



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

**Dr Charlotte Silke¹, Dr Bernadine Brady¹,
Dr Caroline Heary², Dr Carmel Devaney¹,
Prof. AnnMarie Groarke², Dr Clodhna
O'Brien³, Dr Aileen Shaw¹, Mr Emmet
Major⁴, Mr Michéal Durcan⁴, Dr Anita
Munnelly⁵, & Dr Gemma Cox⁵**

1 UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, University of Galway

2 School of Psychology, University of Galway

3 National Suicide Research Foundation

4 Western Region Drug & Alcohol Task Force

5 Health Service Executive

University of Galway

UNESCO Child and
Family Research Centre

School of
Psychology

Adolescent Mental Health & Adversity

Profiles & Trends in the West
of Ireland from 2018 - 2022



Research Aims

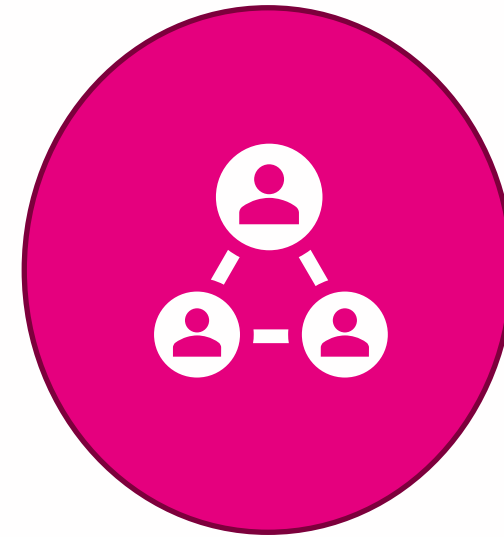


OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



1. Prevalence Rates

Examine youth self-harm & mental health



2. Trends & Demographics

Identify trends over time and across key demographics



3. Adversity Related Risk

Understand the link between youth adversity & mental health



4. Protective Factors

Determine whether social supports & health behaviours act as protective factors

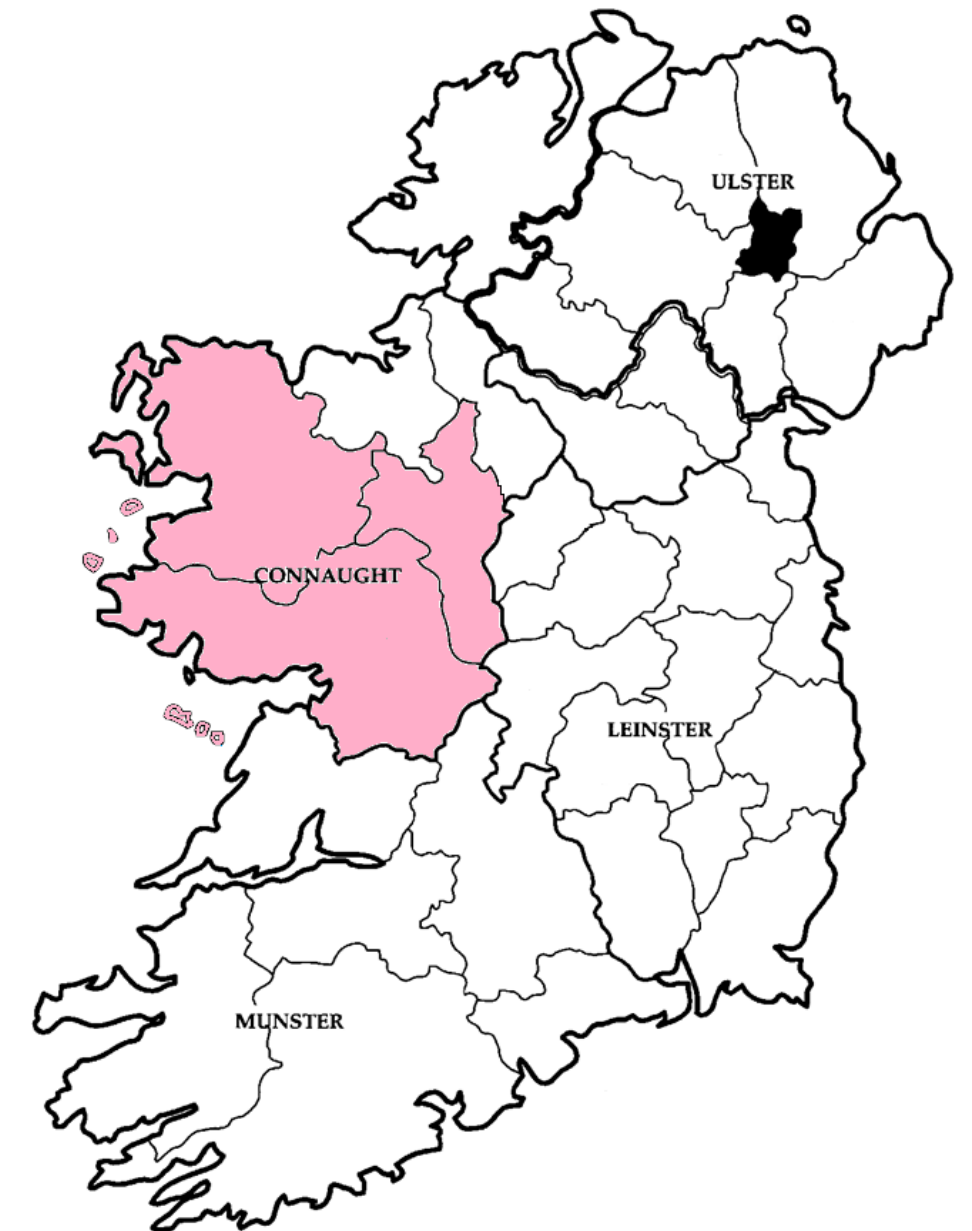
Planet Youth



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Planet Youth is based on the Icelandic Primary Prevention Model and was first introduced in the west of Ireland in 2018

- Regional focus*
- Non-clinical sample of adolescents*
- 100% response rate from schools*
- Bi-annual surveys: 2018, 2020 and 2022.*

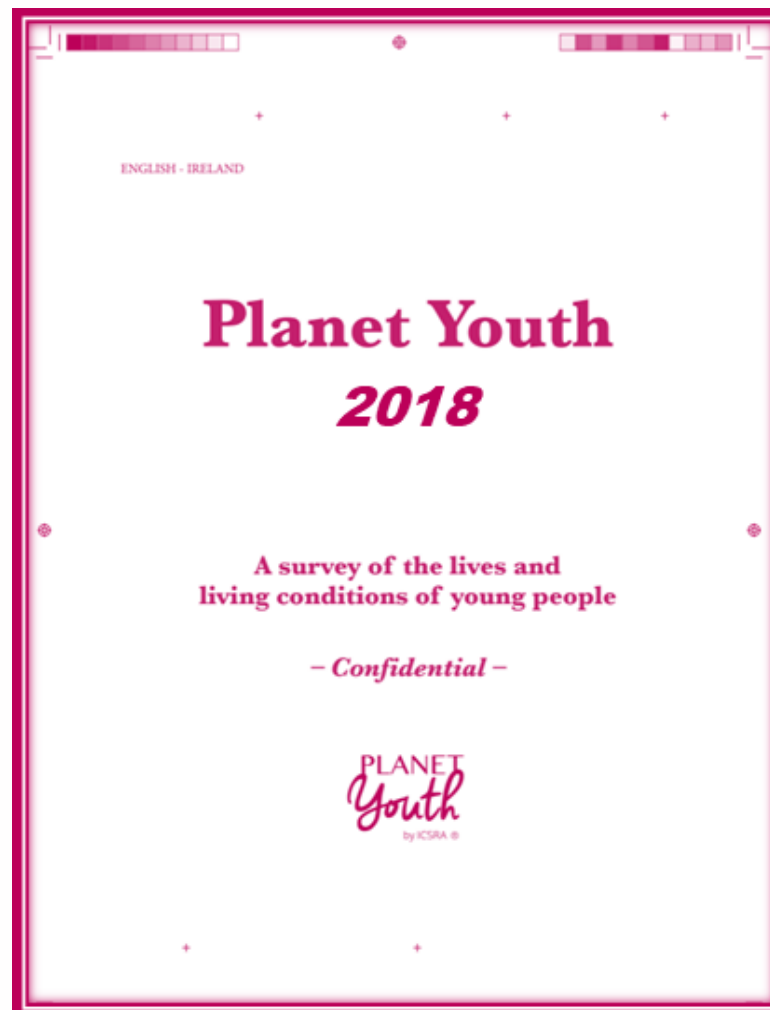


Participants

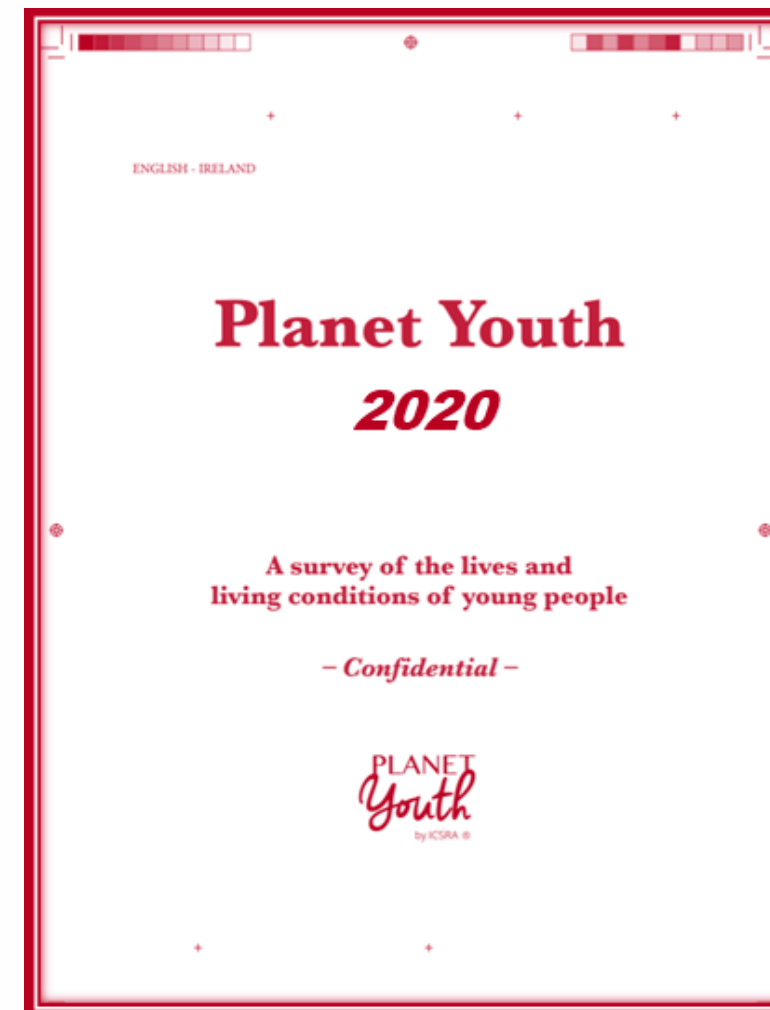


OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

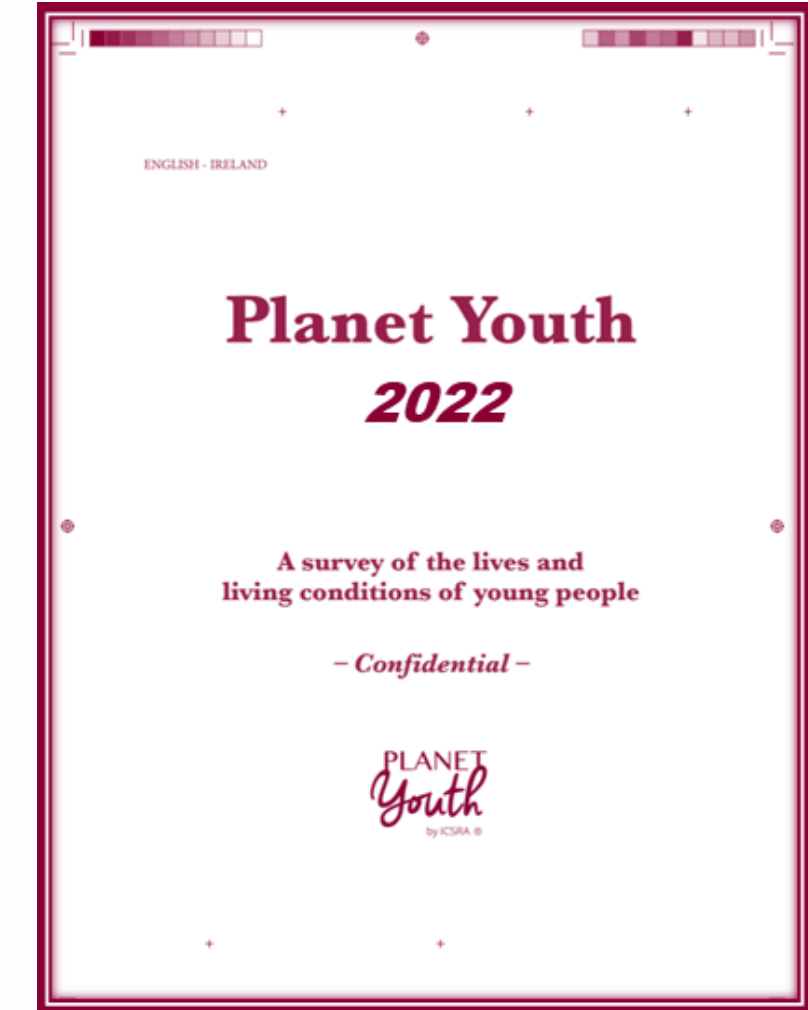
Participants included 15,129 secondary school students from Galway, Mayo, & Roscommon who participated in the 2018, 2020 or 2022 Planet Youth surveys.



2018
n=4848 (1499 Mayo, 534
Roscommon, 2815 Galway)



2020
n=5004 (1523 Mayo, 678
Roscommon, 2803 Galway)



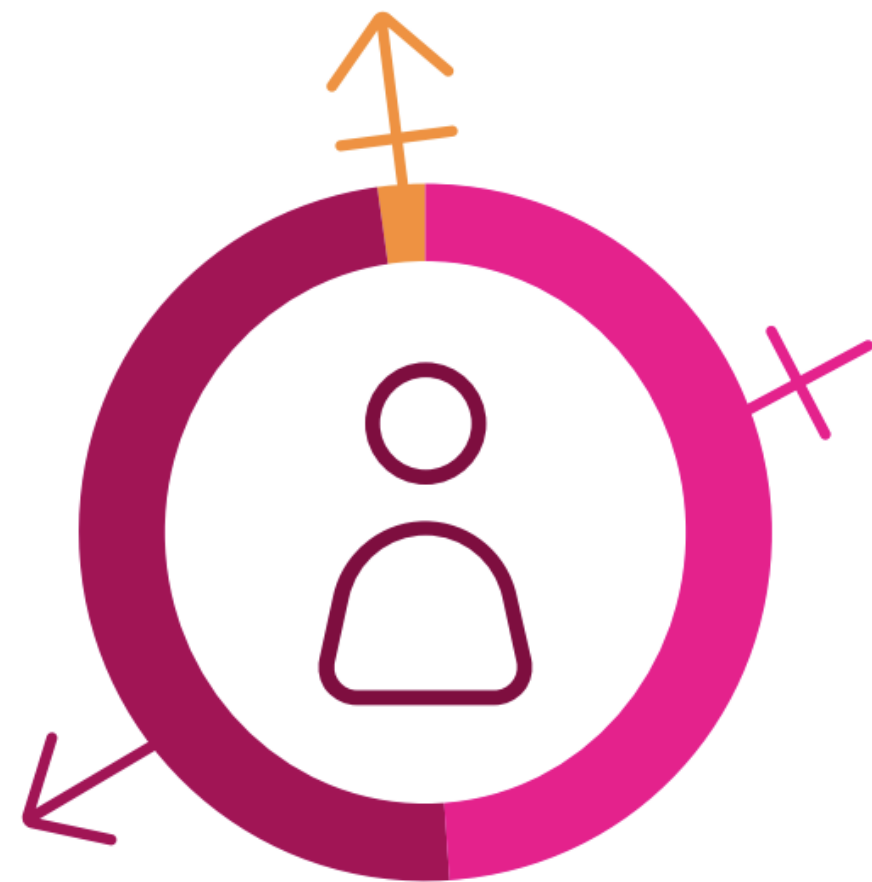
2022
n=5277 (1526 Mayo, 723 Roscommon,
3028 Galway)

Participants



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

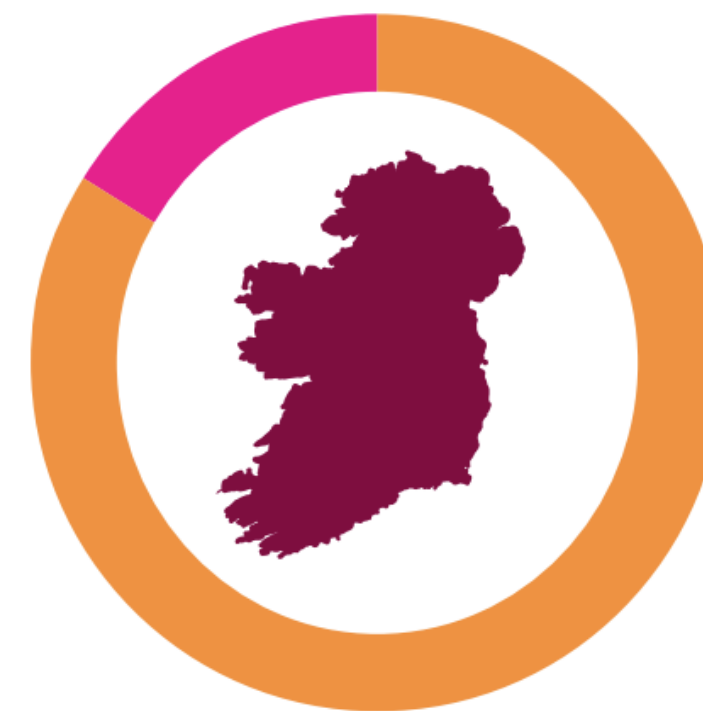
Participants included 15,129 secondary school students from Galway, Mayo, & Roscommon who participated in the 2018, 2020 or 2022 Planet Youth surveys.



49% male, 49% female,
2% non-binary/ prefer
not to say.



Most (88%) youth
were aged between
15-16 years.



The majority (84%)
of students
identified as Irish.



Most (78%) youth
lived in two-parent
households.

Outcome Measures

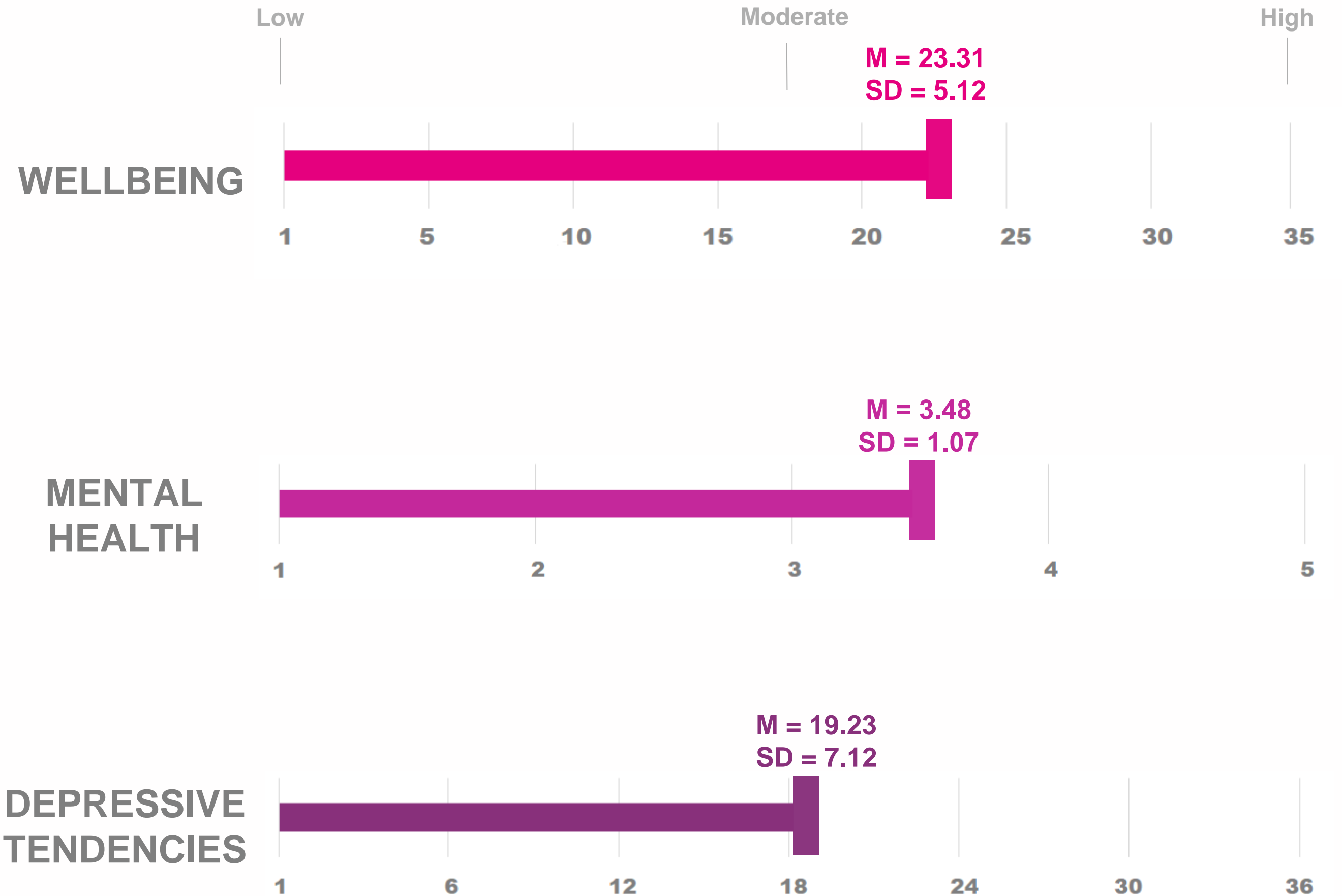
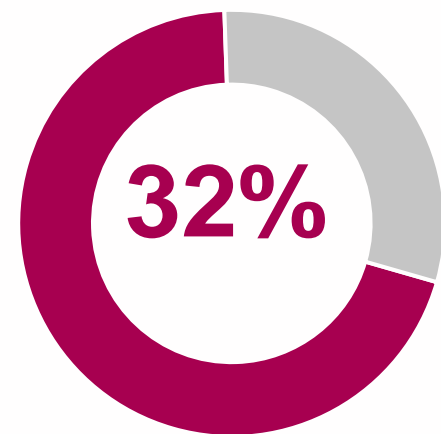
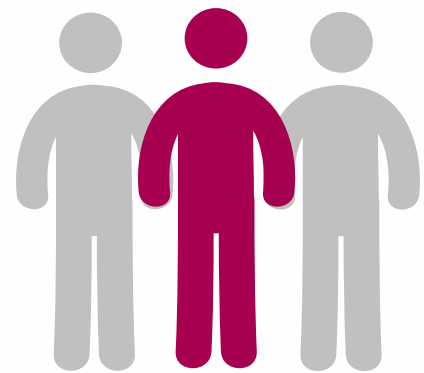


- **Wellbeing** – Scale containing 7-items assessing subjective wellbeing (*e.g., I've been thinking clearly; I've been feeling relaxed*). Scores range from 1-35.
- **Mental Health** – A single item measure: “*How would you rate your mental health?*”. Scores range from 1 (Very Bad) to 5 (Very Good).
- **Depressive Tendencies** – Scale containing 9-items assessing mental discomforts (*e.g., I felt lonely; I thought the future seemed hopeless*). Scores range from 1-36.
- **Self-Harm** - A single item measure: “*During your lifetime have you ever harmed yourself on purpose?*”. Responses coded as YES or NO.

1. Prevalence Rates

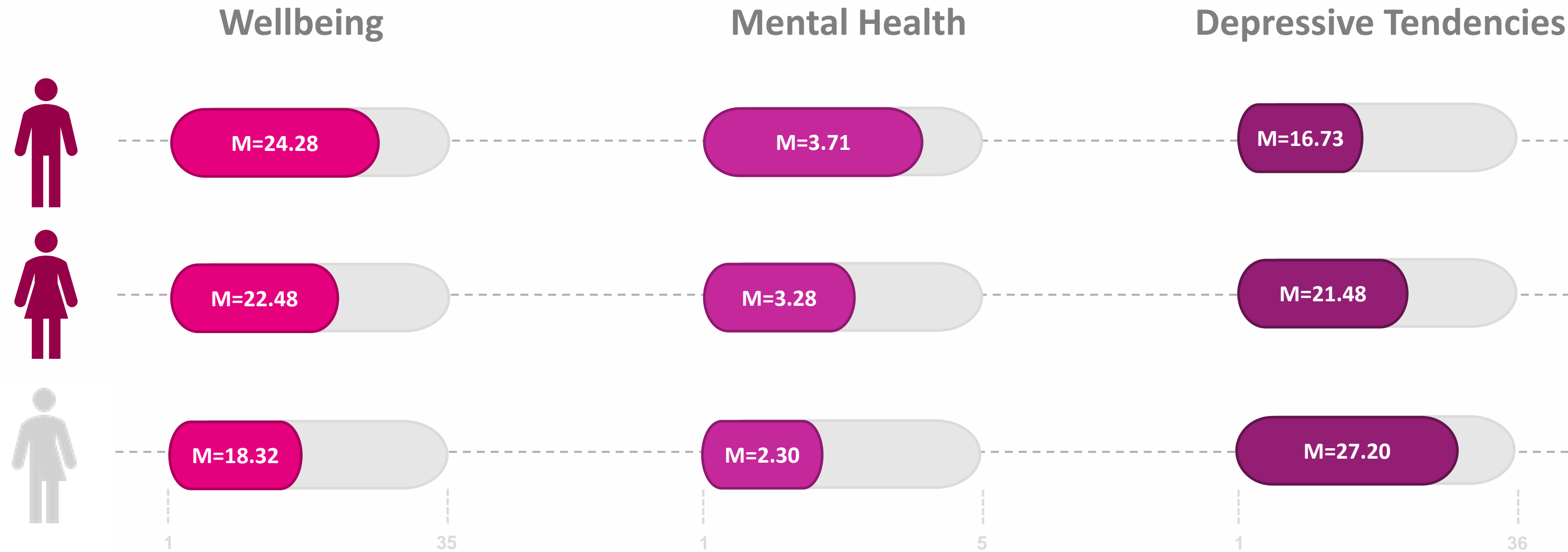


Almost
1 in 3
students
had self-harmed

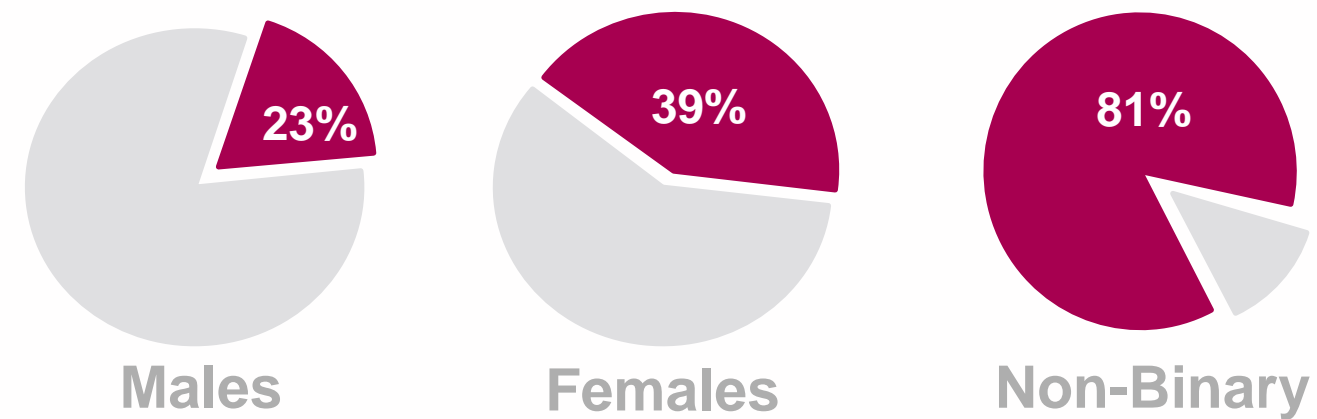


Scale Ranges

2. Trends & Demographics - Gender



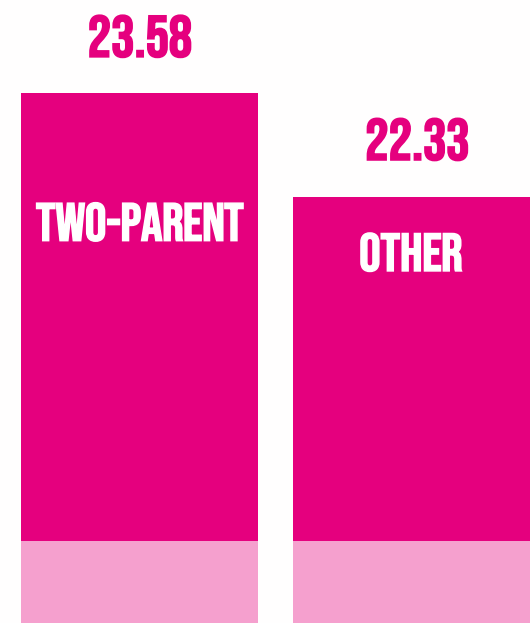
Self-Harm



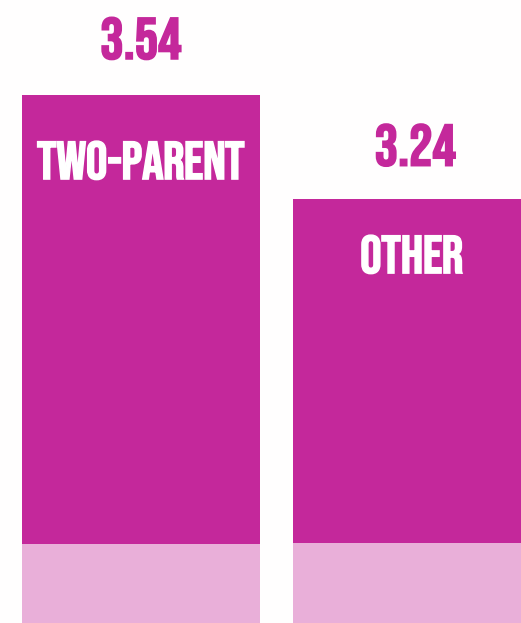
2. Trends & Demographics - *Family Structure*



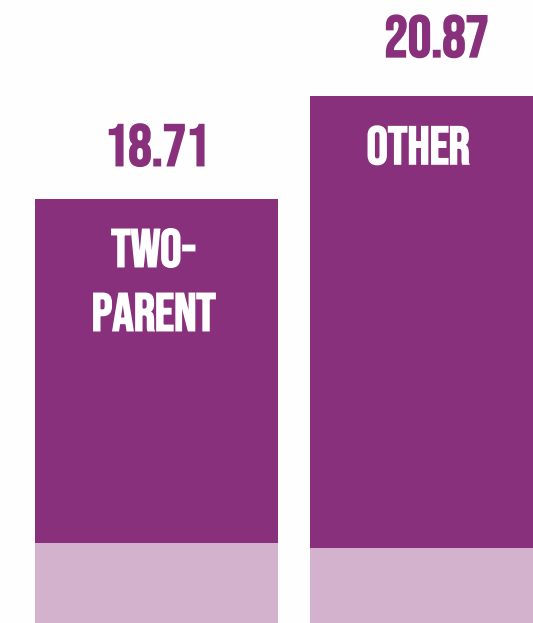
Wellbeing



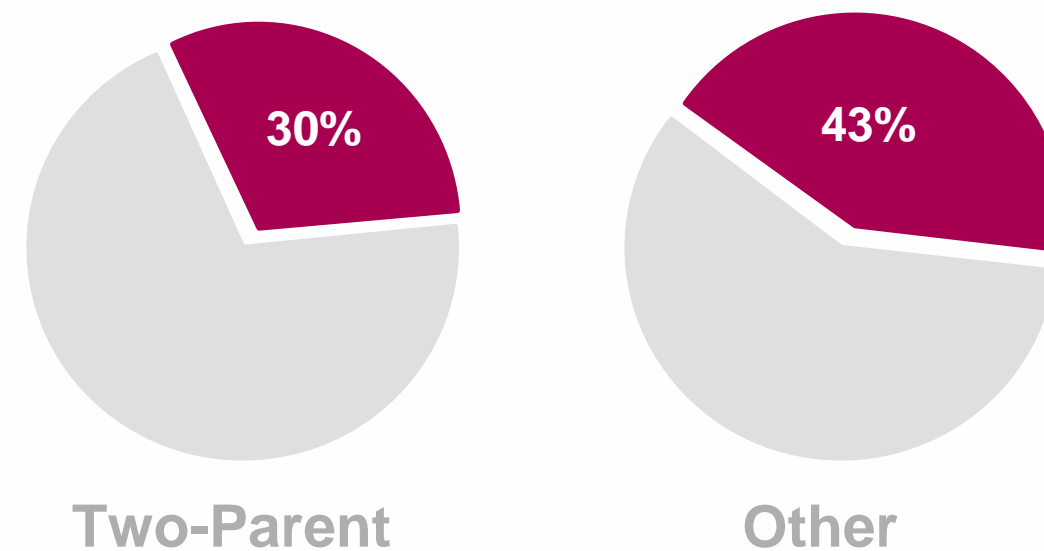
Mental Health



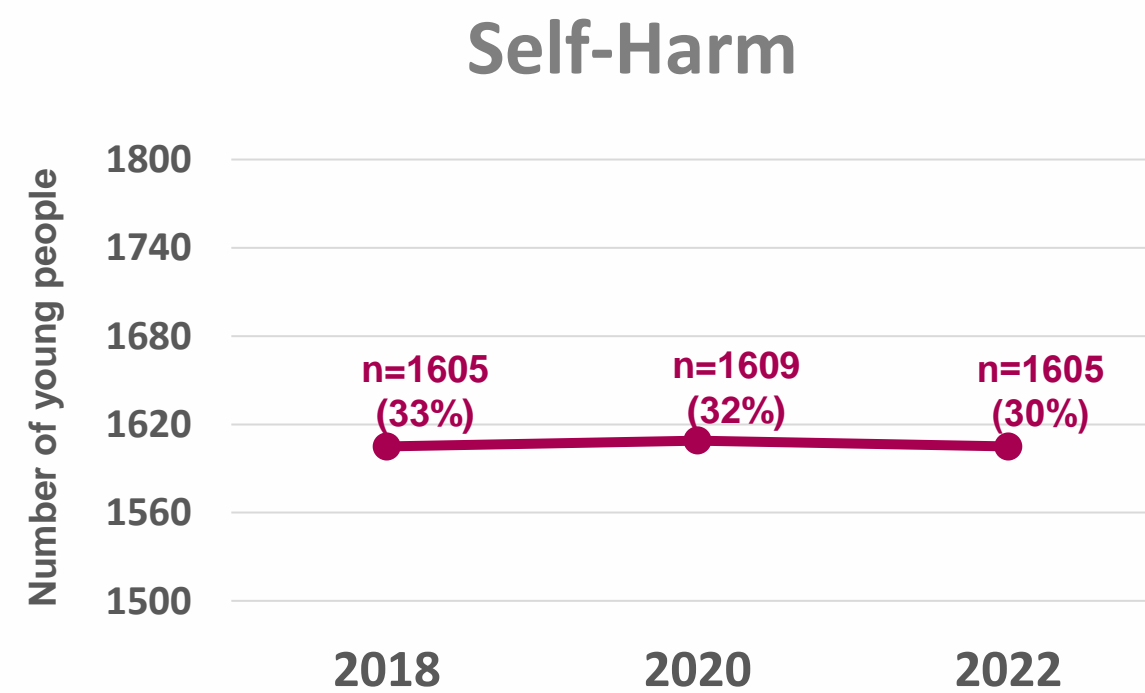
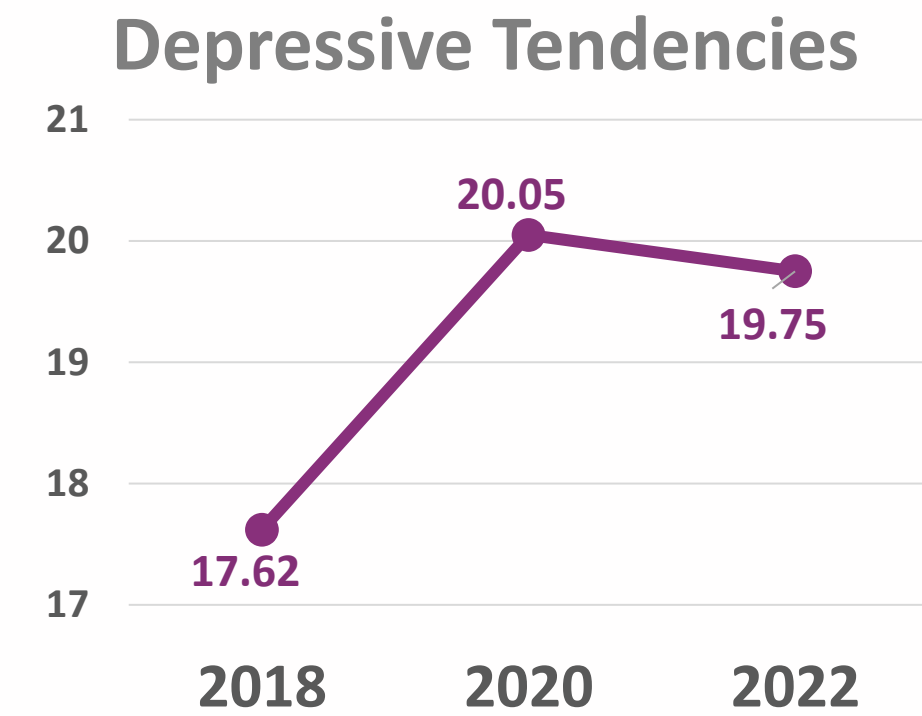
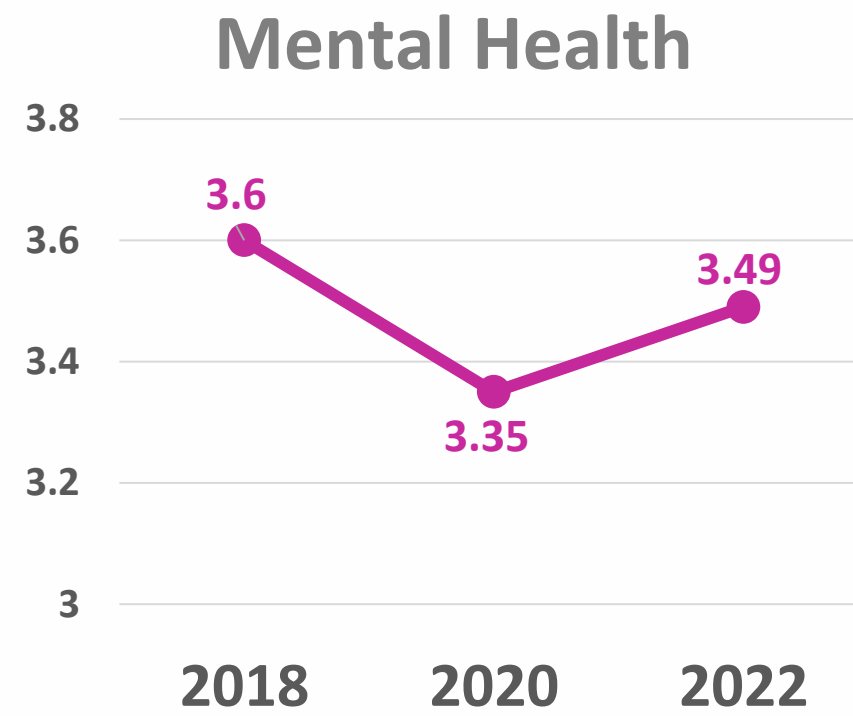
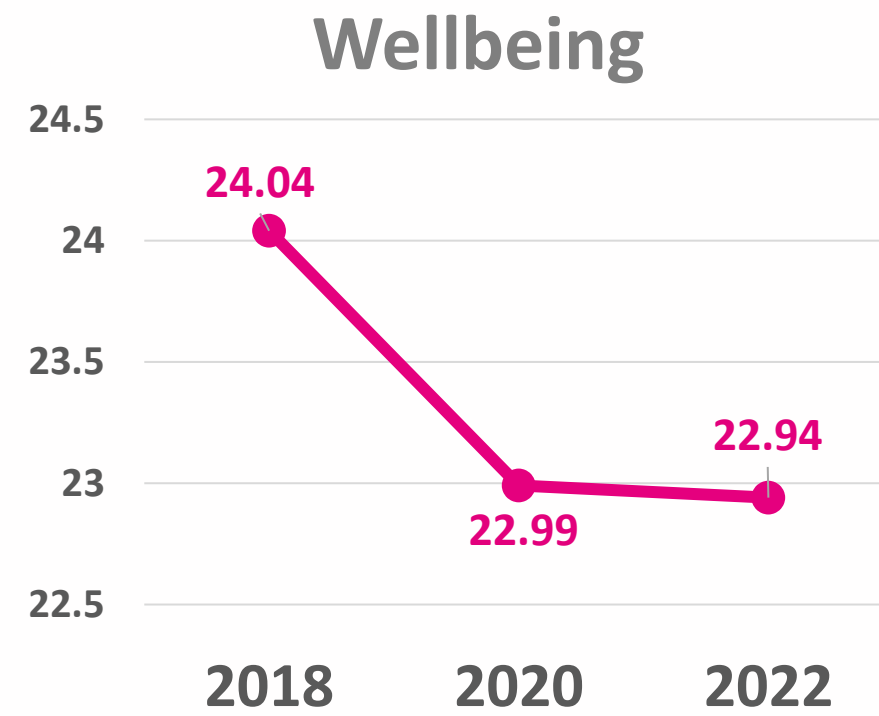
Depressive Tendencies



Self-Harm



2. Trends & Demographics - Time



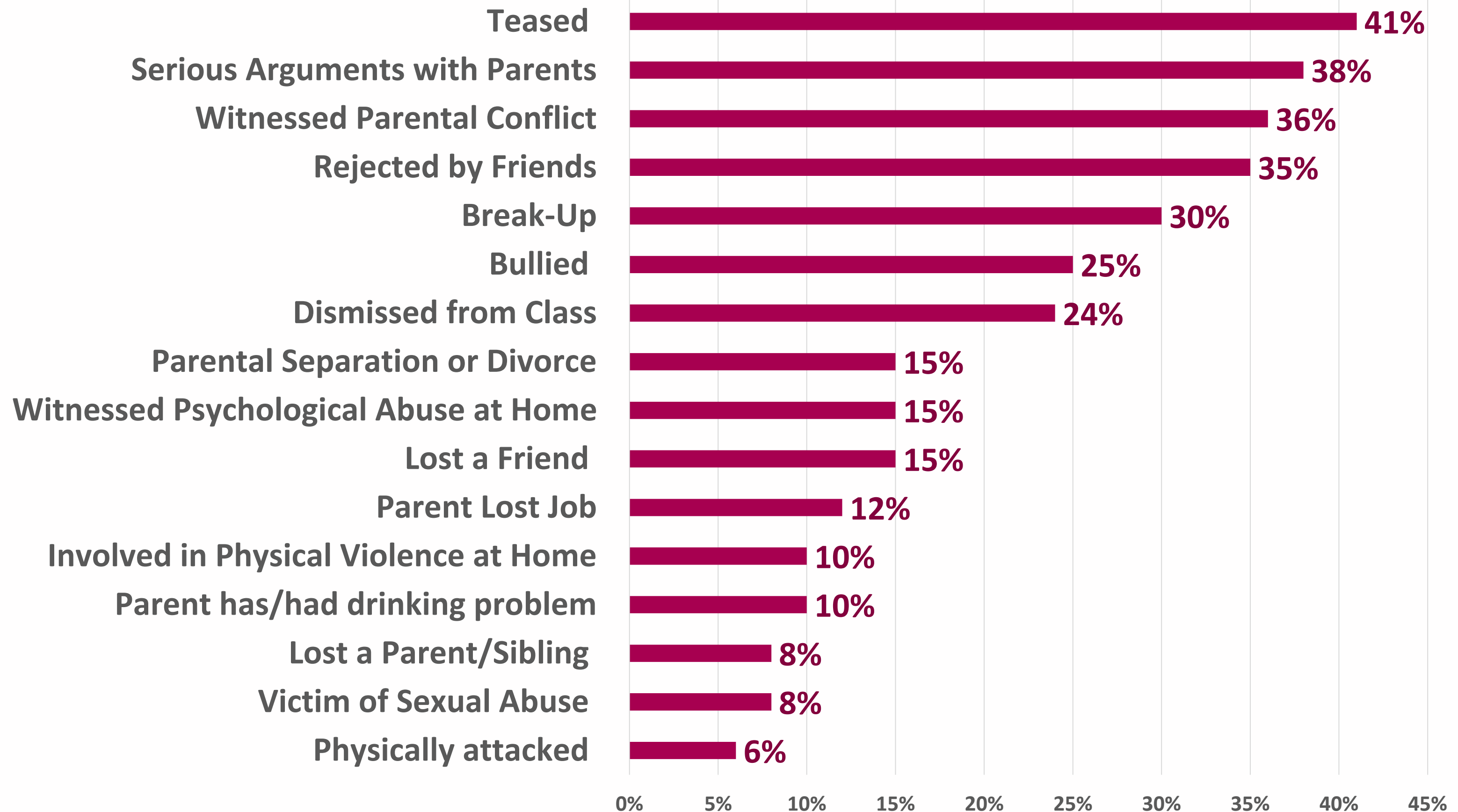
3. Adversity Related Risk



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

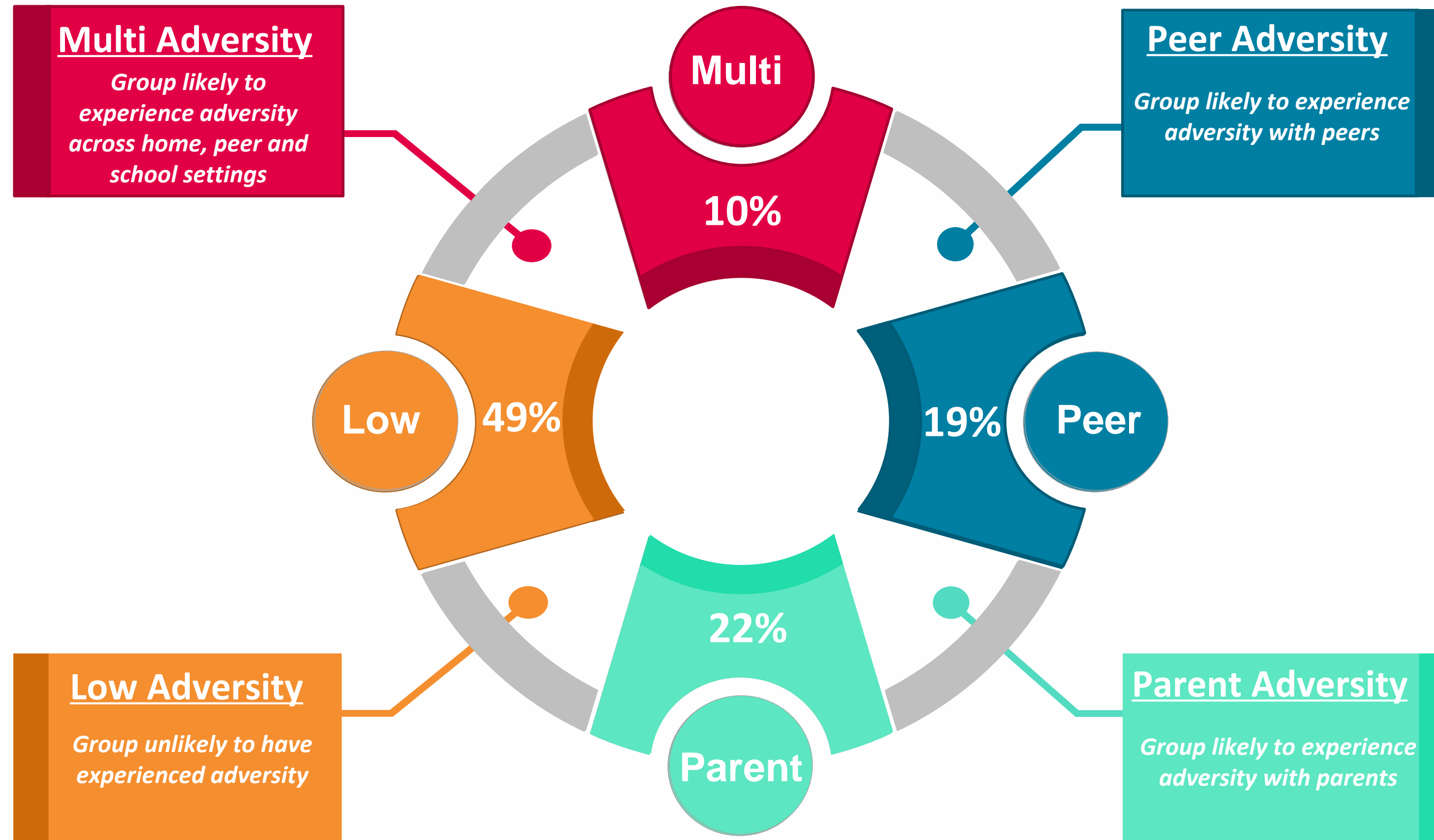
- Evidence suggests that exposure to adverse or negative life events increases risk of self-harm & mental health issues ([Li et al., 2021](#); [Russell et al., 2019](#)).
- Greater research on childhood adversity in Ireland is called for to inform policy and practice ([Prevention & Early Intervention Network, 2019](#)).
- More understanding about the patterns of adversity youth experience outside the home/family context is needed ([Gobel & Cohdres, 2021](#)).

3. Adversity Related Risk



* Findings based on 2020 & 2022 data

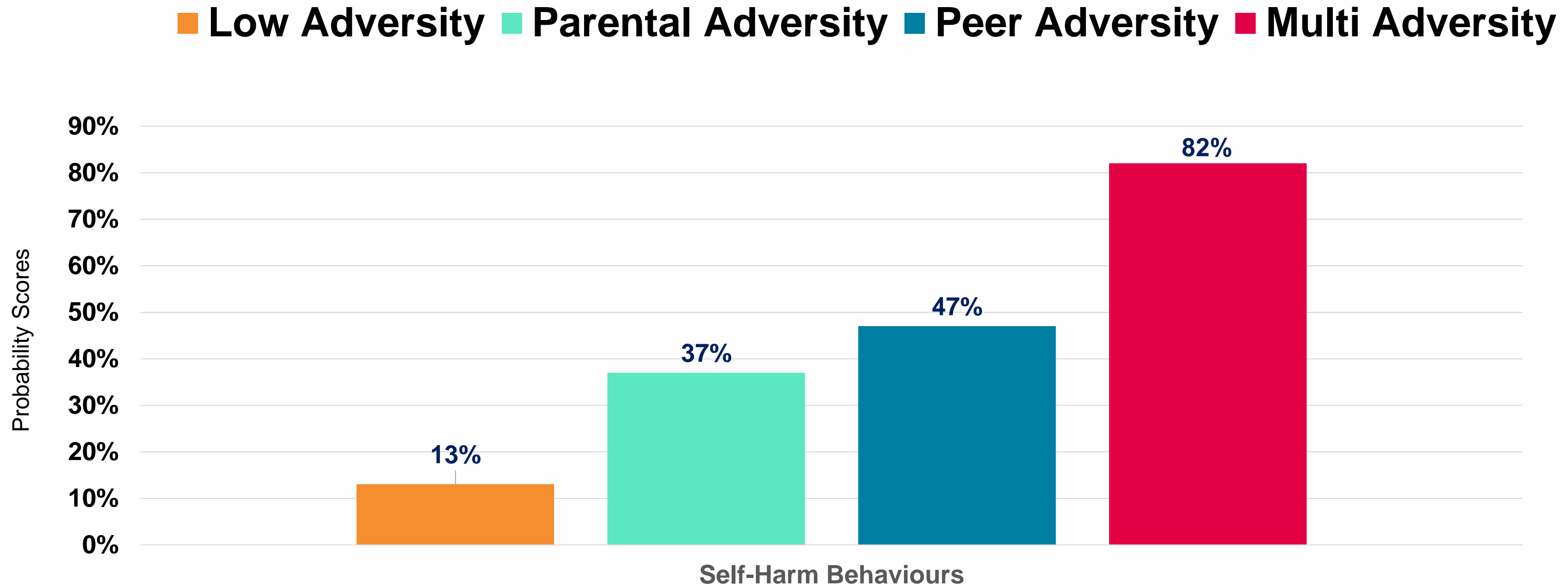
2. Adversity Related Risk



Clustered, multi-group LCA with BCH training weights, identified a 4-class solution as the best fitting model. Average latent class probabilities ranged from .76-.90

* Findings based on 2020 & 2022 data

3. Adversity Related Risk



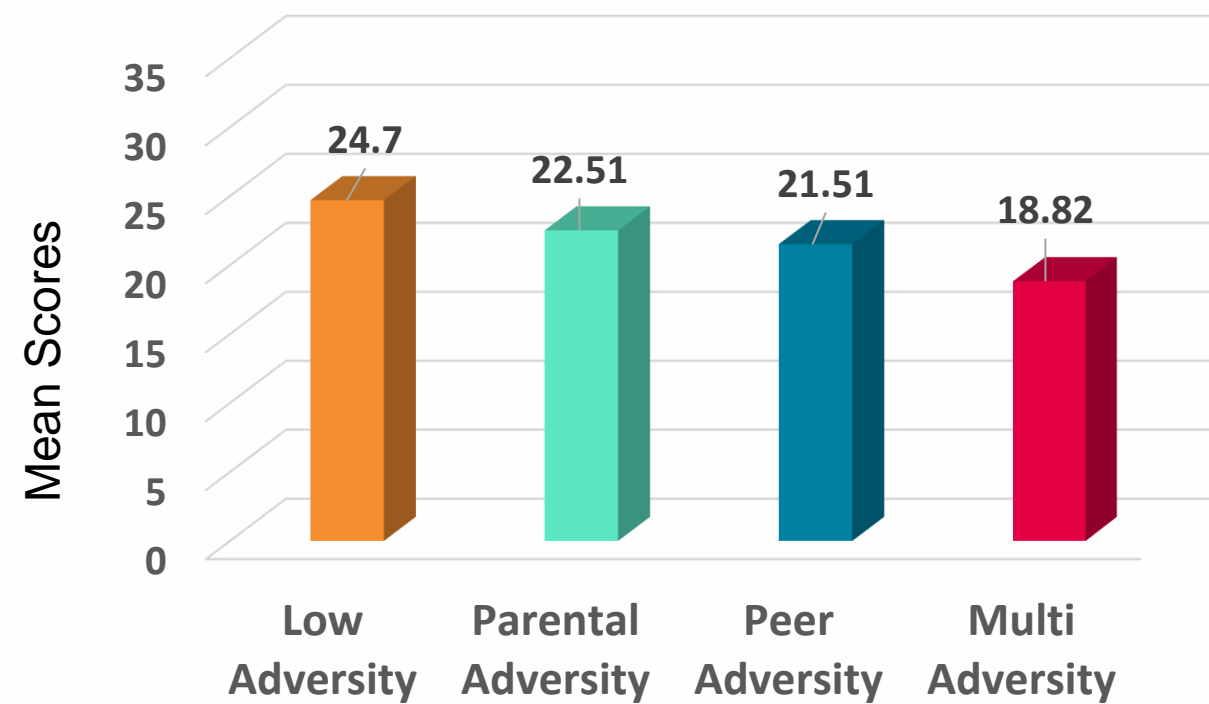
There were significant differences in self-harm behaviours between the four adversity groups.

* Findings based on 2020 & 2022 data

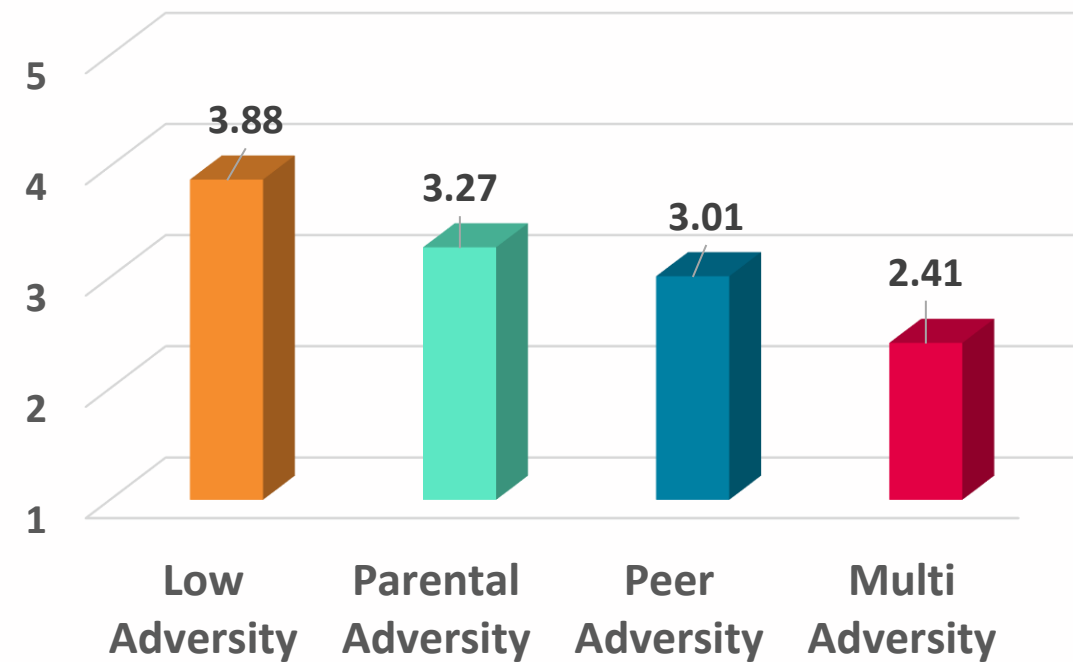
3. Adversity Related Risk



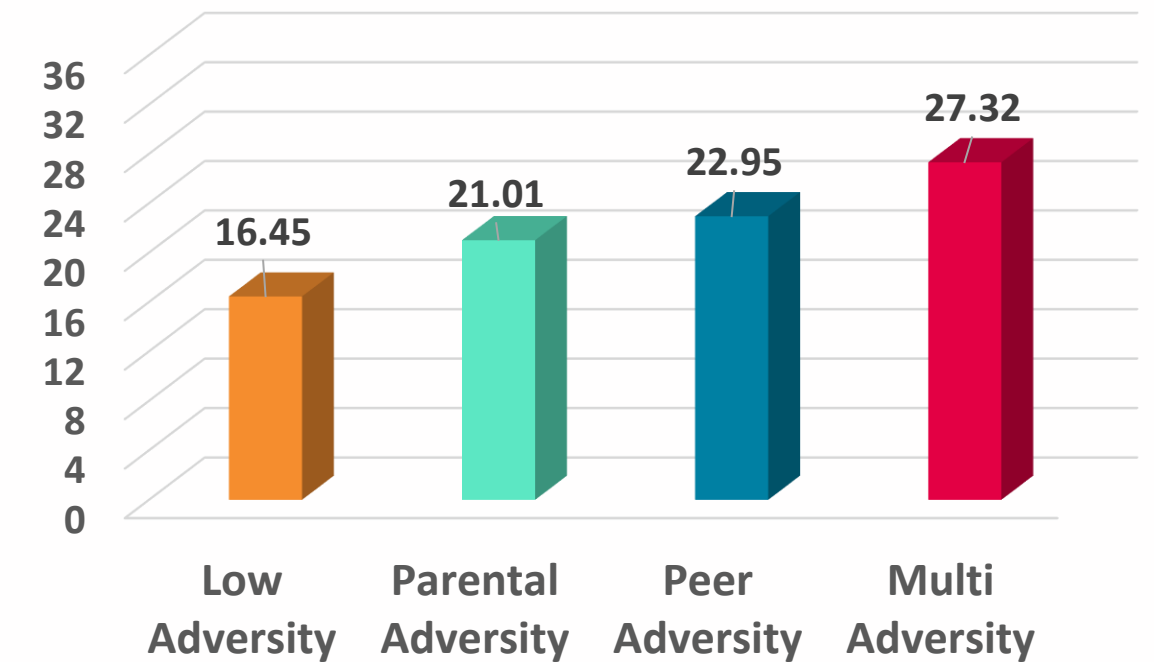
Wellbeing



Mental Health



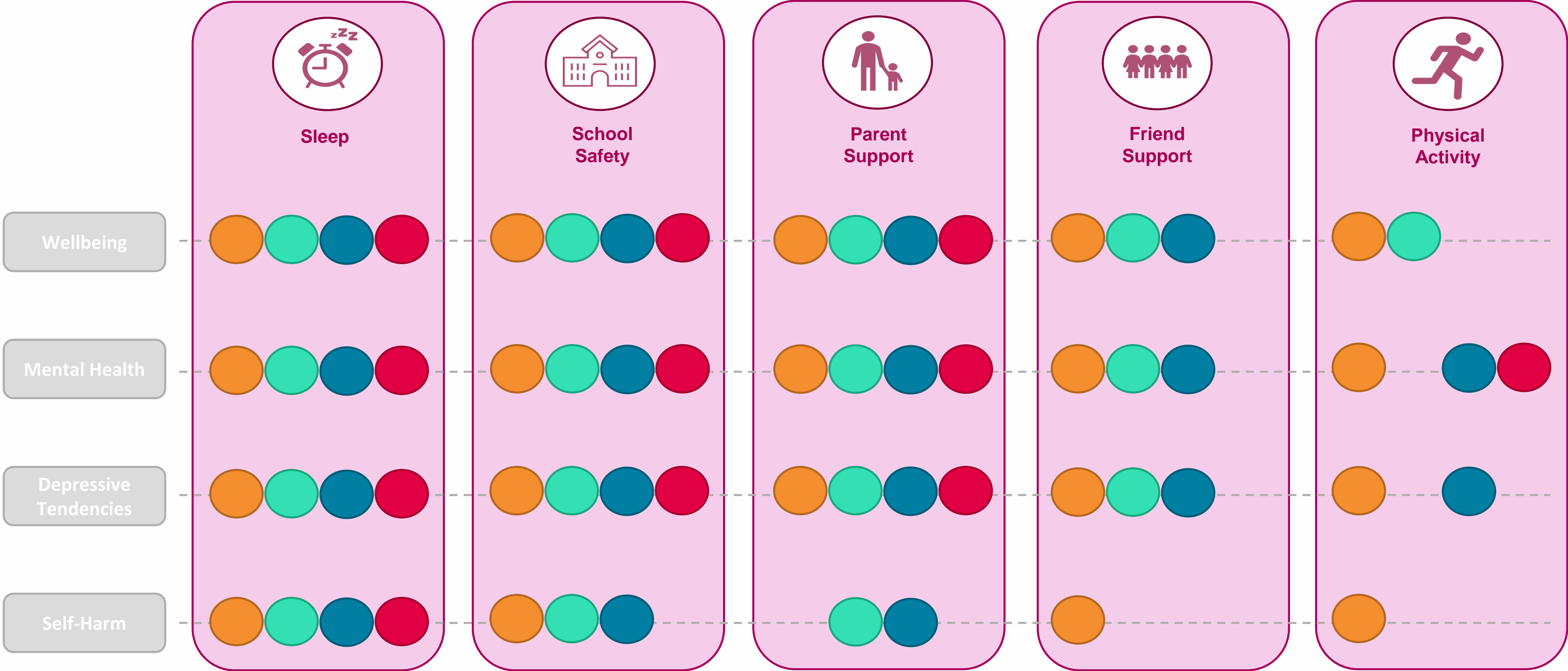
Depressive Tendencies



Significant differences between the adversity groups were observed for mental health, wellbeing and depressive tendencies.

* Findings based on 2020 & 2022 data

4. Protective Factors



● = Low Adversity Group
 ● = Parental Adversity Group
 ● = Peer Adversity Group
 ● = Multi Adversity Group

Conclusions

- Declines in youth mental health outcomes over time were evident.
- Youth experience adversity across different ecological contexts
- Youth who experience adversity across multiple domains are at greatest risk of experiencing poor outcomes.
- Protective factors operate at both the community and individual level.



THANK YOU

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the Inform-YSP Youth Advisory Panel, and Professors Brendan Bunting (Ulster University) & Rory O'Connor (University of Glasgow) for their help and advice.

This research was funded by the Health Research Board: SDAP-2021-025