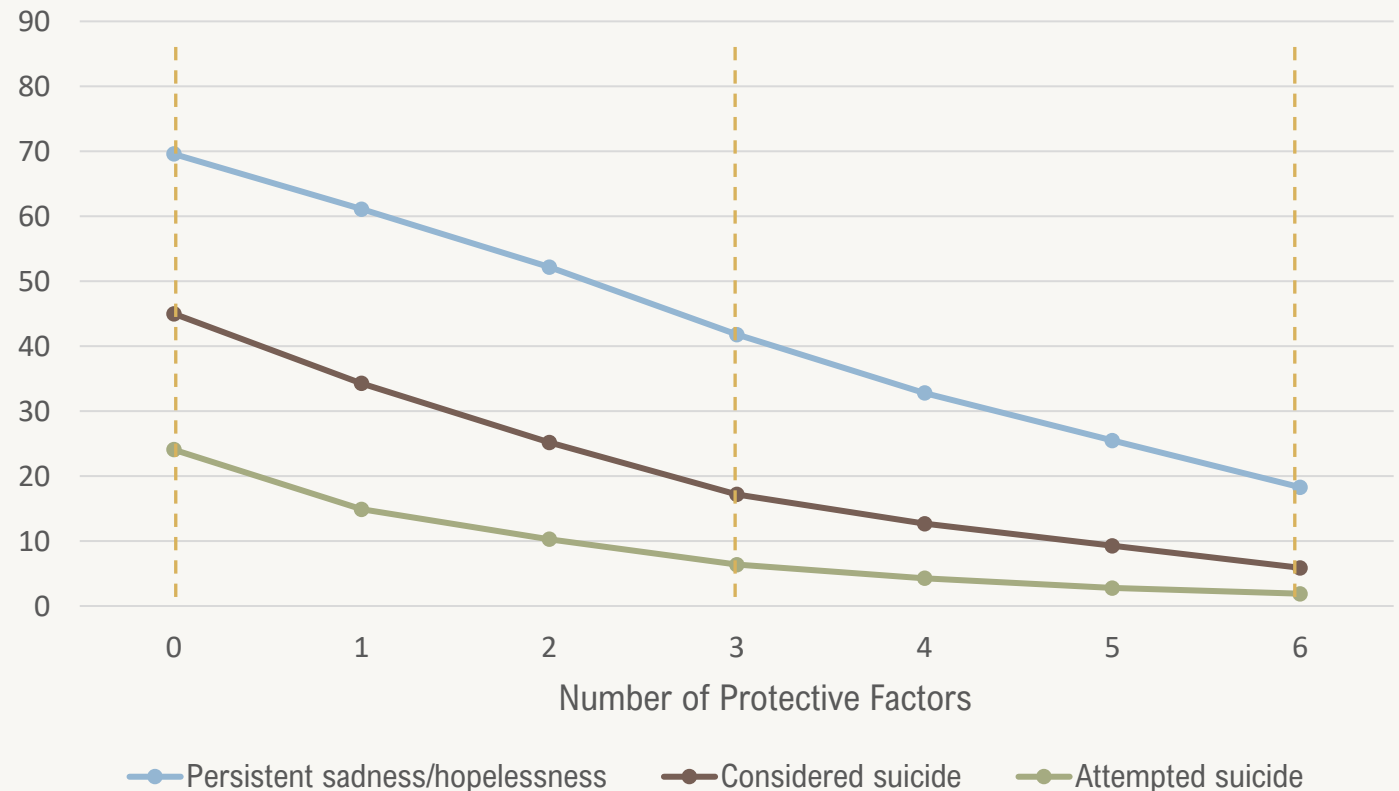
Protective Factors & Mental Health Issues: All Students

The Youth Survey assesses the protective factors that promote well-being and positive development in youth. Overall, **the more protective factors** youth have, **the less likely** they report **mental health-related issues**.

Protective Factors

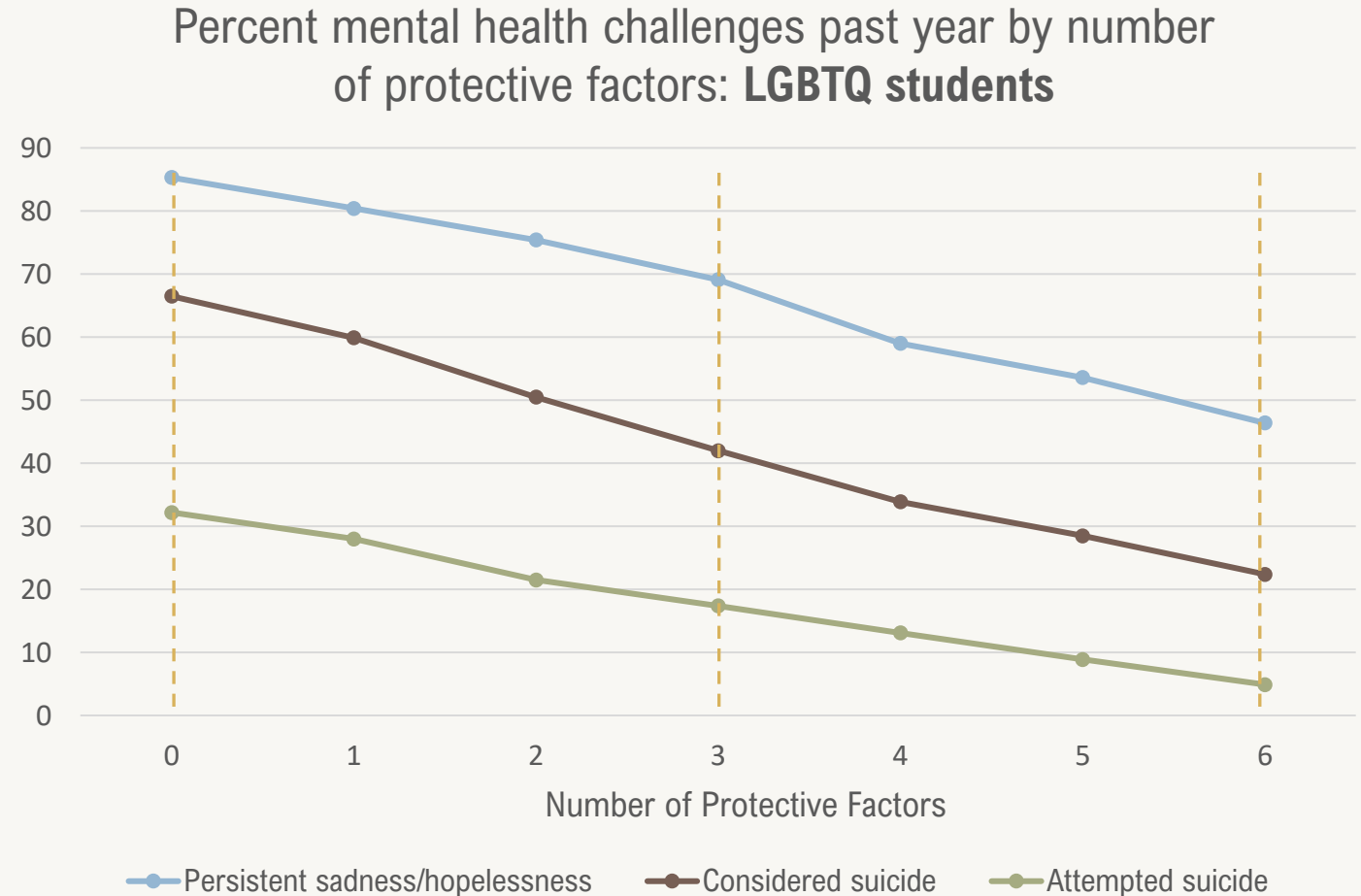
- Accepting responsibility for one's actions
- Having teachers recognize good work
- Participating in extracurricular activities
- Performing community service
- Having community adults to talk to
- Having parents available for help

Percent mental health challenges past year by number of protective factors: **All students**



Protective Factors & Mental Health Issues: LGBTQ Students

While the difference in mental health challenges between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students remain, LGBTQ students with more assets are less likely to report mental health challenges than LGBTQ students with fewer or no assets.



Protective Factors & Mental Health Issues: Students from Food-insecure Homes

While the difference in students' experience in mental health challenges by food security status remain, students from food-insecure homes with more assets are less likely to report mental health challenges than those with fewer or no assets.

