



WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE



*Youth Mental Health:
Understanding the
Challenges and
Opportunities*



WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2023 6:00 PM
Sheraton Needham | Refreshments & Panel Discussion



**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

GRADUATE EDUCATION IN PSYCHOLOGY

“The Kids Are Not All Right”:
**Responding to the Mental Health Needs of Youth
from Marginalized & Underserved Communities**

Gemima St. Louis, PhD
Vice President for Workforce Initiatives
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Prevalence of Youth Mental Illnesses

➤ National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)

- Health Resources & Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau
- Collects data on the health and well-being of children ages 0-17 years
- Largest national and state-level annual survey of the health care needs of children, their families, and their communities

➤ Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2021)
- Tracks behaviors that can lead to poor health in students grades 9 through 12



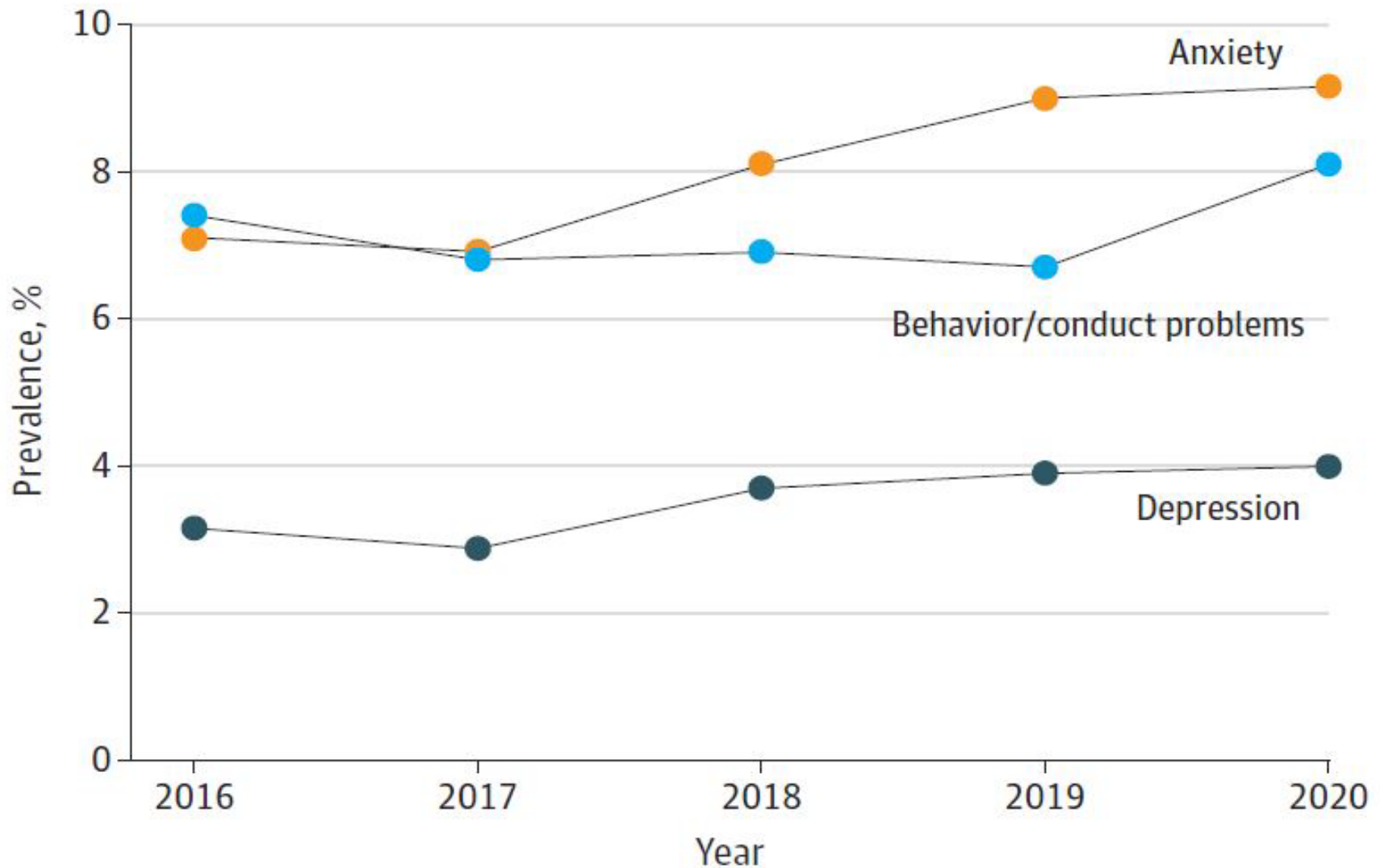
Prevalence of Mental Illnesses among Youth

➤ Key Findings (NSCH, 2022)

- Between 2016 and 2020, the number of youth ages 3 to 17 with a mental illness rose from 5.8 million to 7.3 million
- An increase of 1.5 million



Prevalence of Mental Illnesses among Youth



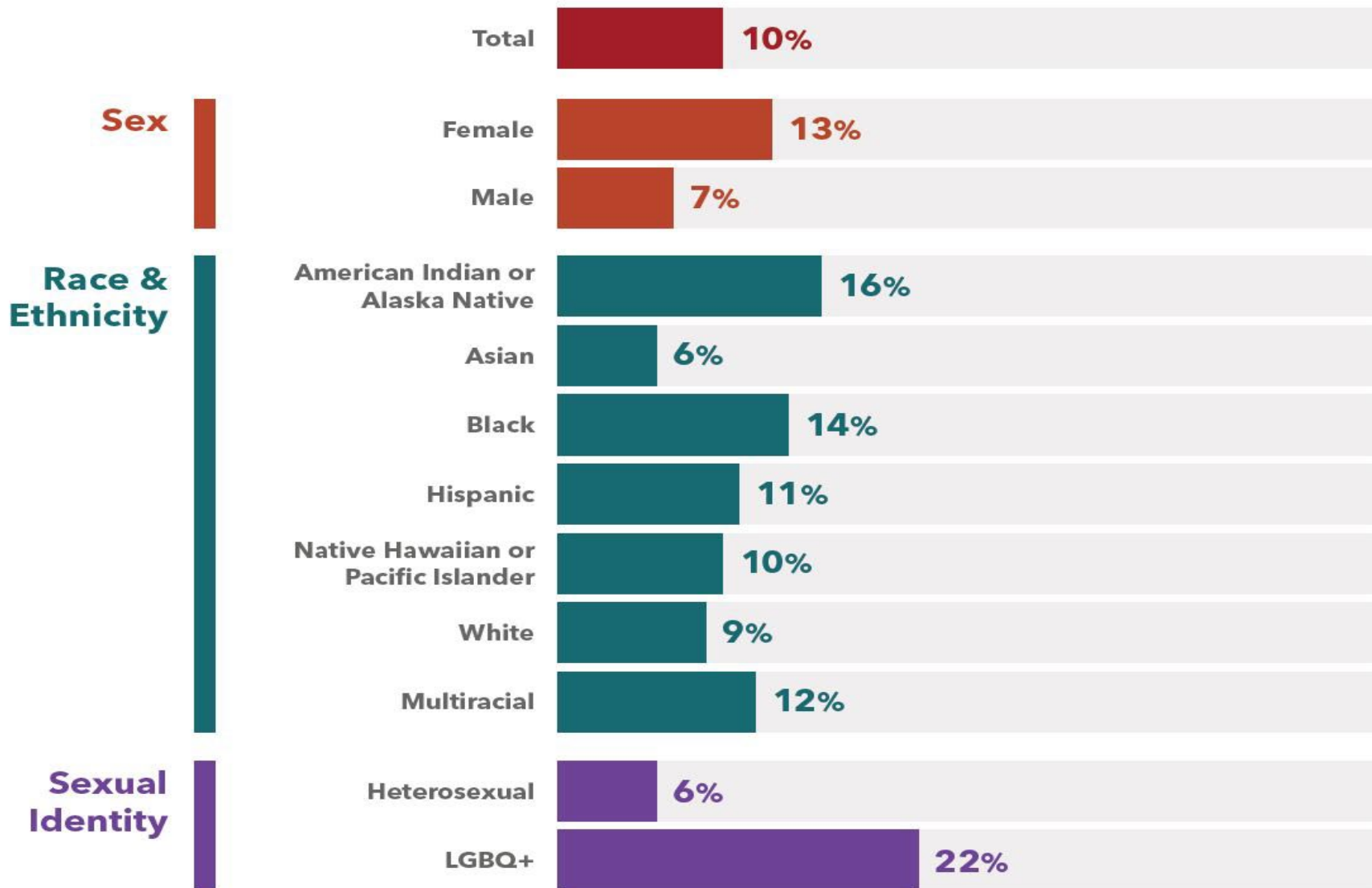
Prevalence of Mental Illnesses among Youth

CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS, 2021)

- Significant disparities based on gender, ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation.
 - Higher rates of bullying, and physical and sexual violence



Percentage of High School Students Who
Attempted Suicide during the Past Year,
by Demographic Characteristics, United States, YRBS, 2021

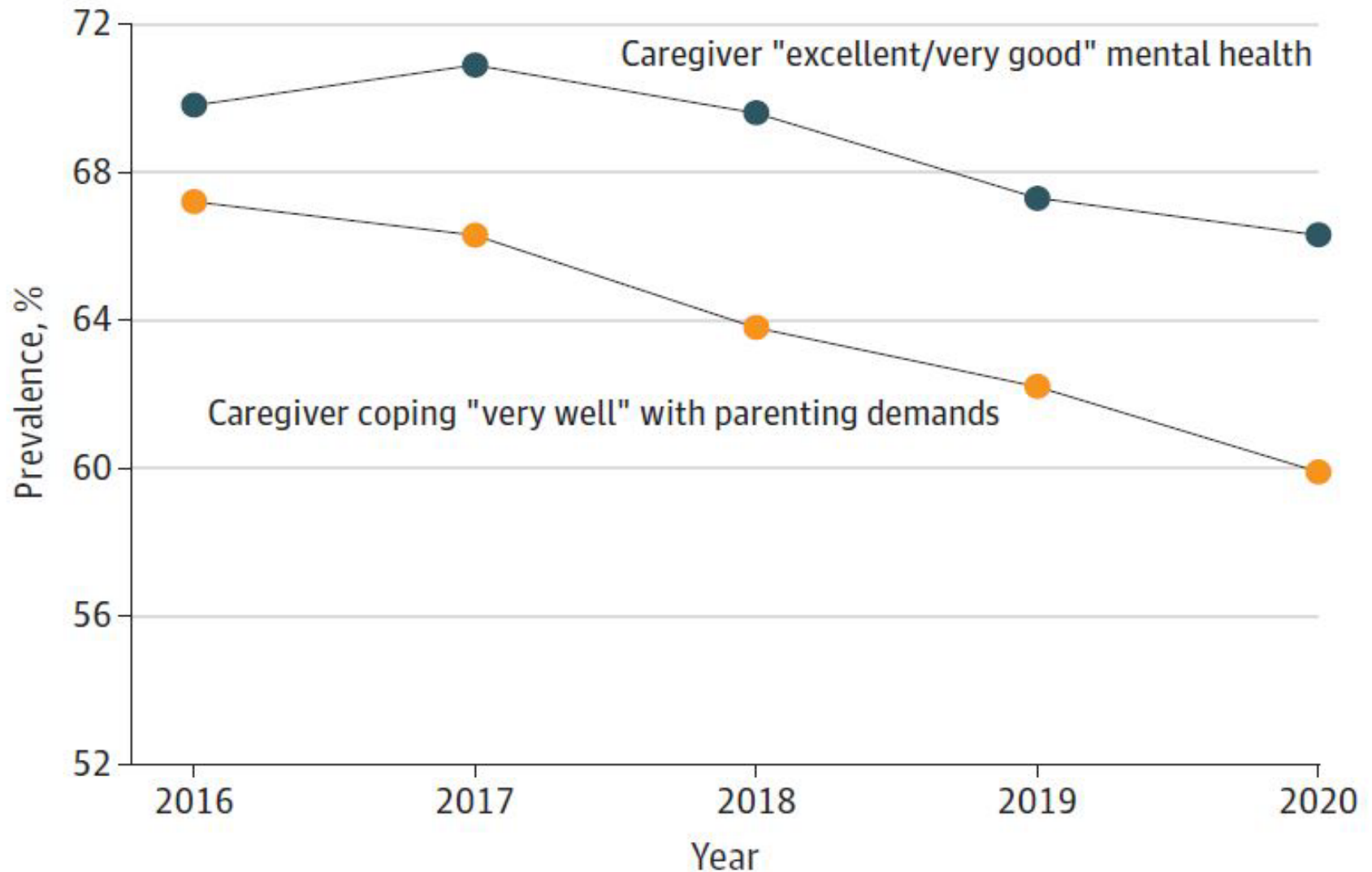


Social Determinants of Health Disparities Impacting Youth & Families

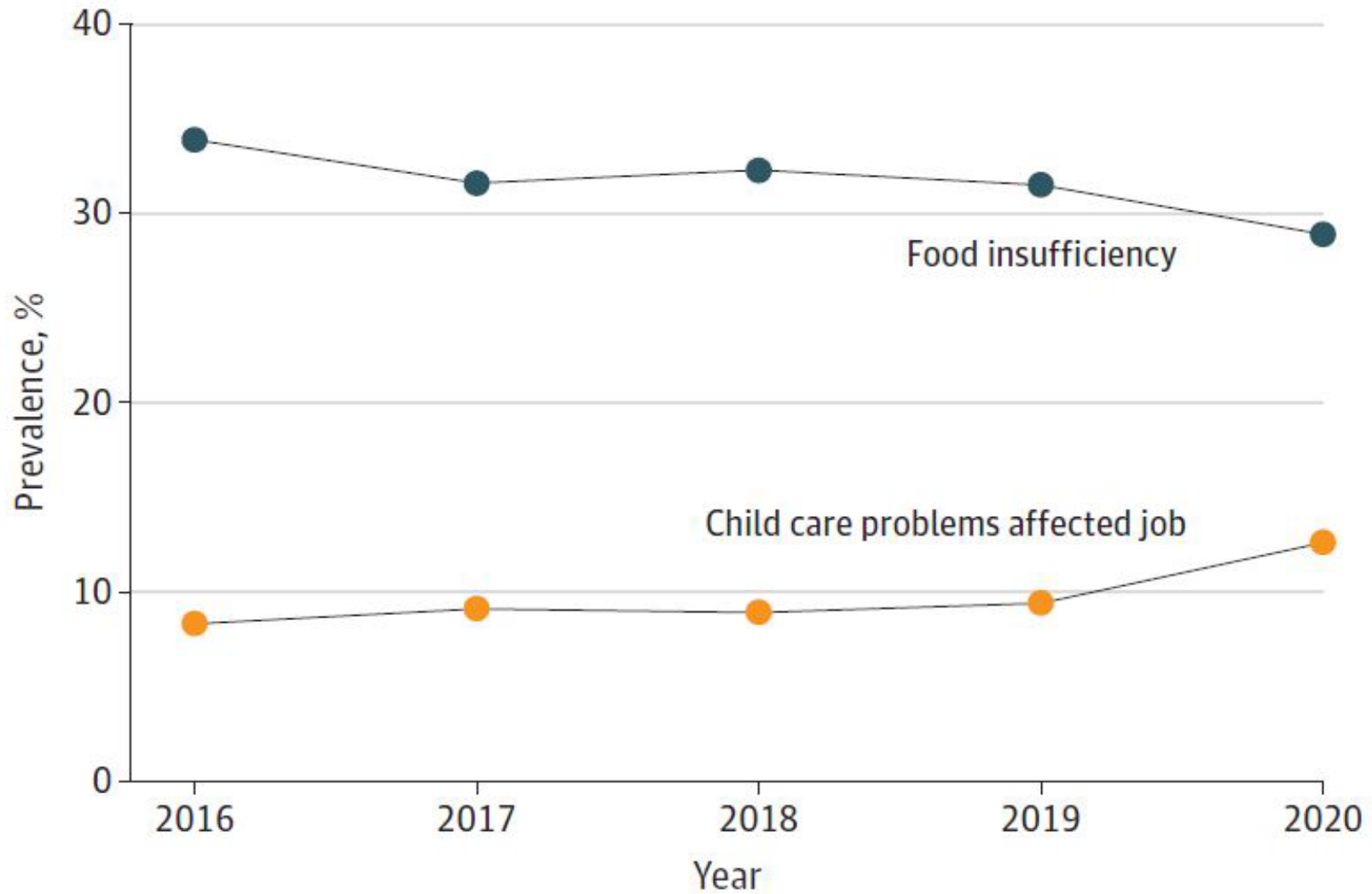
- Family Structure
 - Socioeconomic Status
 - Unemployment
- School Environment
- Exposure to Community Violence
- Experiences of Racism, Discrimination & Other Systemic Inequities



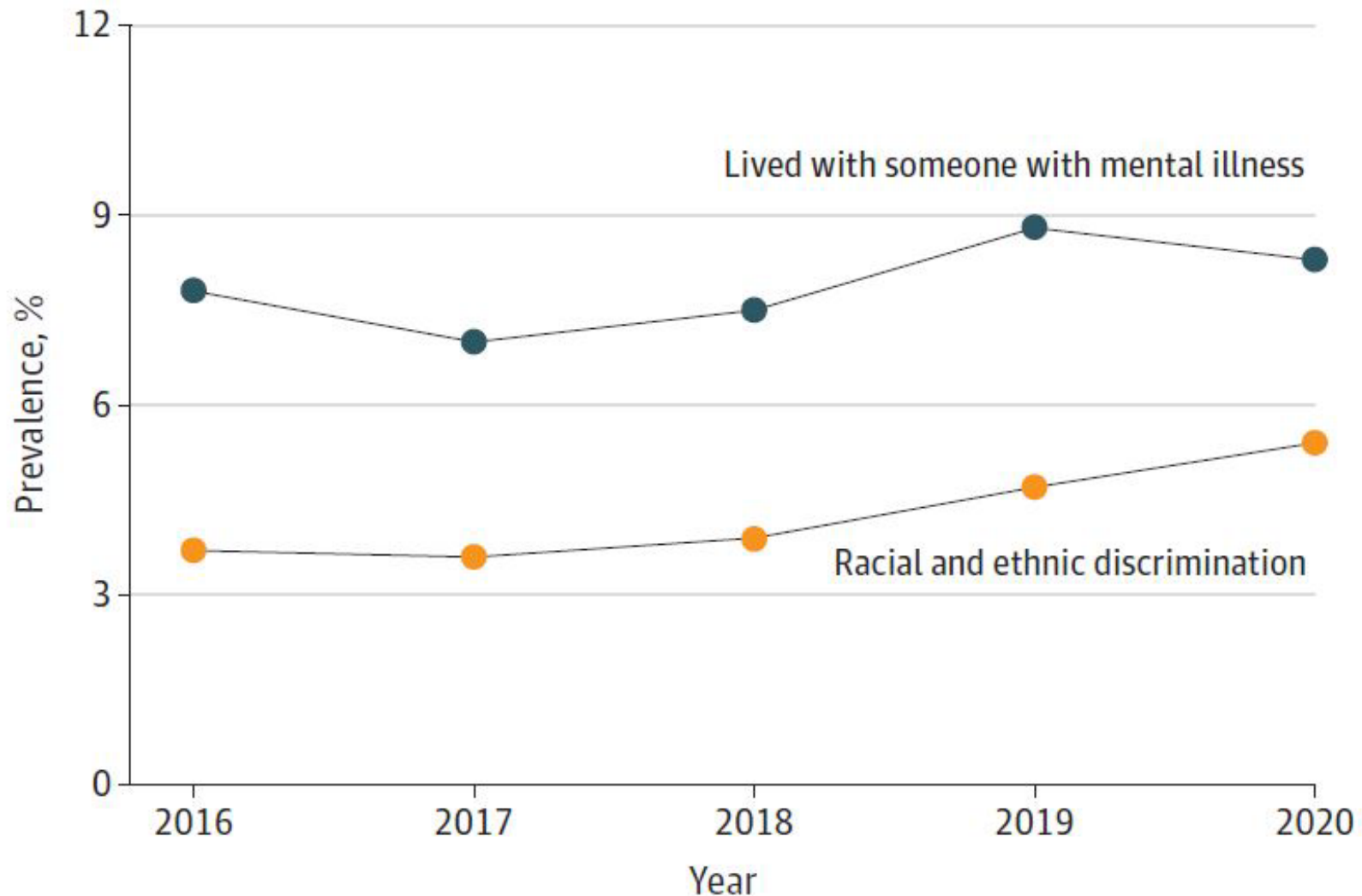
Caregiver/Parental Well-Being



Food Insecurity

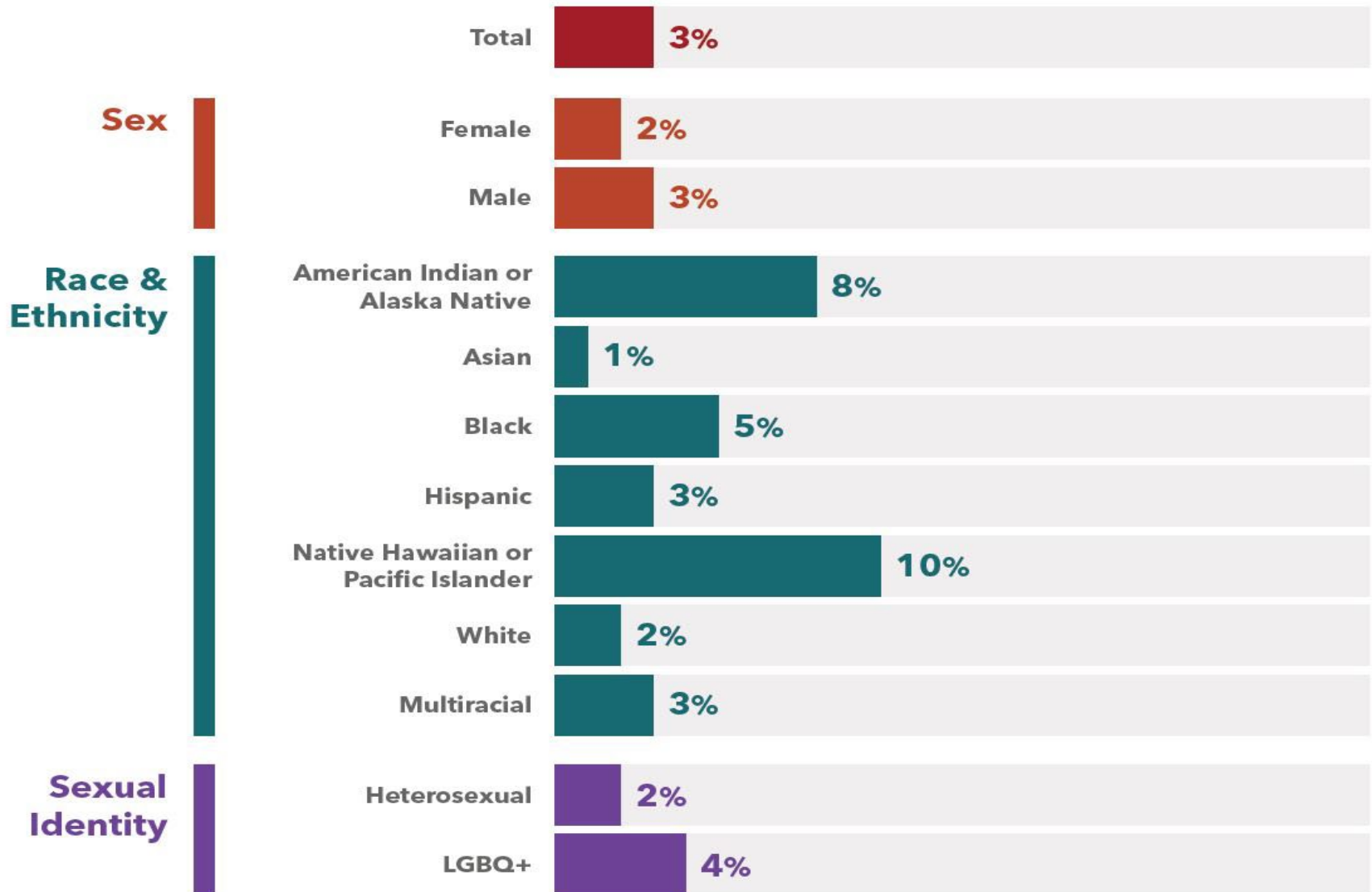


Exposure to Racism & Discrimination



Percentage of High School Students Who

Experienced **Unstable Housing** during the Past 30 Days,
by Demographic Characteristics, United States, YRBS, 2021



Responding to the Need



1. ADDRESS SYSTEMIC RACISM AND INEQUITIES IN HEALTH

- Establish an administration leadership structure that is accountable for a “whole of government” and community-informed approach to health equity
- Establish a four-year plan for reducing inequities in health care coverage, access, quality, consumer experience, and outcomes
- Empower and fund the communities most impacted by inequities to advance health equity at the community level



3. CONFRONT THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Establish a cross-sector cabinet of leaders charged with planning to improve the mental health of Massachusetts children and youth
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the mental health care continuum for children and youth, and develop initiatives to address gaps
- Craft a 10-year strategy across all sectors serving Massachusetts’ children to improve the health and well-being of children and youth
- Establish a way of allocating federal and state funding across multiple sectors to support the strategy

A Focus on Health Care:

Five Key Priorities for the
Next Administration

DECEMBER 2022

Responding to the Need

- Prioritize meeting the basic needs of youth and families.
- Ensure all youth have access to the mental health care they need, when and where they need it
- Invest in prevention-based programs (act early)
- Address social determinants of health (i.e., systems- and policies-level interventions)



References

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. (2022). A Focus on health care: Five key priorities for the next administration. Retrieved from [https://www.bluecrossmafoundation.org/publication/strengthening-health-care-commonwealth-priorities-next-administration#:~:text=This%20report%20synthesizes%20the%20findings,3\)%20confronting%20the%20mental%20health](https://www.bluecrossmafoundation.org/publication/strengthening-health-care-commonwealth-priorities-next-administration#:~:text=This%20report%20synthesizes%20the%20findings,3)%20confronting%20the%20mental%20health)
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. *Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011-2021*. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/yrbs_data_summary_and_trends.htm
- Lebrun-Harris, L. A., Ghandour, R. M., Kogan, M. D., & Warren, M. D. (2022). Five-year trends in US children's health and well-being, 2016-2020. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 176(7), e220056. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.0056
- Murthy, V. H. (2022). The mental health of minority and marginalized young people: An opportunity for action. *Public Health Reports*, 137(4), 613-616.



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