



MONTANA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

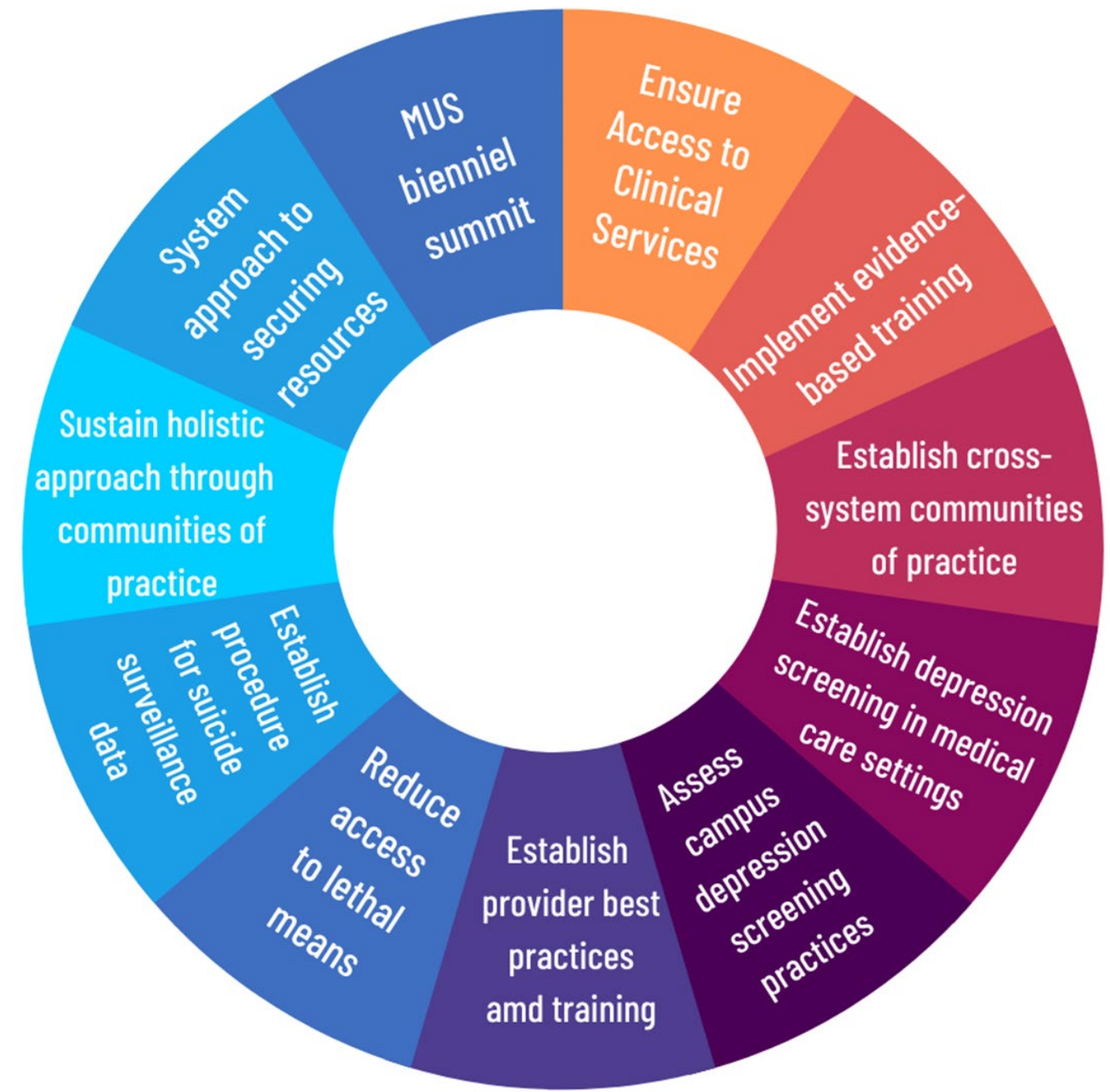
College Student Mental Health & Wellbeing in Montana: A Public Health Approach

Sasha Zhou, PhD, MHSA, MPH, Assistant Professor Department of Public Health,
Wayne State University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Co-Investigator Healthy
Minds Network

Betsy Asserson, Ph.D., Director, Counseling and Psychological Services, MSU

Crystine Miller, Director of Student Affairs & Student Engagement, OCHE

MUS Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Task Force



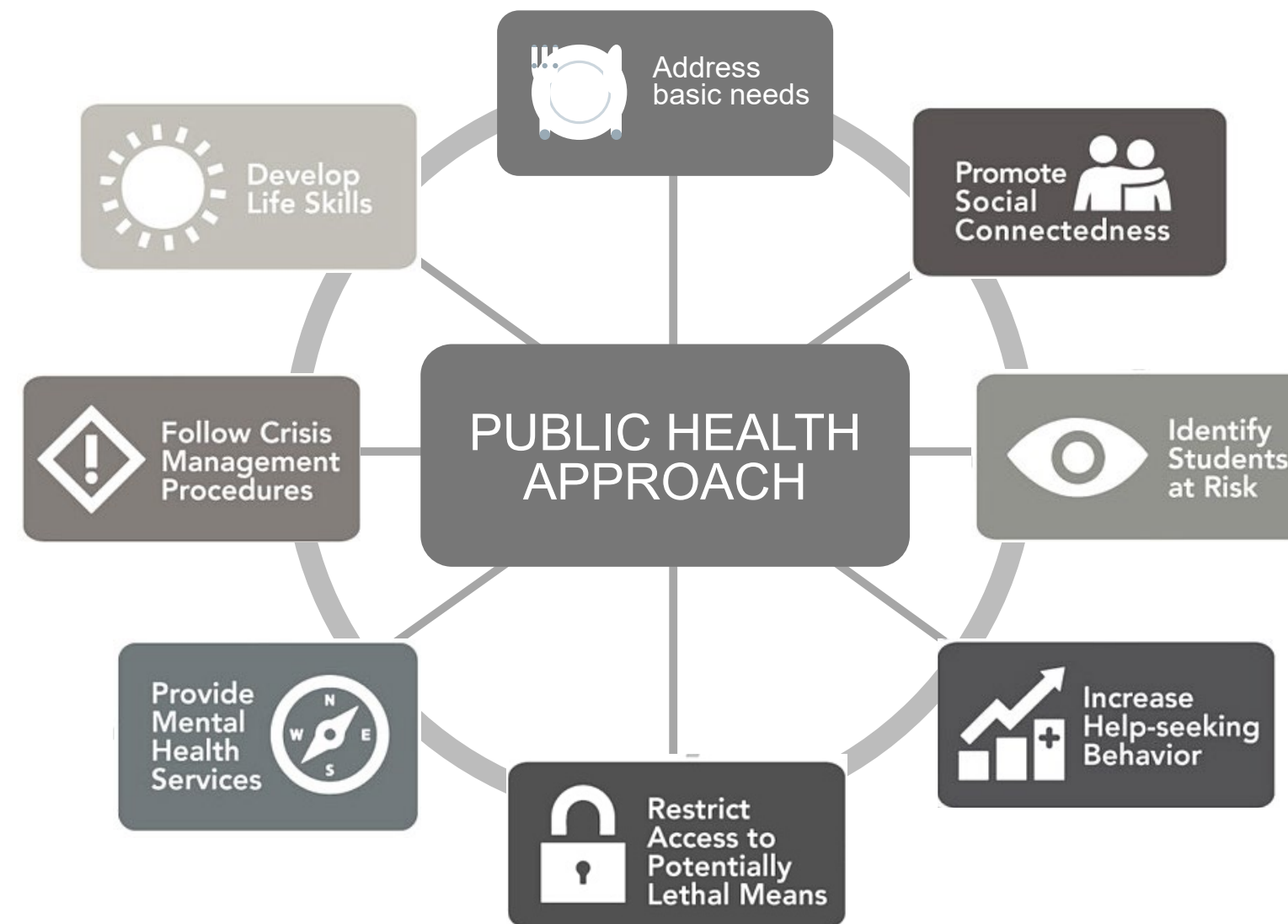
Enriching Community Mental Health & Wellbeing



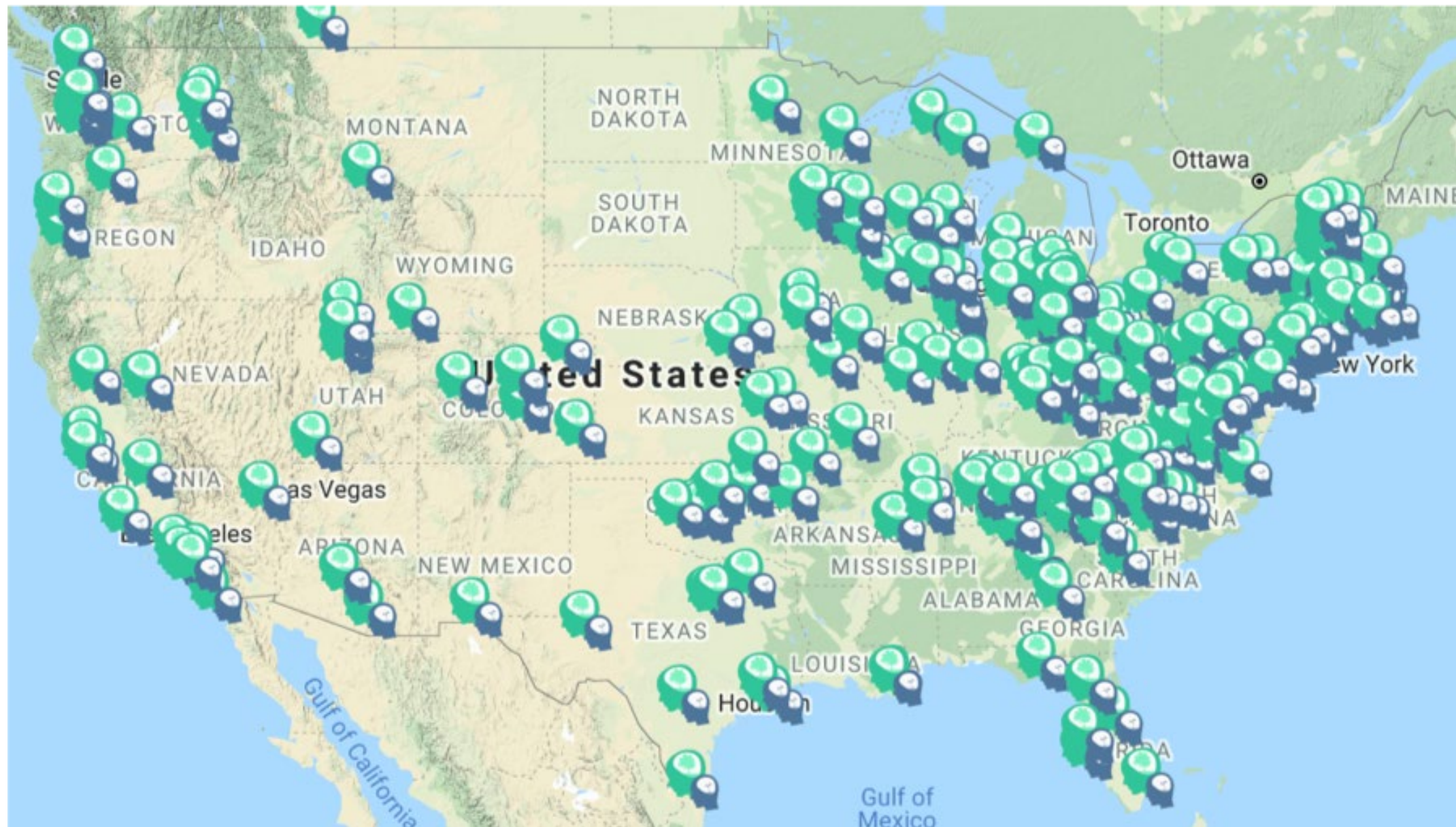
1. Frame student mental health and wellbeing as a **public health** issue that is connected to all parts of campus life.
2. Develop models that support mental health and wellbeing on a **continuum from thriving to crisis**.
3. Better understand the connection between student **mental health & wellbeing** and **academic mission** of colleges and universities.
4. Identify the **mental health and wellbeing** needs of the **diverse student populations** across the state.



Framework for campus strategies (JED/SPRC)



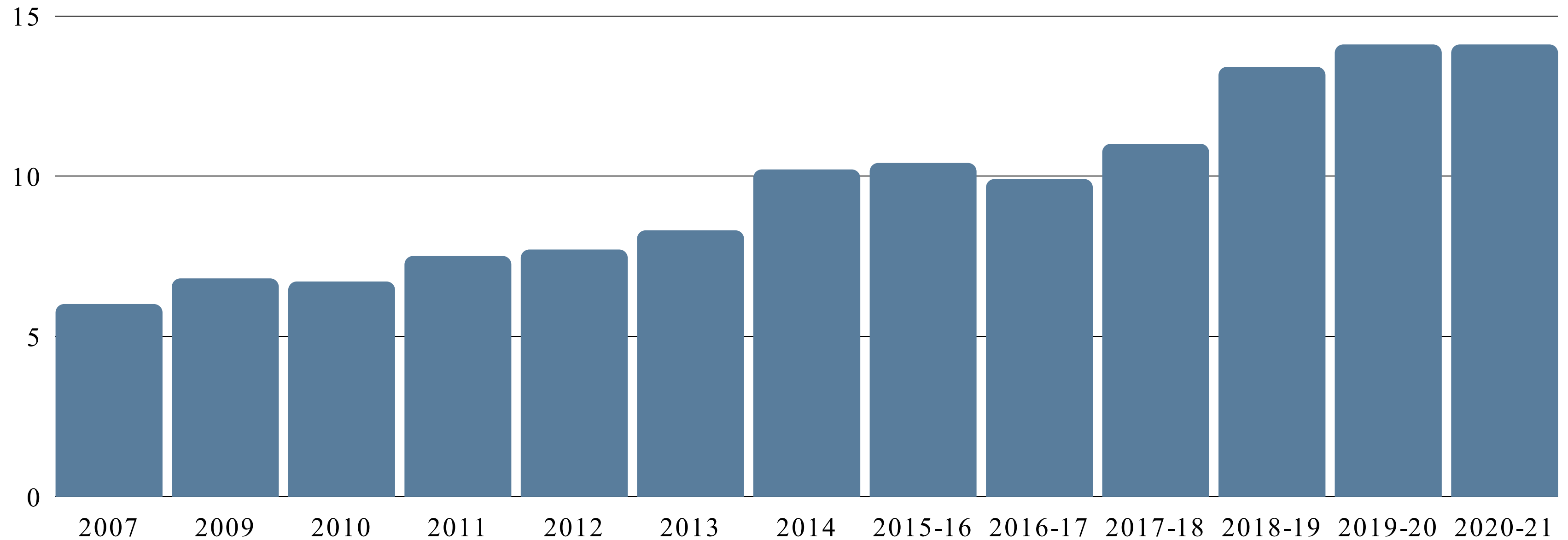
About the Healthy Minds Study



- ~600 colleges and universities
- >600,000 student respondents
- Based at BUSPH, UM, UCLA, WSU
- Random samples recruited from participating schools
- Online survey (Qualtrics)
- Validated screening tools/measures

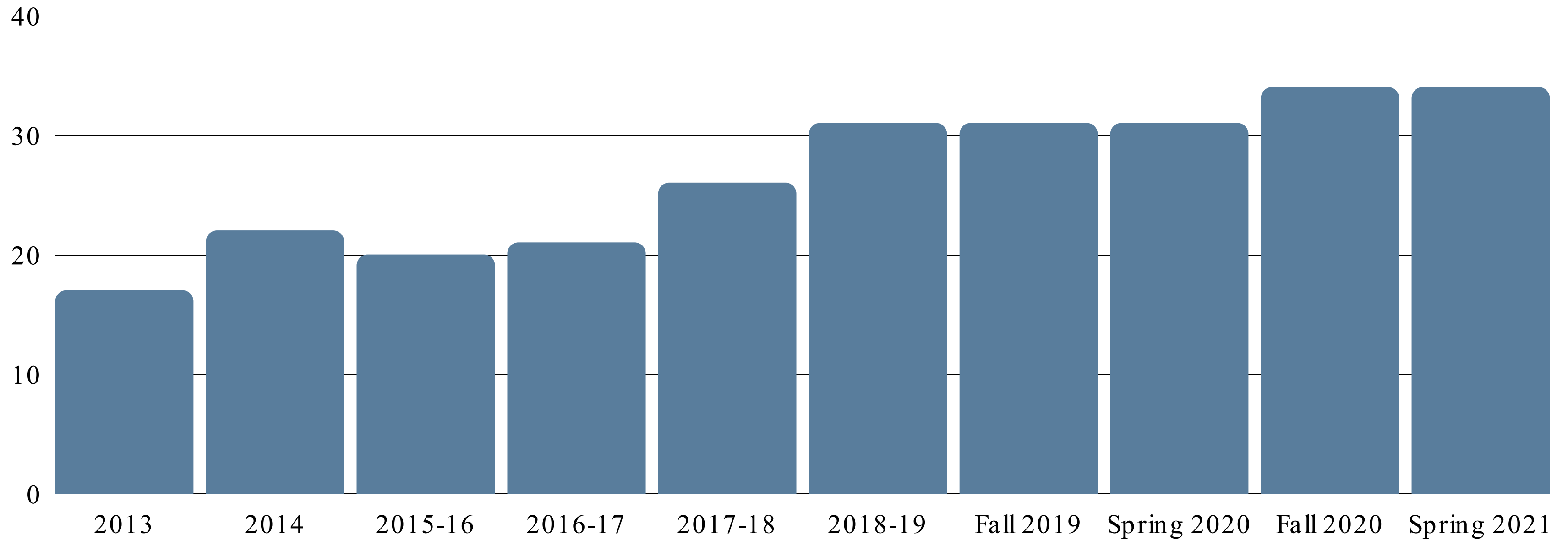
Increasing rates of suicidal ideation

2007 (6%) - 2021 (14.1%)



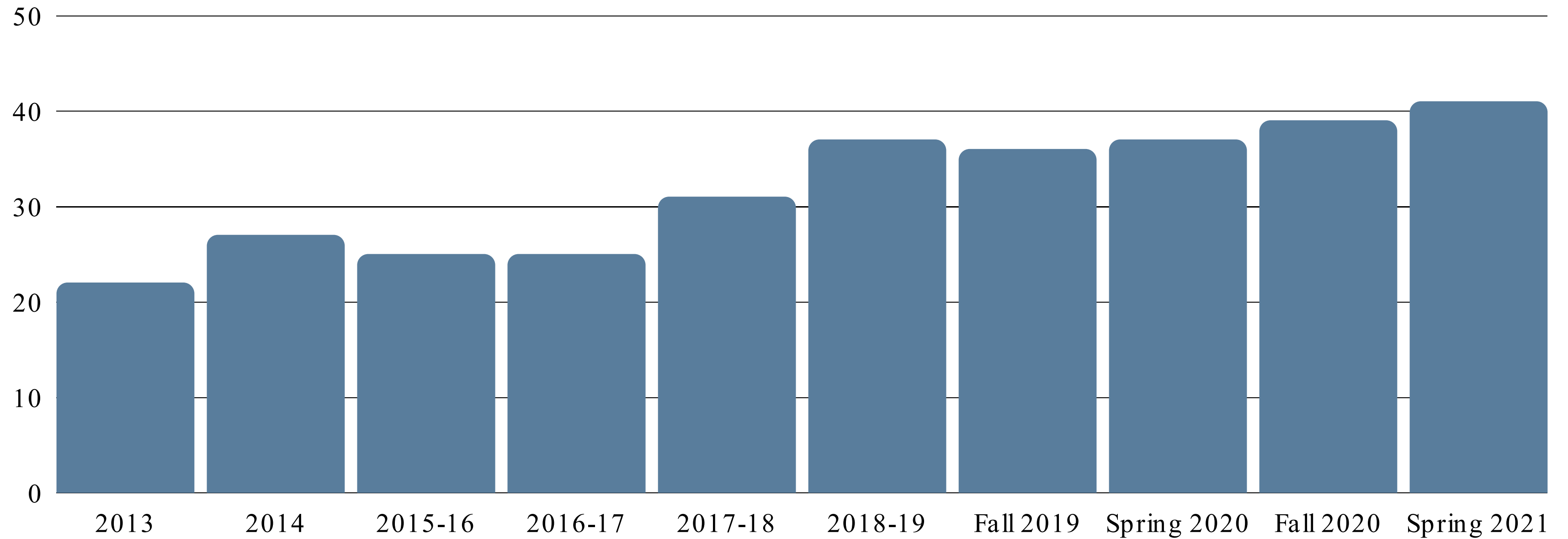
Increasing rates of anxiety symptoms

2013 (17%) - 2021 (34%)

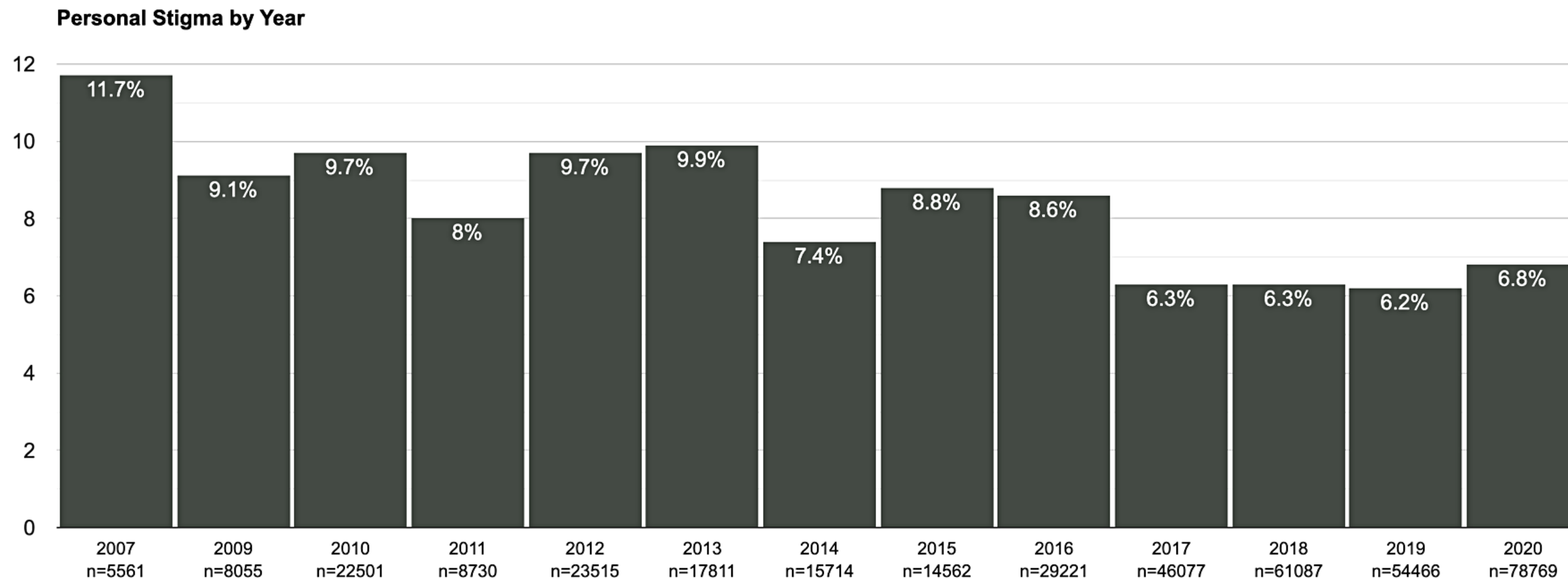


Increasing rates of depressive symptoms

2013 (22%) - 2021 (41%)



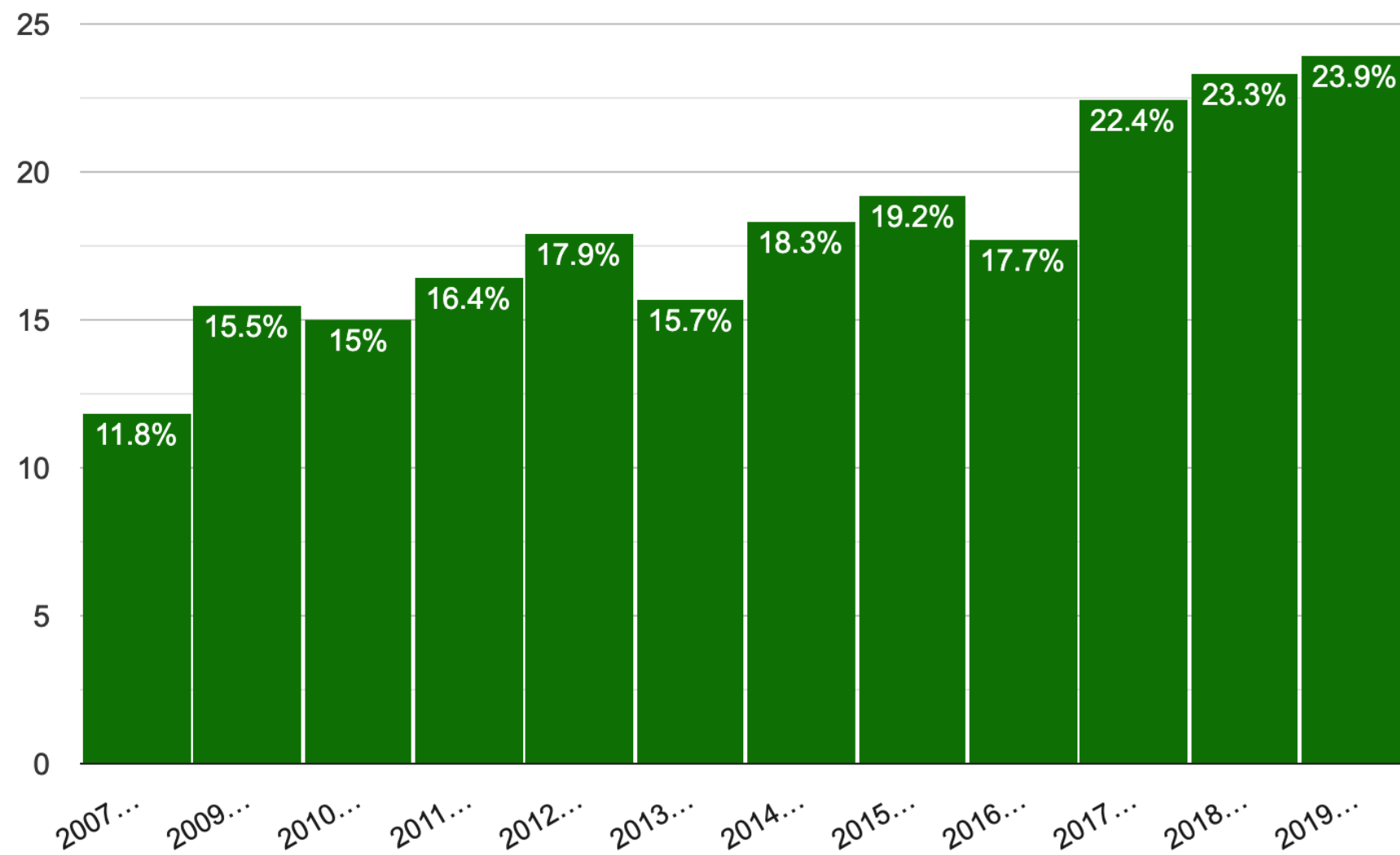
Mental health stigma has declined.
Personal stigma (significant predictor of help-seeking) is low and decreasing.



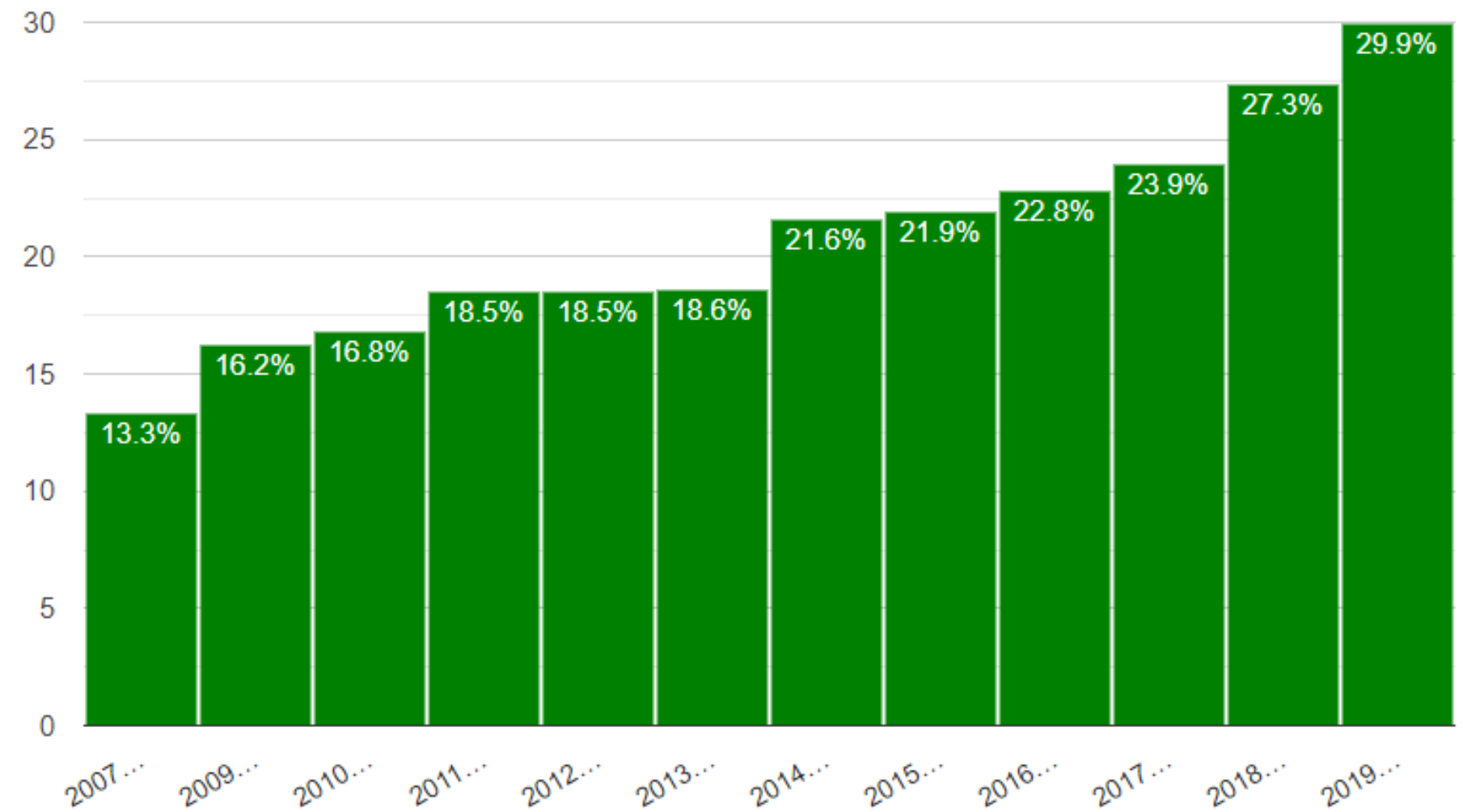
Mental health treatment use

2007 -2019

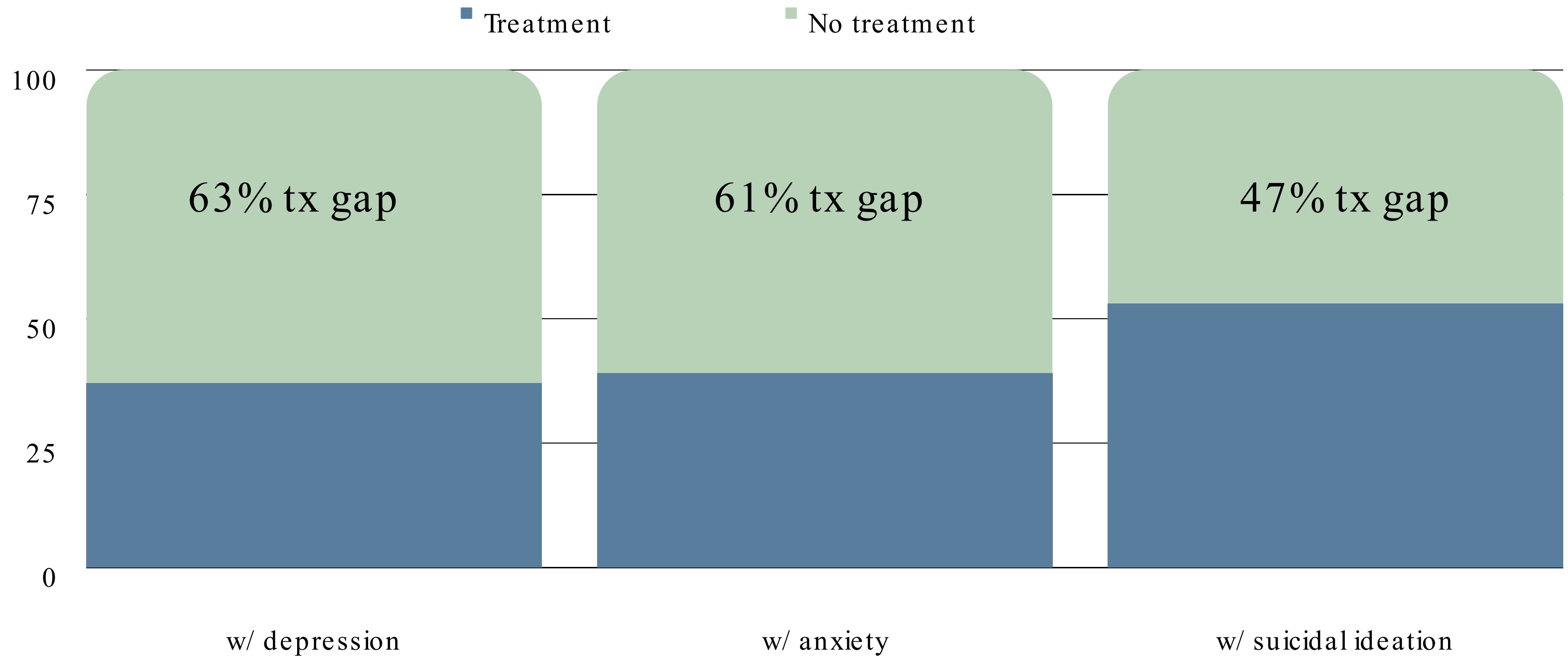
Used Any Psychotropic Medication (Past Year)



Used Any Counseling or Therapy (Past Year)

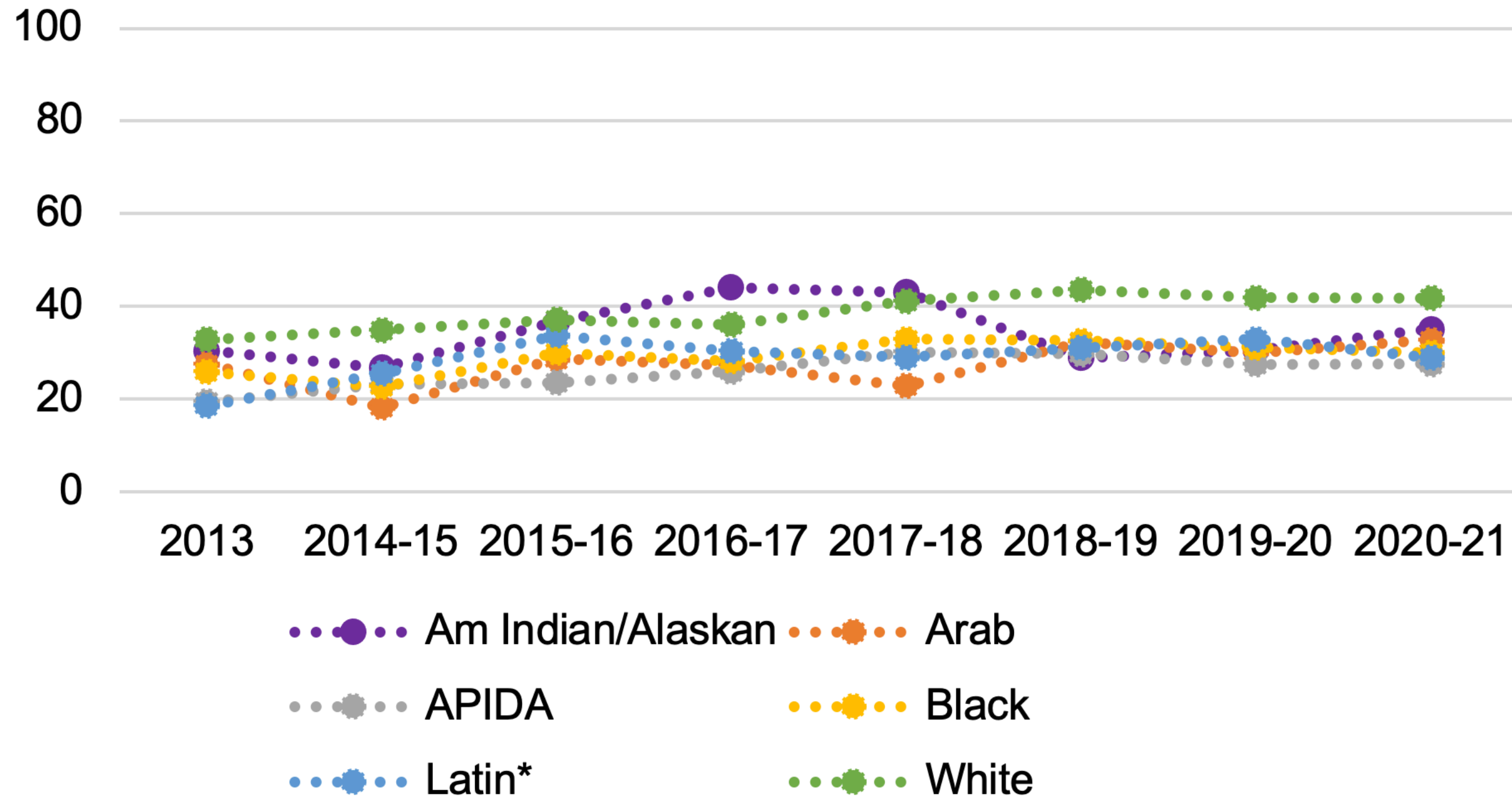


Mental health 'treatment gap' remains wide.



Mental health 'treatment gap' is disproportionately wide for BIPOC students.

Past-year Therapy Among Students with MH Symptoms
2013– Spring 2021



Mental health needs of rural students: Need for more research

JED

Epidemiology of Suicide in Rural Settings

According to CDC data across a 20-year period (1999-2019), the average suicide death rate for youth between the ages of 10-19

most rural areas
(7.6/100k)

nearly double the
number of their
counterparts

most urban areas
(3.9/100k)

²

Sources: ¹ Fontanella et al., 2015

² CDC WONDER, accessed 2021

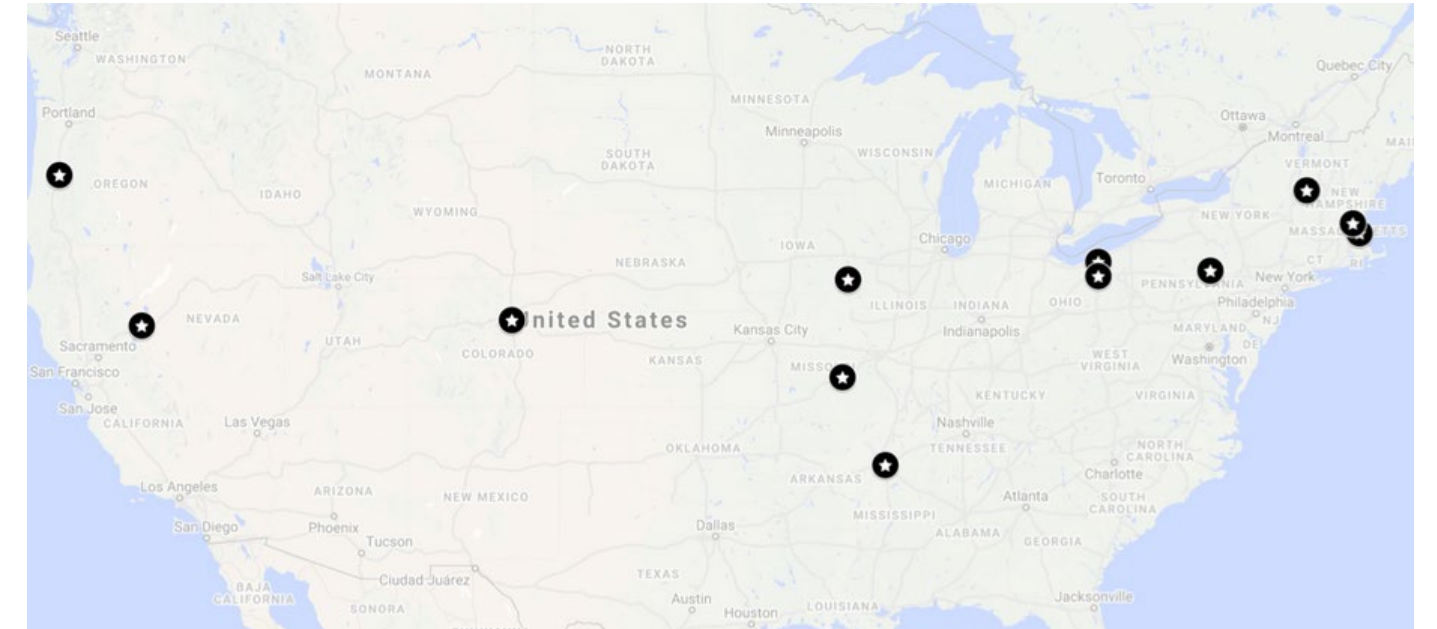
Though most students w/ untreated symptoms have positive attitudes & beliefs, there is a lack of urgency around the task of seeking help.

Most commonly reported barriers among students w/ untreated symptoms:

- Haven't had a need (31%)
 - Prefer to deal w/ issues on my own (27%)
 - Question how serious my needs are (20%)
 - Don't have time (17%)
-

The Role of Faculty in Student Mental Health

- Pilot study (1,685 faculty at 12 colleges/universities)
- Data collected through Qualtrics: 1/25-3/10/21
- Four survey sections
 - Faculty characteristics
 - Faculty knowledge and attitudes
 - Faculty experiences related to student mental health
 - Faculty mental health and wellbeing
- Mary Christie Institute, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, Healthy Minds Network, BUSPH
- Major Findings:
 - 80% of faculty report having 1:1 conversations with students regarding mental health
 - 75% of faculty report likelihood of reaching out if student is in distress; ~50% of faculty have a good idea on how to recognize this
 - Faculty welcome more resources to better support student MH



Need for a public health approach to mental health in higher education.

- Conceptualizing mental health along continuum (aligns with prevention, early intervention, treatment, crisis resources)
 - Saturation approach with GKT and other educational programs for all students, faculty, staff (“No wrong door”)
 - Bring mental health into the curriculum
 - Addresses inertia, lack of urgency barriers by bringing mental health into daily routines (default)
 - Acknowledging and jointly addressing mutable risk factors for poor mental health (e.g., discrimination, financial stress)
 - Pursue partnerships to ensure campus-wide, comprehensive approach (requires collaborations and resources, must include students)
 - Invest in making resources accessible, affordable, tailored to the needs of diverse students
 - Mental health is largely absent from national dialogue about college persistence
 - Mental health and well-being of all campus stakeholders (including faculty and staff)
 - One key aspect of a public health approach is ongoing data collection and intentional use of data
-

Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Task Force

2016 Recommendations

- Increase clinical services
- Suicide prevention training
- Identifying higher risk groups to benefit from gatekeeper training
- Mental health summits

MSU Counseling & Psychological Services

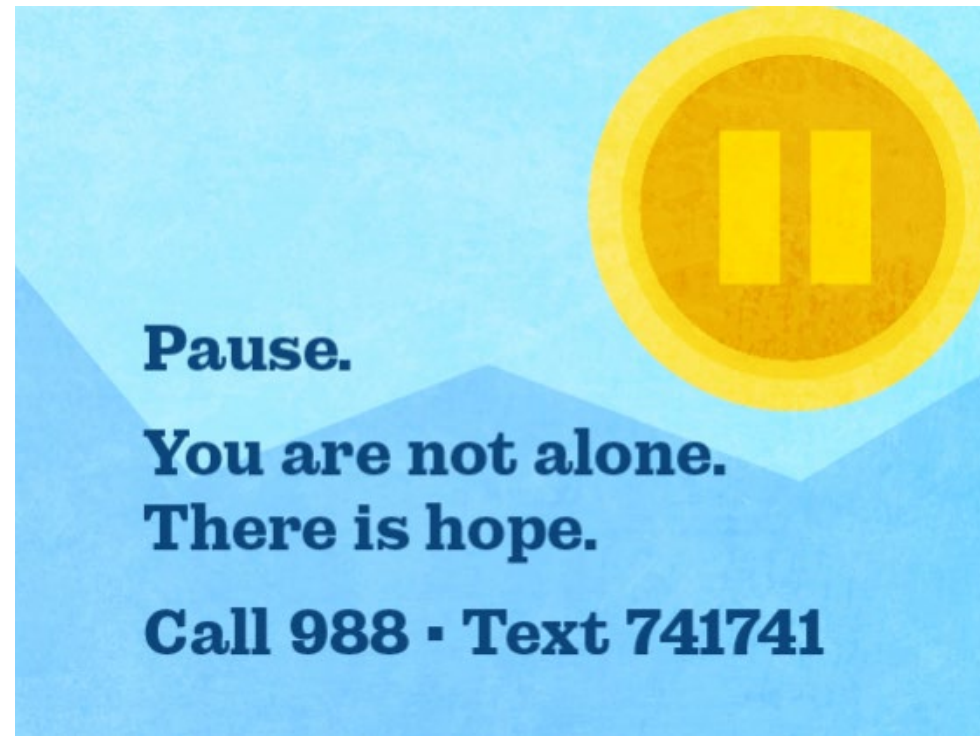


- 2017: Integration of Medical Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, and Office of Health Advancement
- 2015-2018: SAMHSA grant for suicide prevention
- Healthy Minds Study - MSU
 - 2017: 78% said that emotional/mental health issues hurt academic performance
 - 2019: 71% said they currently need help for mental health problems

Mental Health & Academics

- **Students with mental health issues such as depression are 2x more likely to leave school (Healthy Minds research)**
 - **For every 100 students who receive mental health treatment, 6 drop-outs are averted (Eisenberg, 2012)**
 - **Of students who withdrew from university, 64% did so due to mental illness. (NAMI, 2012)**
 - **75%-80% of faculty have been approached by a student for a mental health concern (Zhou, 2022)**
-

Partnerships



MONTANA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Thank you!

Betsy Asserson

basserson@montana.edu

Crystine Miller

cmiller@montana.edu

Sasha Zhou

sashaz@wayne.edu

Twitter: [@sashazhou](https://twitter.com/sashazhou)

The Healthy Minds Network

www.healthymindsnetwork.org

healthyminds@umich.edu

Twitter: [@healthymindsnet](https://twitter.com/healthymindsnet)
