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HEALTH ALLIANCE**  
Redefining Health for Kids and Teens

# How You(th) are the Key to Tackling Stigma on Mental Health

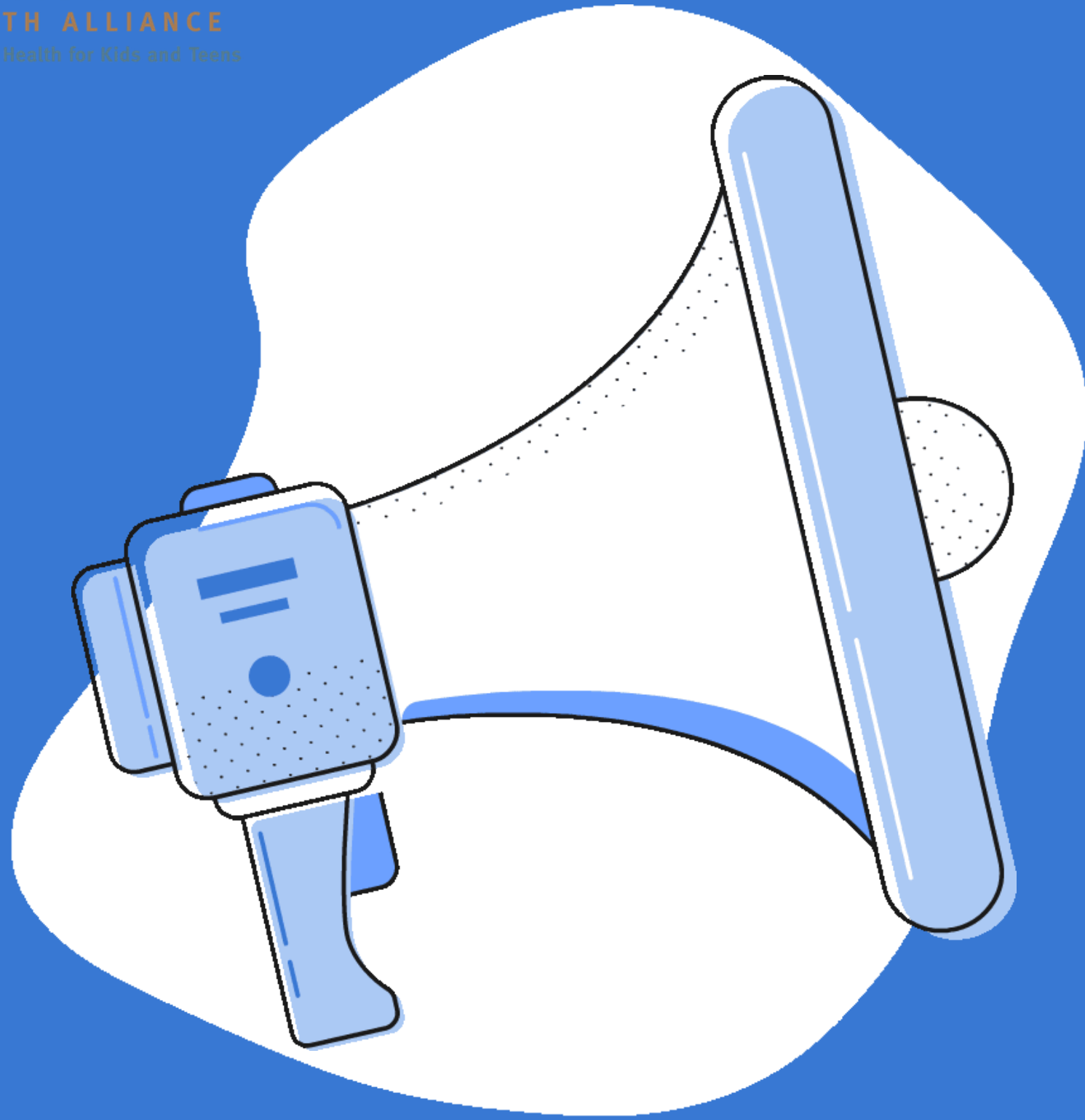
School-Based Health Alliance  
Youth Advisory Council





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# Practice Scenarios

# SCENARIO 1

Alexa has been feeling sad for a few weeks now. She's stopped doing things that she used to love like playing soccer and painting, and she always feels really tired. She told her parents about how she has been feeling, but they told her to "just get over it." Alexa doesn't know what to do and feels like she's trapped.

- What mental health issue do you think is present?



# SCENARIO 1

Alexa has been feeling sad for a few weeks now. She's stopped doing things that she used to love like playing soccer and painting, and she always feels really tired. She told her parents about how she has been feeling, but they told her to "just get over it." Alexa doesn't know what to do and feels like she's trapped.

- Is there stigma present?
- If there is, how do you think the situation could have been handled better?



# SCENARIO 2

**Emmanuel was sexually abused when he was younger. He frequently experiences nightmares, flashbacks, and panic attacks. He really wants to go to his school-based health center to get help, but he is scared of what his guardians and peers might think. He doesn't want them to think he is crazy or sick.**

- What mental health issue do you think is present?



# SCENARIO 2

**Emmanuel was sexually abused when he was younger. He frequently experiences nightmares, flashbacks, and panic attacks. He really wants to go to his school-based health center to get help, but he is scared of what his guardians and peers might think. He doesn't want them to think he is crazy or sick.**

- Is there stigma present?
- If there is, how do you think the situation could have been handled better?



# SCENARIO 3

**Max has frequent mood swings. One day, his friend Blake told him to “stop being so bipolar.” Max is now really concerned that he may be bipolar.**

**Meanwhile, another friend of theirs, Jamie, actually has bipolar disorder and takes offense to the term bipolar being used incorrectly.**

- **What mental health issue do you think is present?**



# SCENARIO 3

**Max has frequent mood swings. One day, his friend Blake told him to “stop being so bipolar.” Max is now really concerned that he may be bipolar.**

**Meanwhile, another friend of theirs, Jamie, actually has bipolar disorder and takes offense to the term bipolar being used incorrectly.**

- **Is there stigma present?**
- **If there is, how do you think the situation could have been handled better?**





# Break the Stigma Video

Created by Children's Hospital Colorado





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# Break the Stigma Video

## Key Takeaways

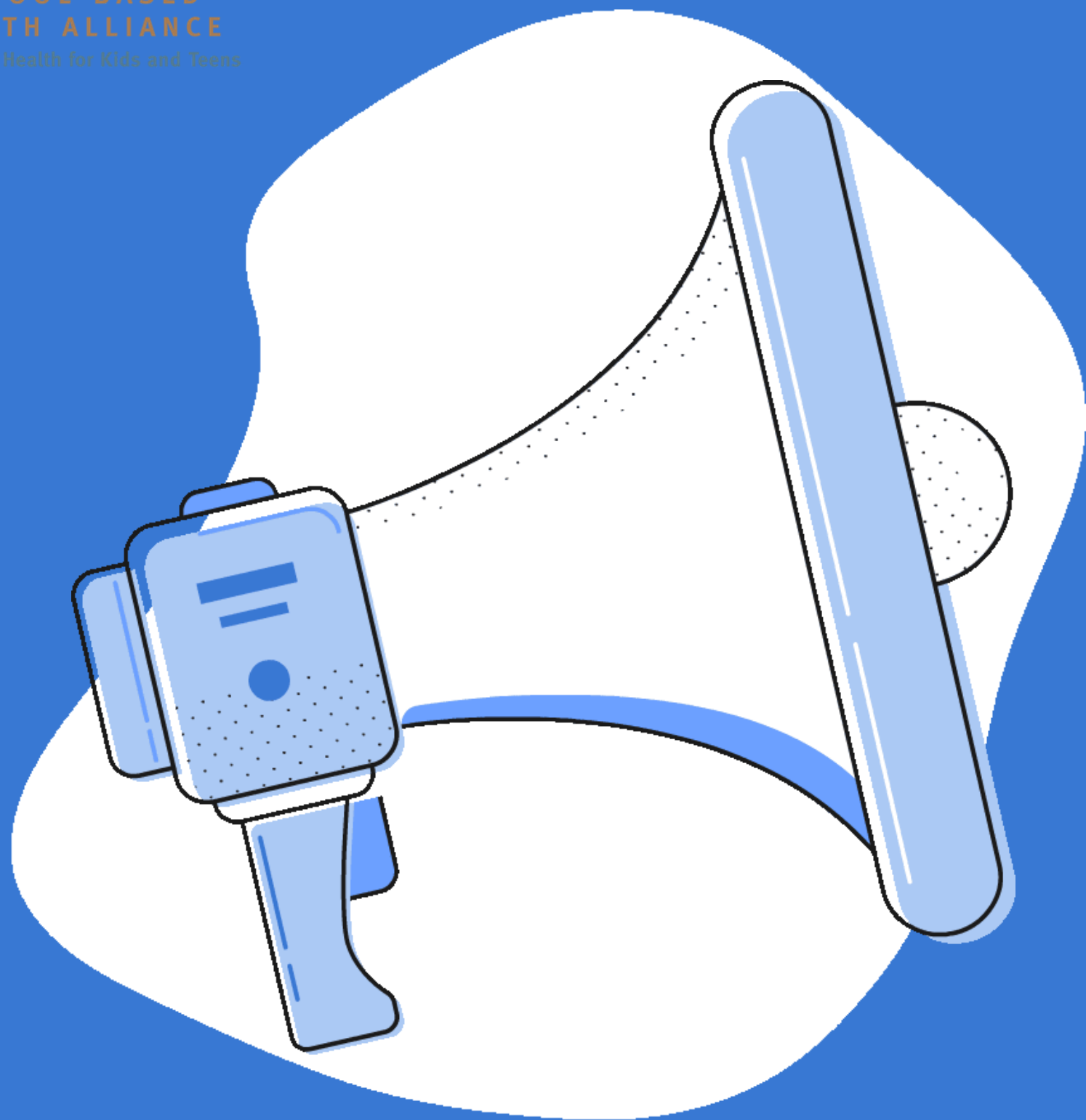
- Mental health should be a part of our general health and well-being.
- Mental health stigma is ingrained in our culture, but it has improved and will continue to improve with your help.





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# Connection & Impact of Stigma on Youth



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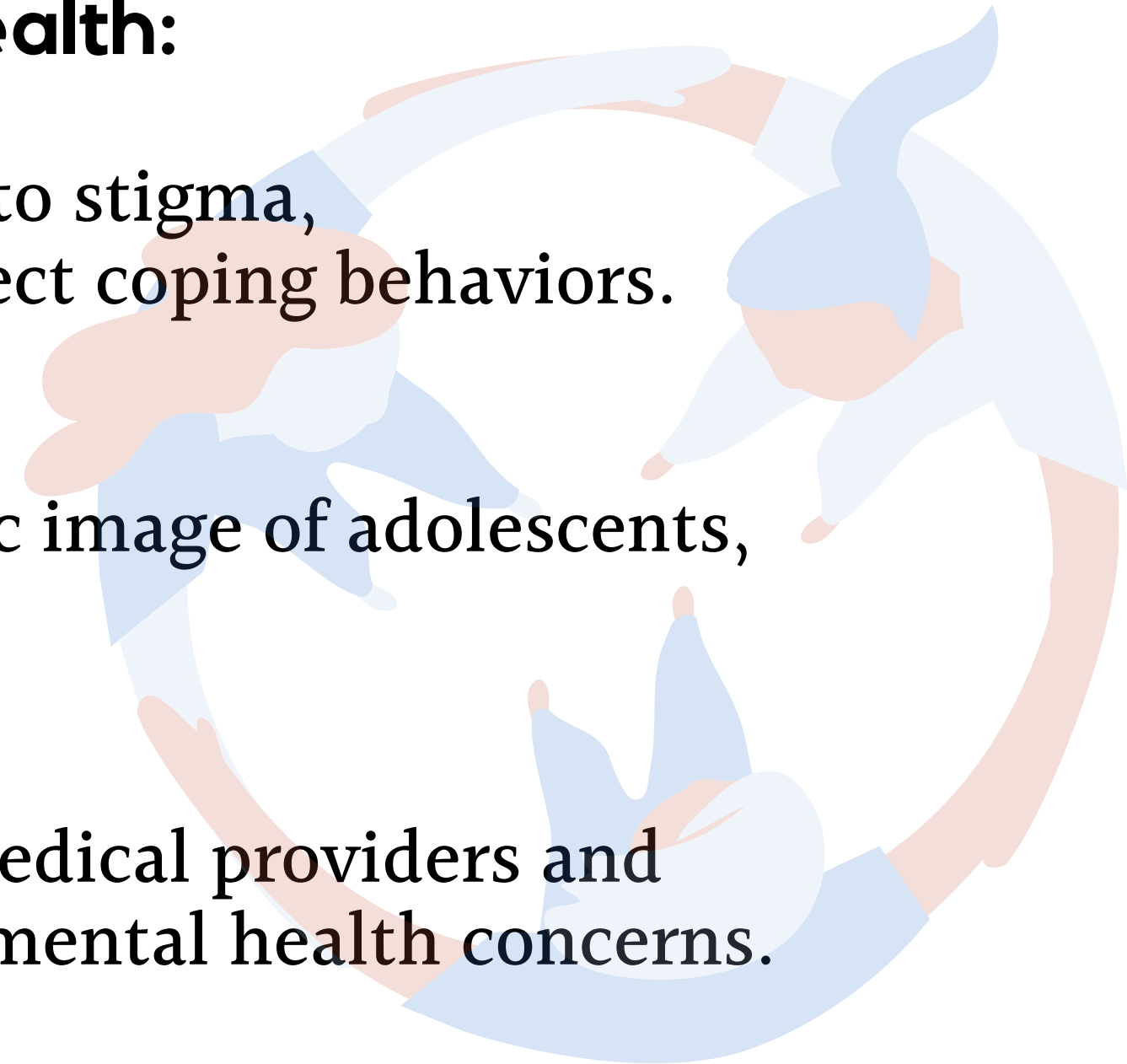
# Impact of Stigma on Youth

**There are many aspects (social media, school & domestic environment, cultural barriers, etc) that might hinder teens from being fully open about mental health:**

**Cultural** – Many minority communities hold beliefs related to stigma, psychological openness, and help-seeking, which in turn affect coping behaviors.

**Social**– Social media overwhelmingly promotes an unrealistic image of adolescents, creating a false sense self and mental entrapment.

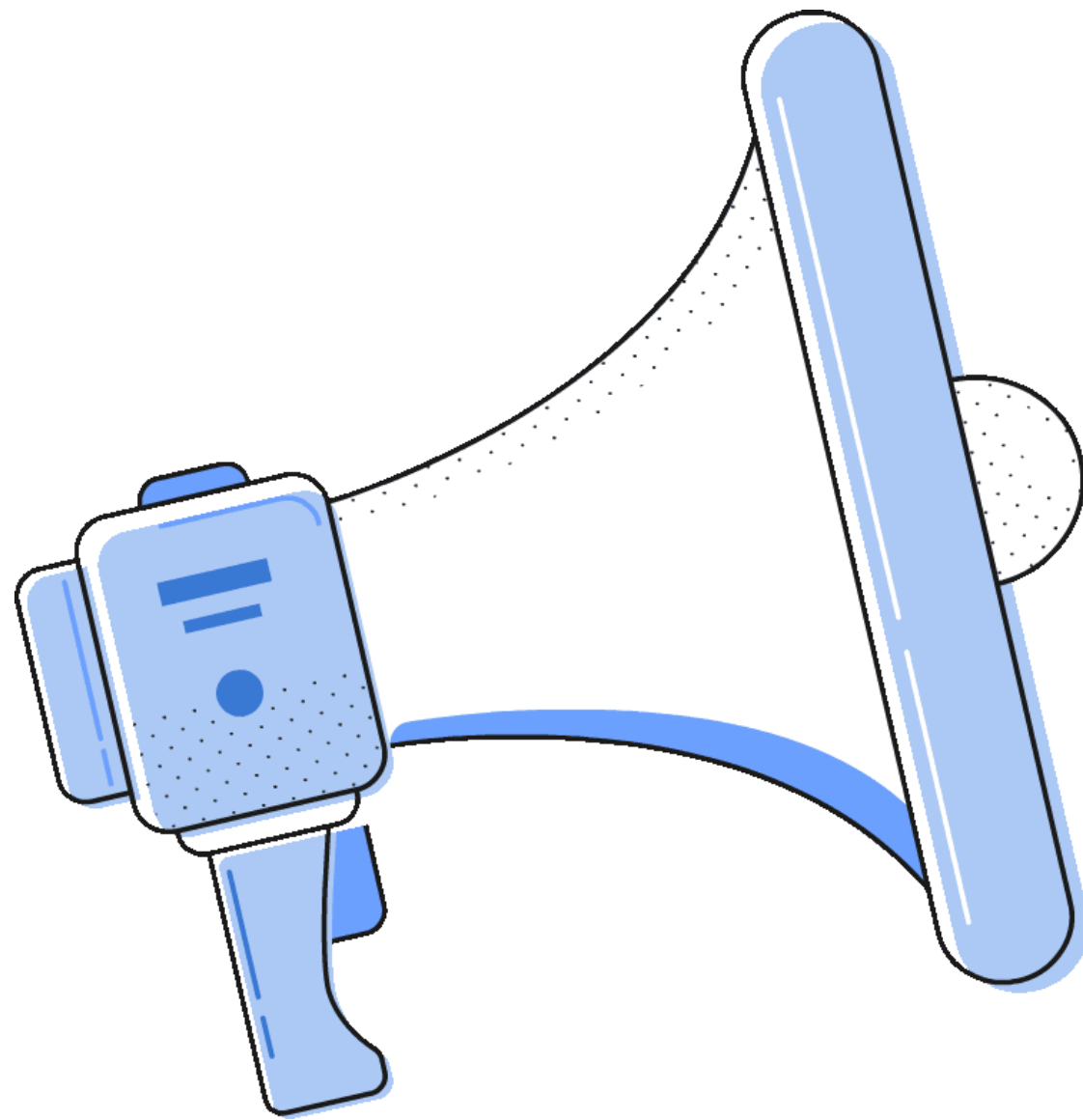
**Medical** – Openness and acceptance (or lack thereof) from medical providers and facilities greatly impact youth's willingness to express their mental health concerns.





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# YPAR: Youth Participatory Action Research

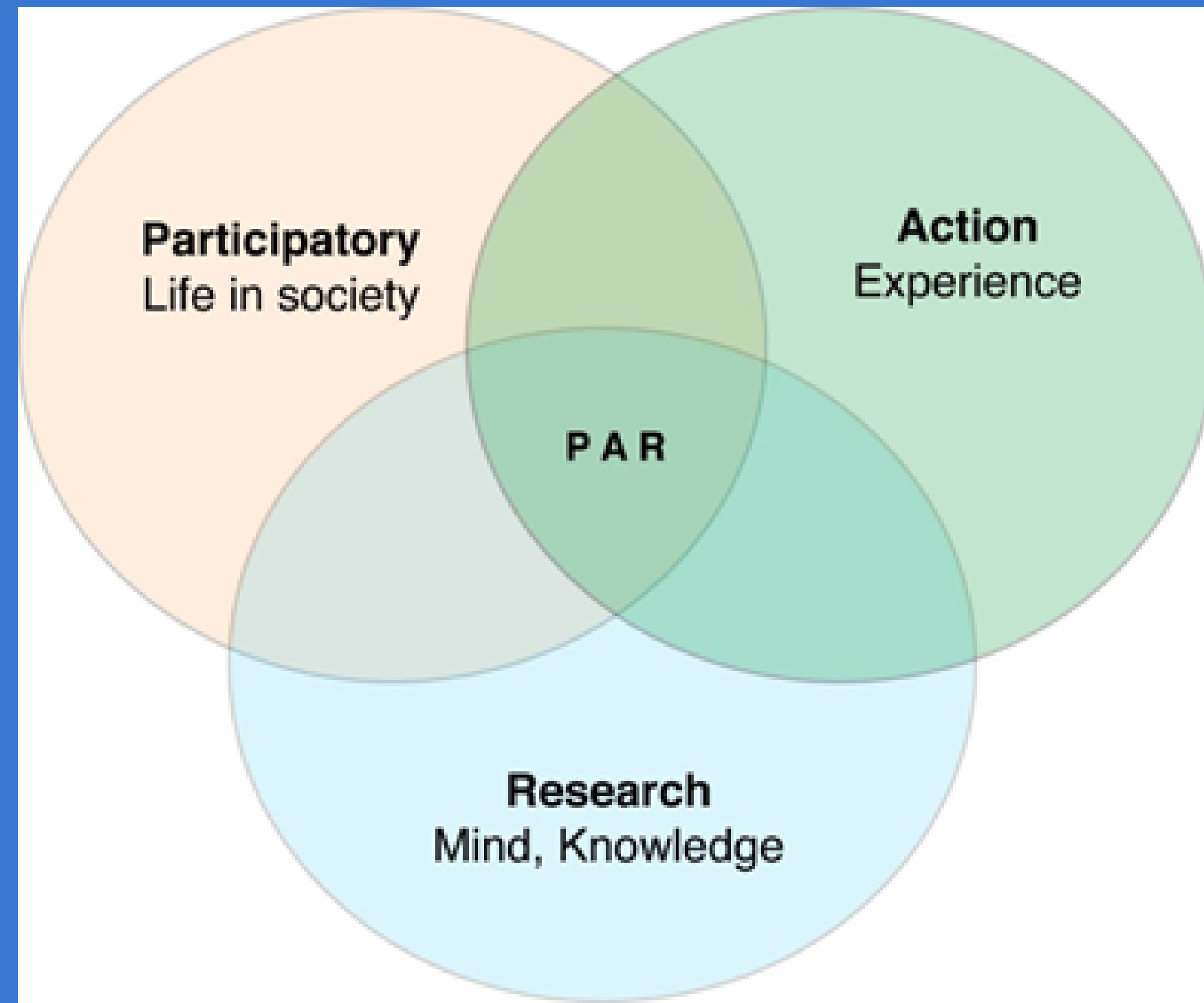


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# What is YPAR?

YPAR utilizes a participatory action research framework that includes the following steps:

- **Identify** the issue or problem.
- **Define** what is known about the issue or problem.
- **Identify** what additional information is needed to understand the issue.
- **Determine** what methods and approach will be used to collect this information and then work together as a team to accomplish this.
- **Use** the information for education, understanding, strategic action, and/or community change.



# YPAR Principles

*we've got a*

**VOICE**

Key principles of the approach include:

- Youth opinions are solicited, respected, and applied.
- Youth identify their own issues, problems, and possible solutions.
- Youth initiate project ideas, carry out planning, and goal setting.
- Youth drive the process and are involved in all states of decision-making.
- Youth teach other youth.

# YPAR: Taking Action

## From Data to Action

*“At SBHCs, youth are the primary stakeholders. Youth engagement enhances quality and operations of SBHCs and is an opportunity for young people to recognize their power and assert agency about their health.”*

- How do we use this research – by youth and about youth – to mobilize young people and professionals in school-based health care to take action on the chosen issue?
- The Youth Advisory Council shares youth perspectives on health issues with the school-based health care field through webinars, workshops, blogs, and social media.





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# Poll:

**How familiar are you with  
Youth Participatory  
Action Research?**

# Our YPAR

## States Represented

- Arkansas
- Georgia
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- New Jersey
- New York
- Florida

## Demographics

- April 3–22, 2020
- Ages 16–24
- Similarities and differences in perspective, between personal and second hand accounts on mental health stigma

## Total Surveyed

56

# Our YPAR

- **Social Media**
  - Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook
- **Educational Apps**
  - Google Classroom, Remind
- **Personal**
  - iMessage, Direct Messaging

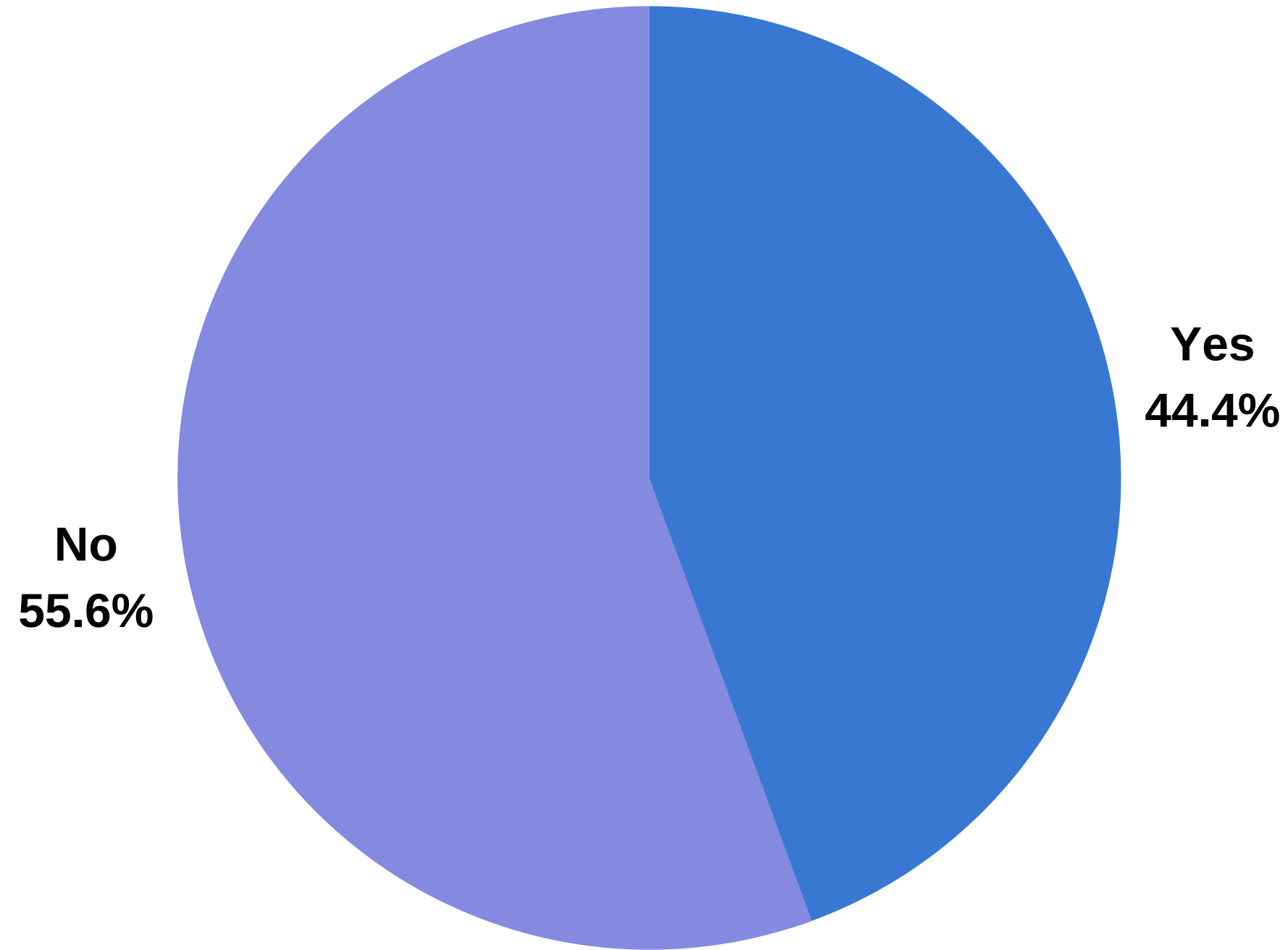


Personal  
Account

Secondary  
Account

Both

# Have you ever received mental or behavioral health services in the past?



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# What's been your experience accessing mental health care? Has it changed based on the provider or setting?

I utilized services available to me at my university for free. Registration was very easy and I felt safe and comfortable throughout my session.

I have been able to access what I need.

It's hard to find a someone that I feel I can trust while being a minor.

The setting and provider was always the same and he is very respectful. He allows for the child to talk without the parent present so there's no pressure. He was also very upbeat and encouraging!

It's difficult to find a therapist in my area due to my parents healthcare. My medication almost wasn't covered either.

It has been slightly challenging to access, as it is very expensive. As a teenager I do not have much, and my parents do not feel that it is necessary for my wellbeing.

It's pretty easy to get mental health care just the maintenance of it is harder because I have to actually keep going with it and not ignoring it.

Personal  
Account

# What kind of resources and/or services are available to you?

There are school psychologist, teachers, counselors, therapist and youth groups.

My university provides services but they're not actually that good and not easily accessible.

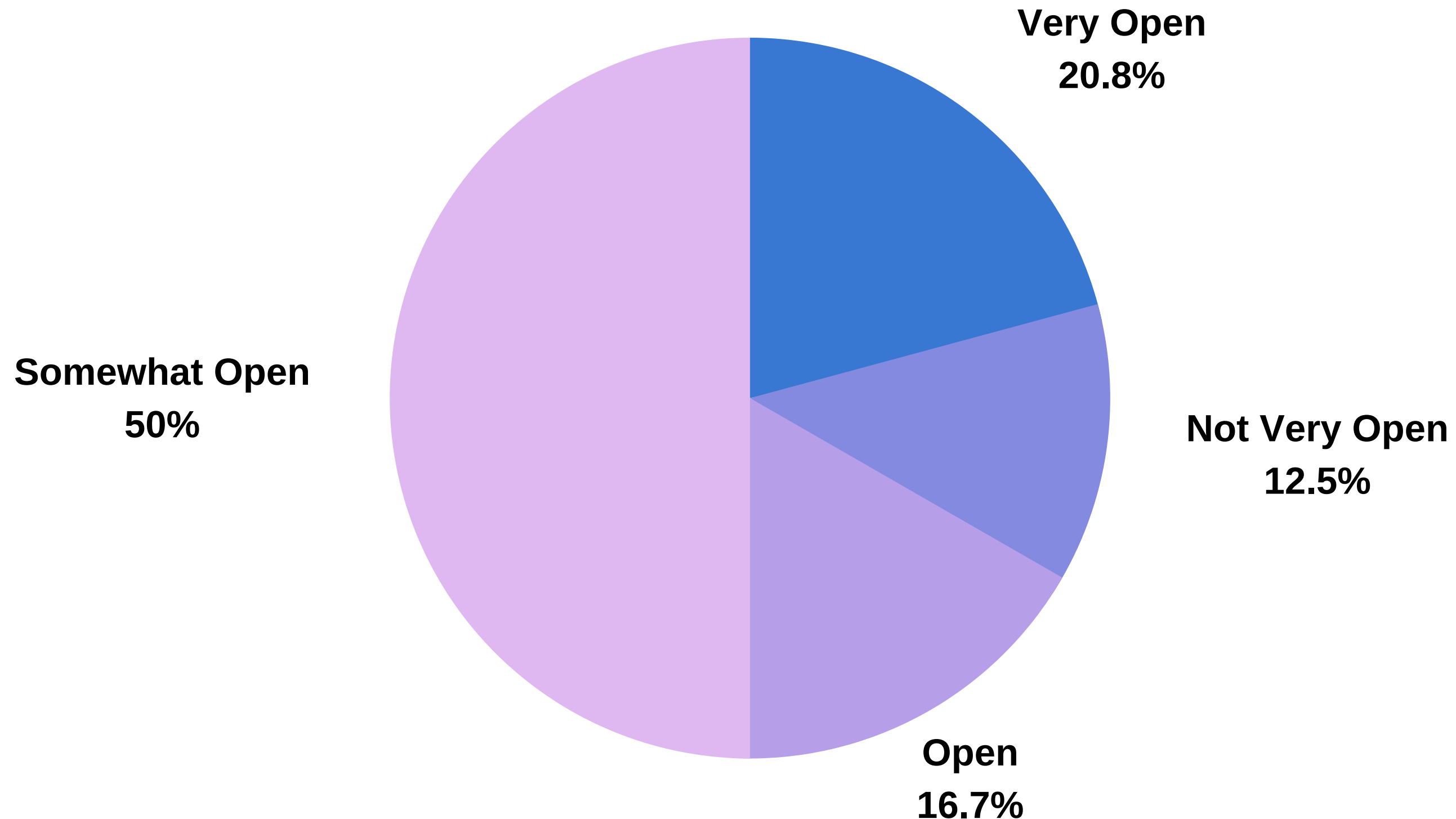
There are councilors in the school system that offer 3 free sessions.

There are multiple free clinics that are available to the public for group and independent counseling.

Mental health services covered by my insurance for a certain number of sessions.

There are online resources available in this time of crisis. But when people could interact, I saw a therapist several towns over from my own and take medication that help to stabilize my moods.

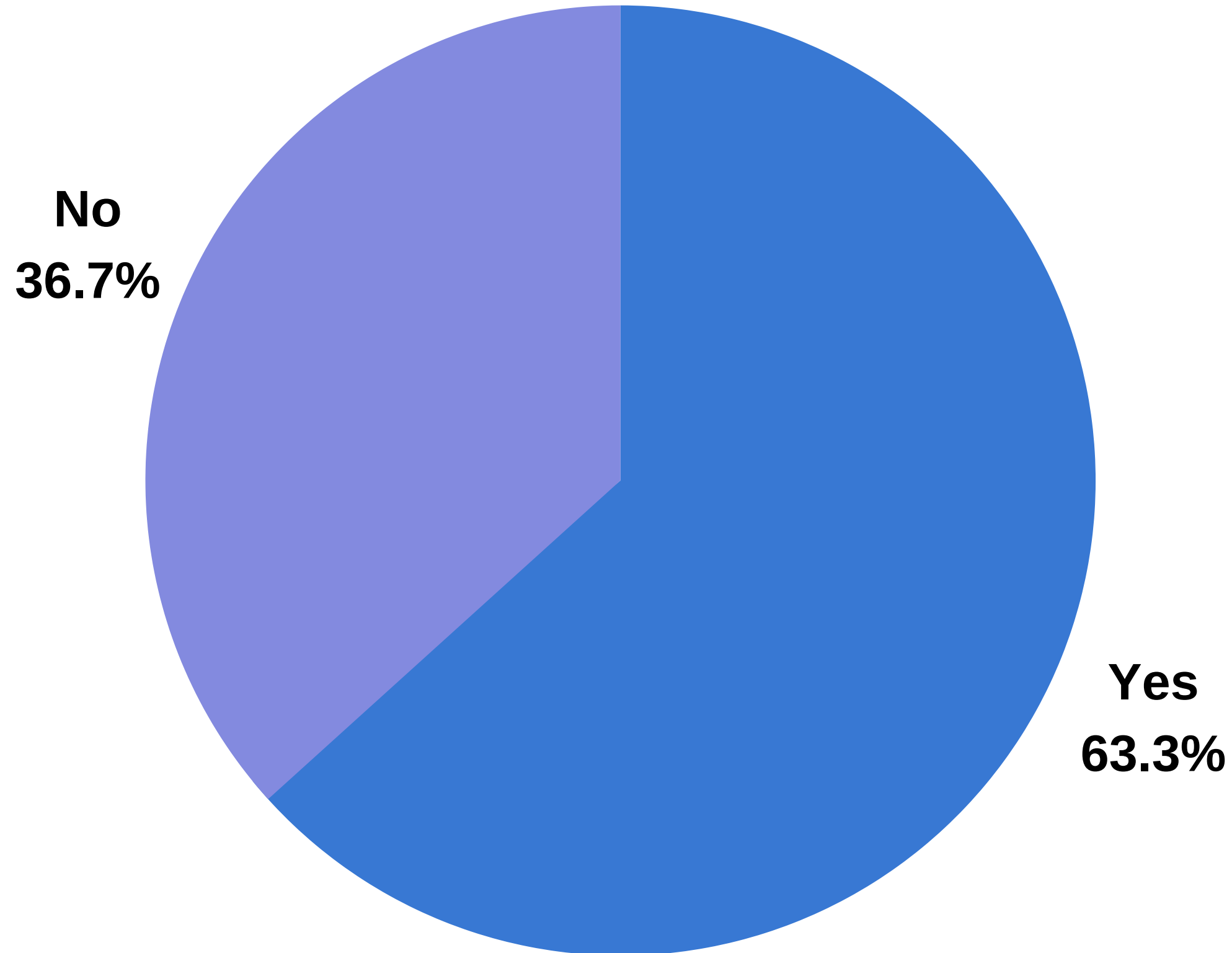
# How would you describe yourself when it comes to sharing your experience?





# Do you know someone who receives mental health services?

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# What was your initial reaction to learning this information?

I admired her openness because I have always wanted to seek mental health services.

I was accepting, its good to seek help if you need it.

I had an interest to learn more about their situation so I wont offend or be offended if the wrong thing is said from either party.

That I was happy they were looking for tools to better navigate some of there issues.

Nothing new. I've seen the effects of this.

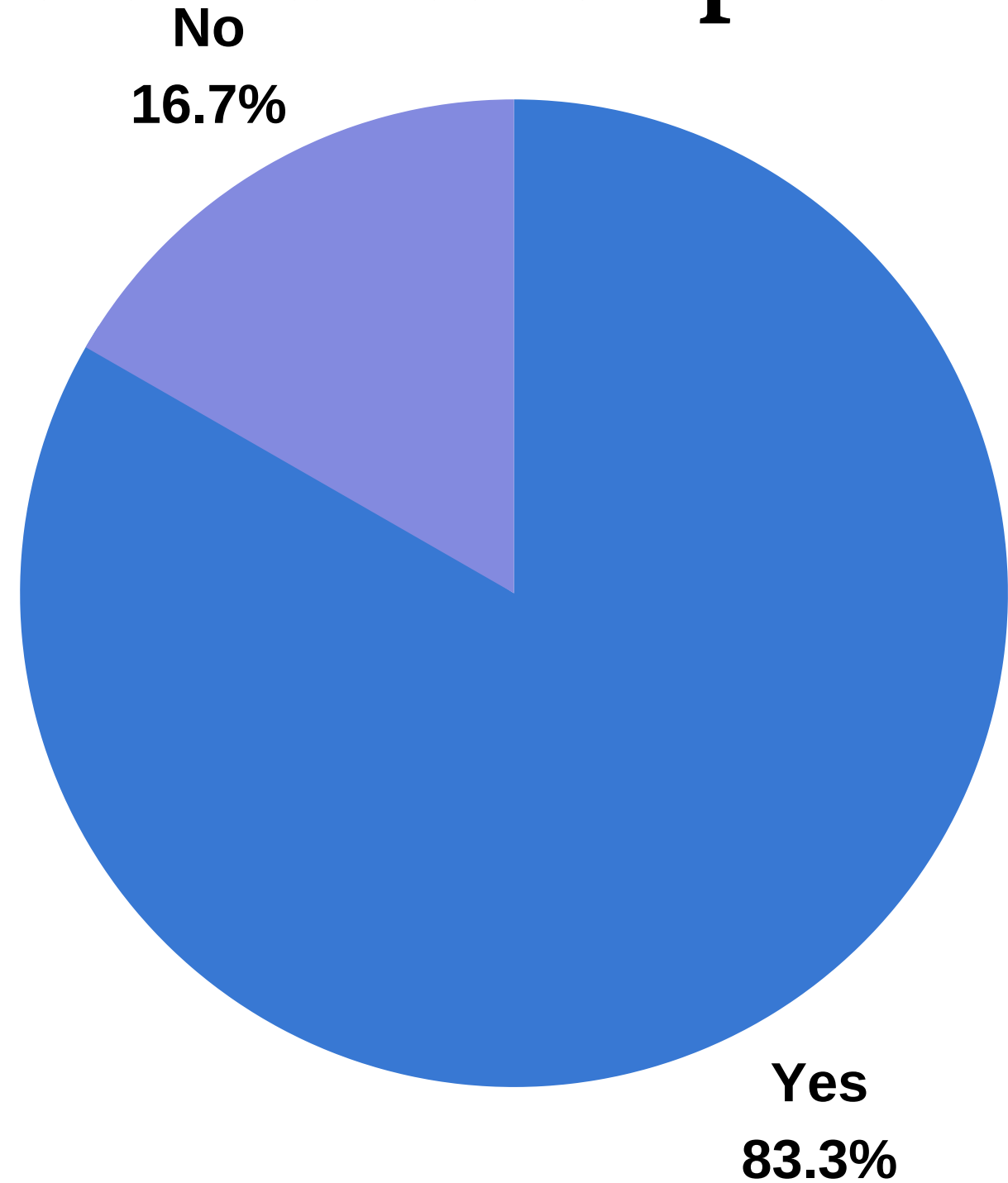
I was happy to hear that my friend was seeking help and improving her mental health.

My initial reaction was finally somebody is talking about because it is something that needs to be discussed.

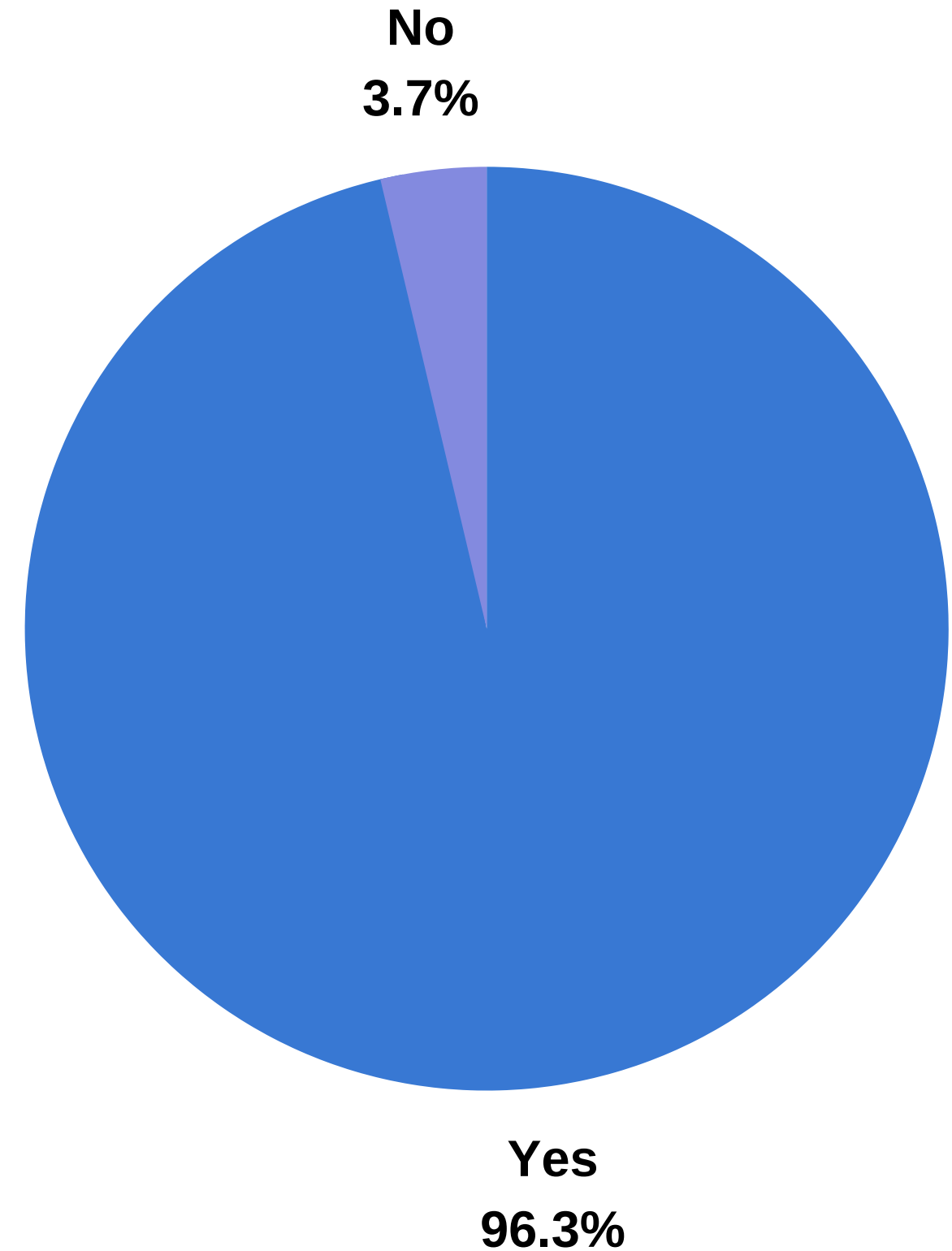
I was surprised that they were actually getting resources from the school, I had no idea we could ever get mental health services from school.



# How important would you say mental health is to your personal development?



# Is mental health just as important as physical health?

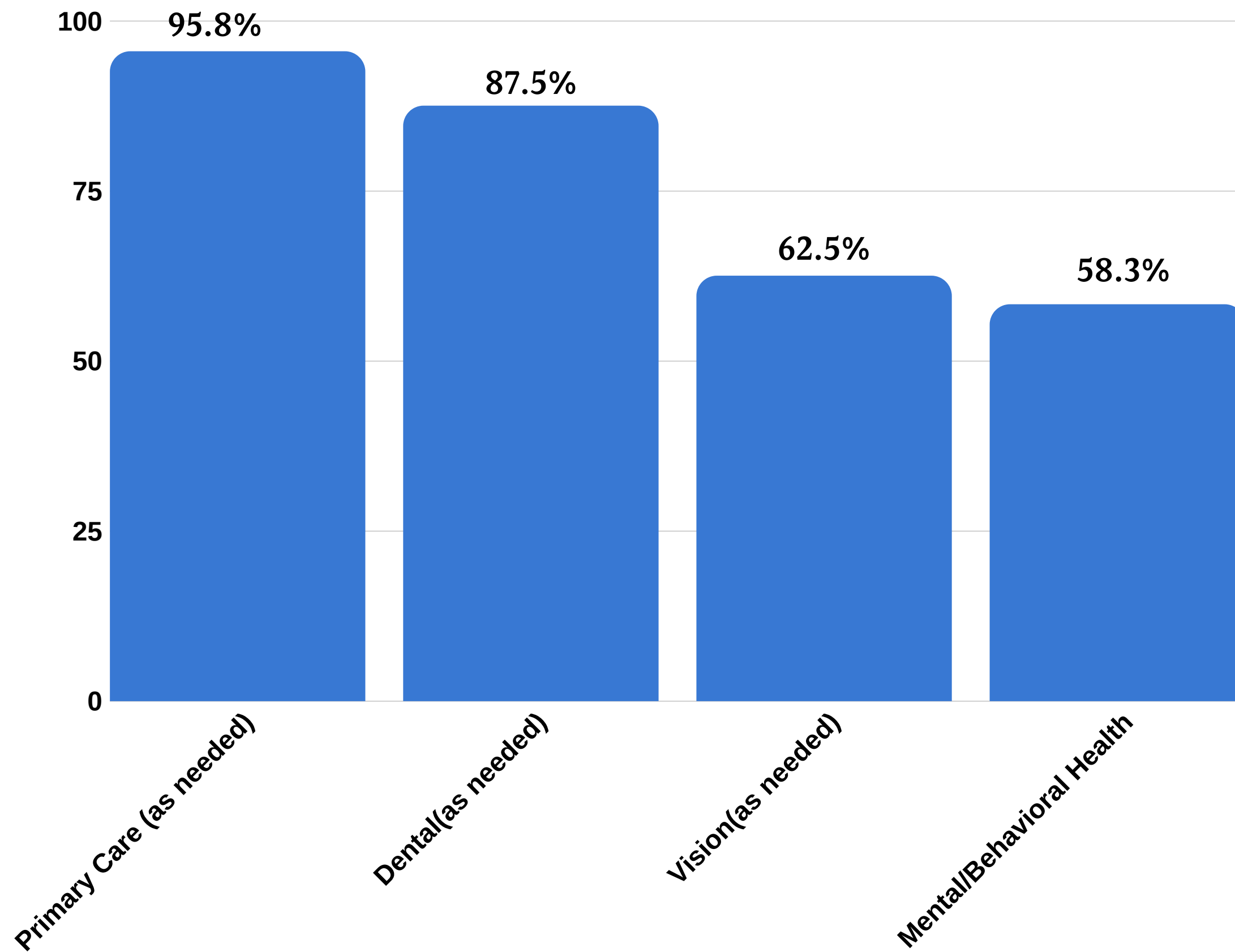


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# Which of the following do you see regularly?

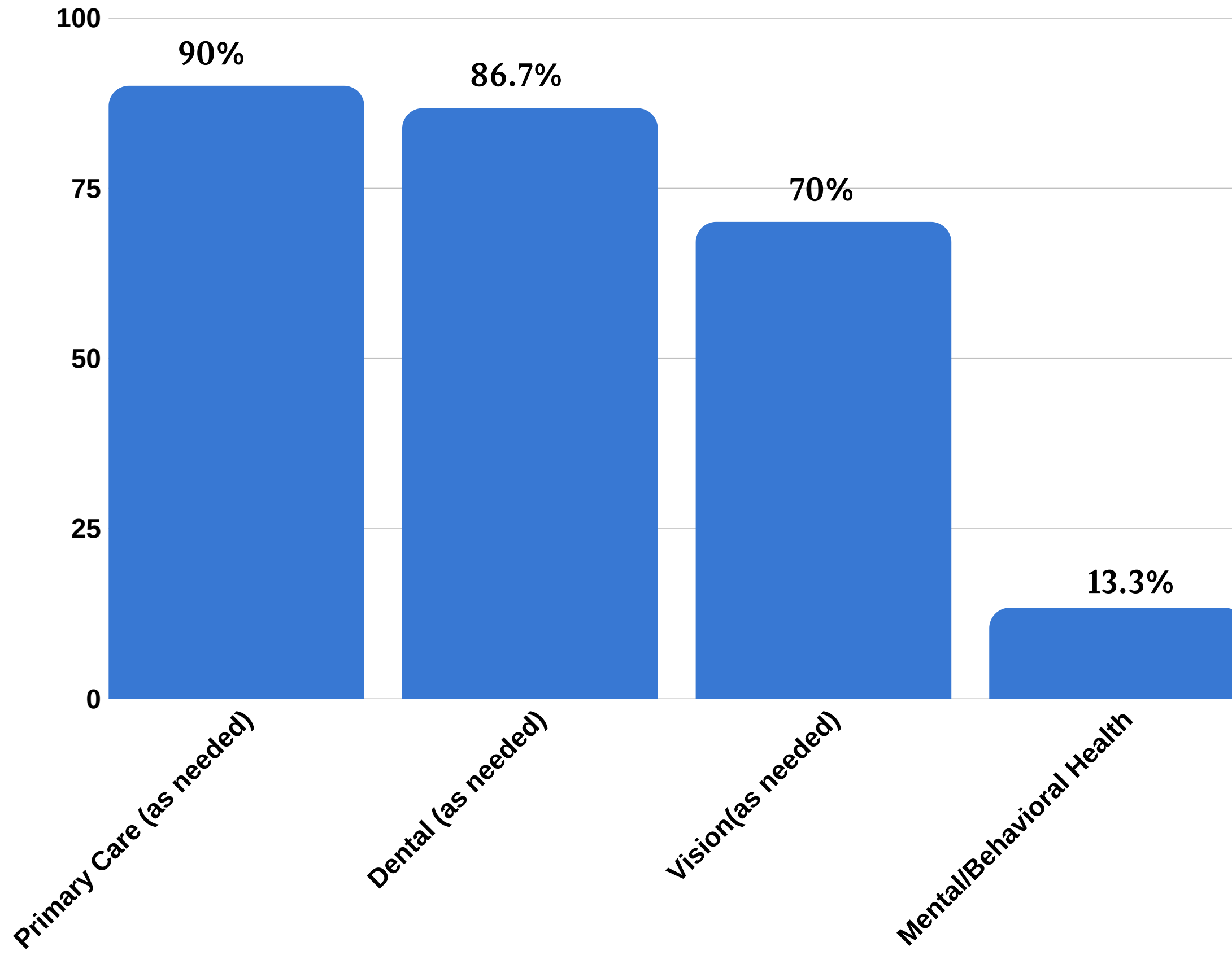


Personal  
Account



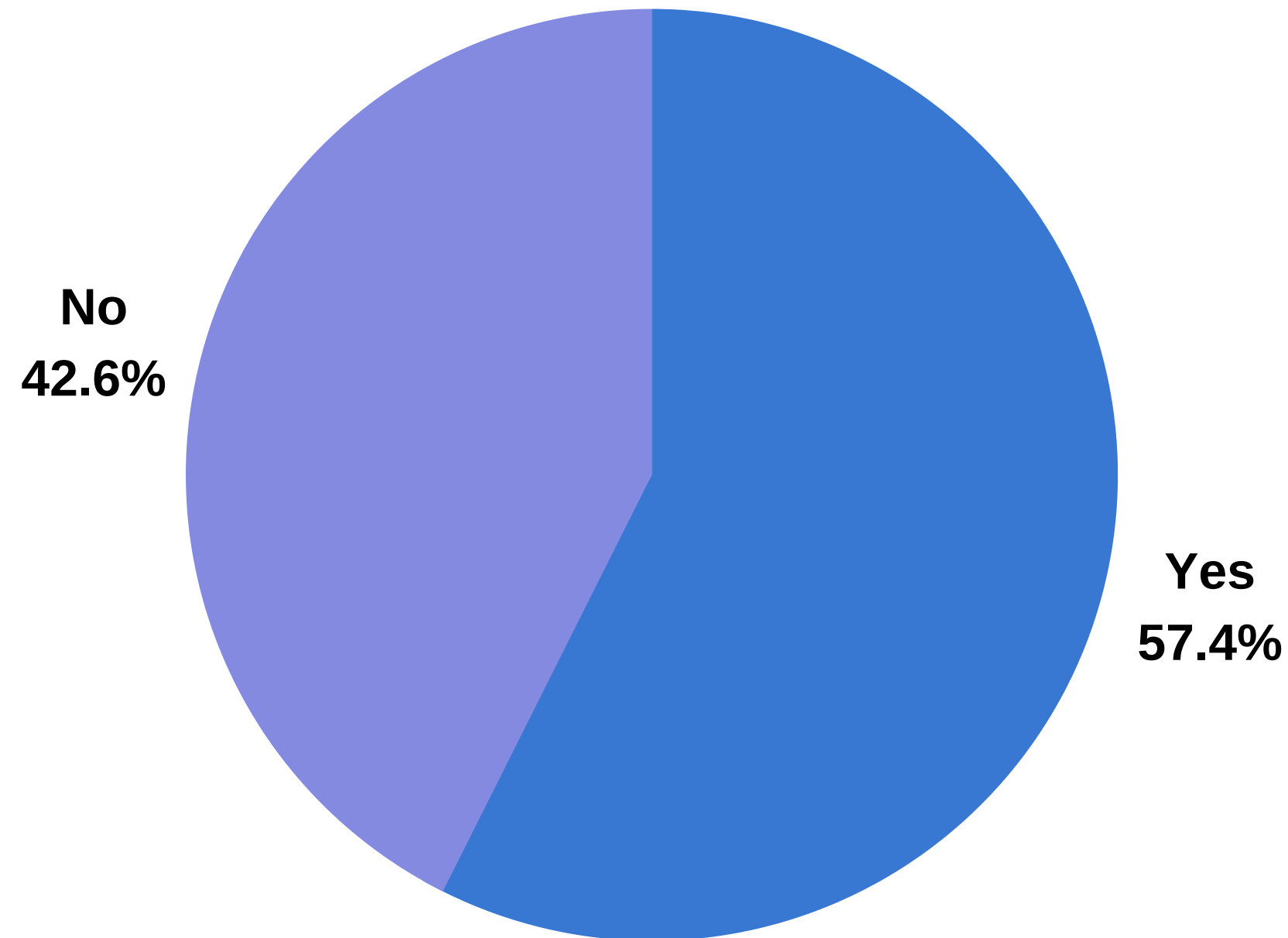
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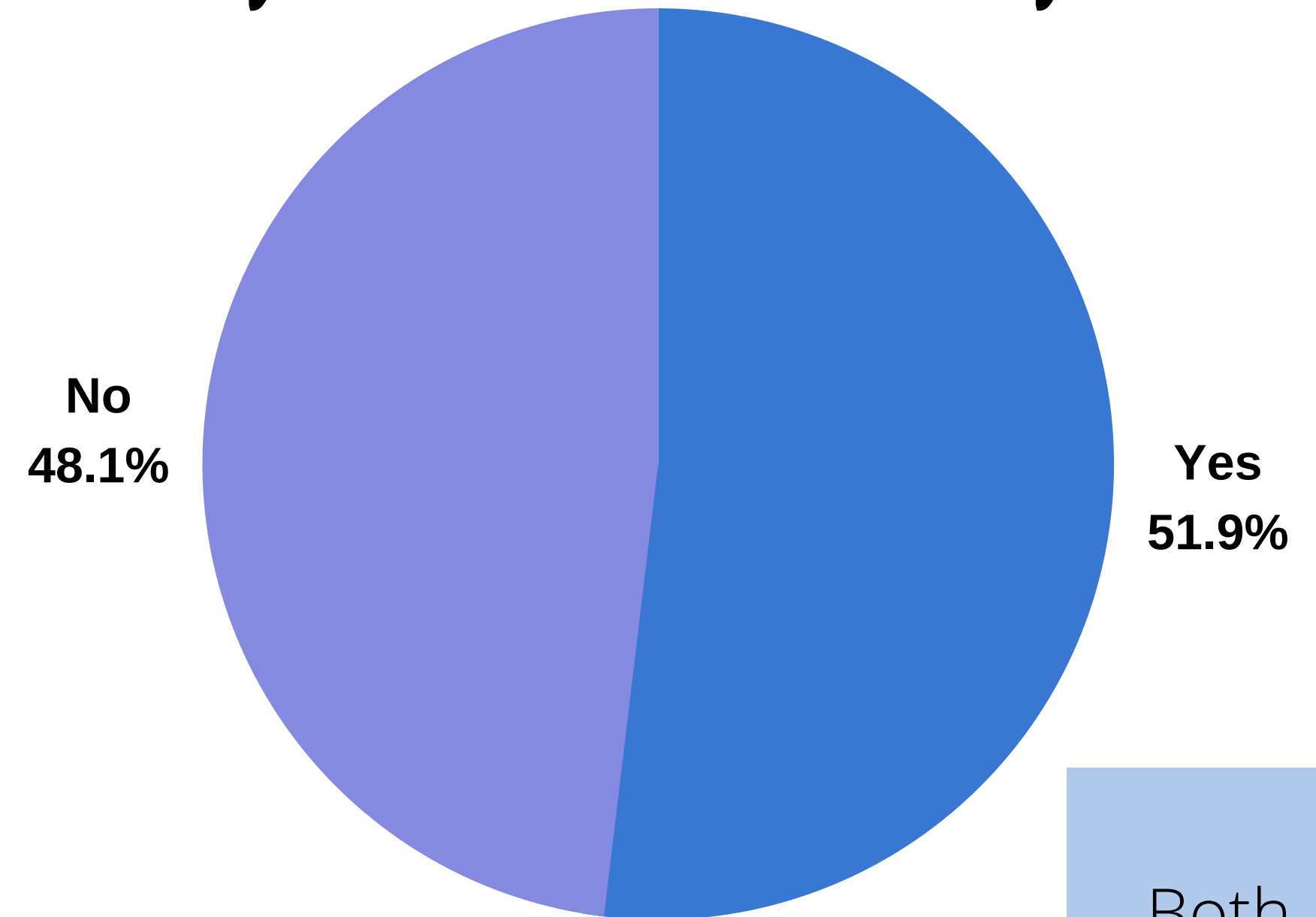


Secondary  
Account

# Do you feel mental health is supported in your school?

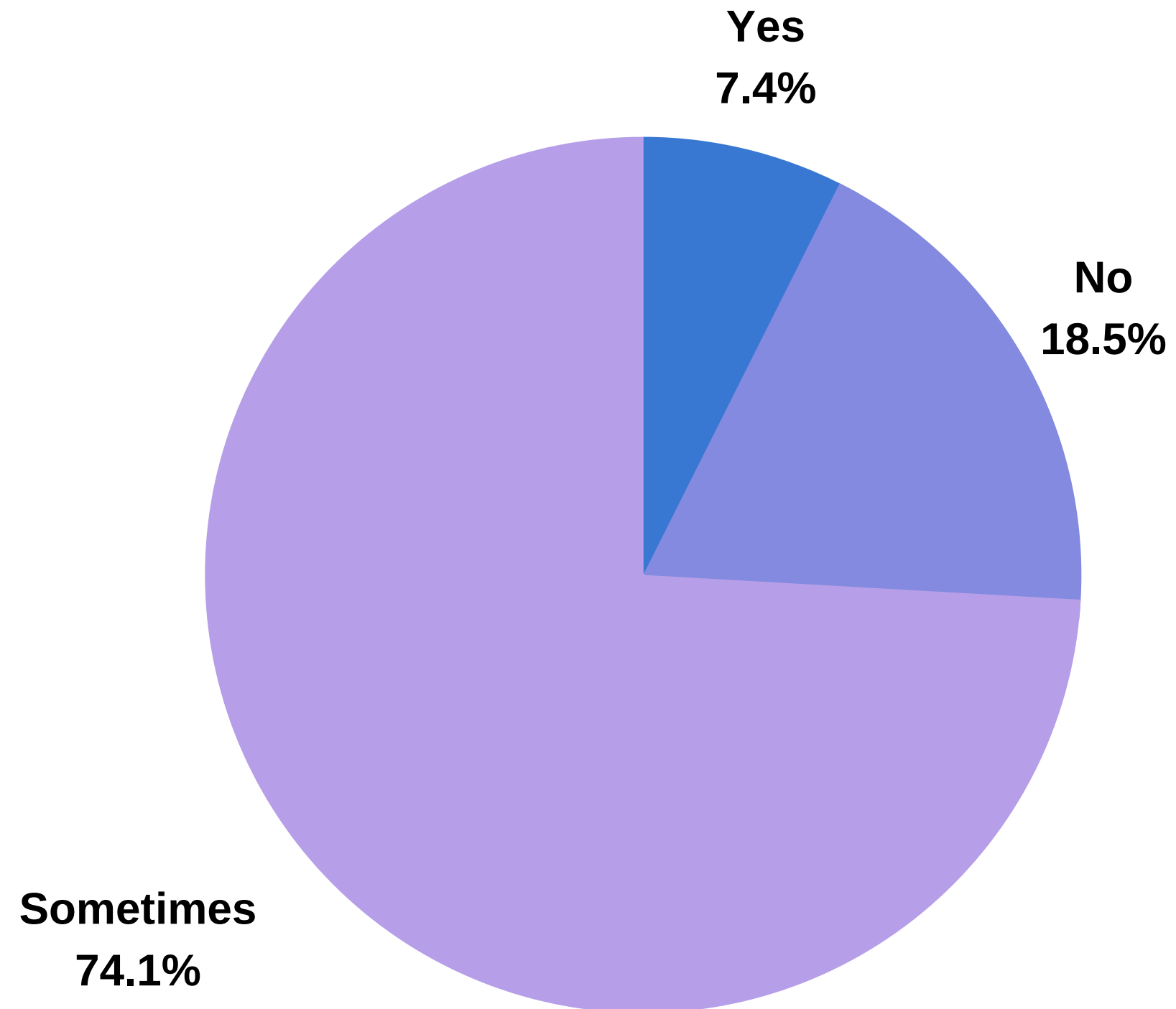


# Do you feel mental health is supported in your community?



Both

# Do you feel people are accepting and open when it comes to talking about mental health?



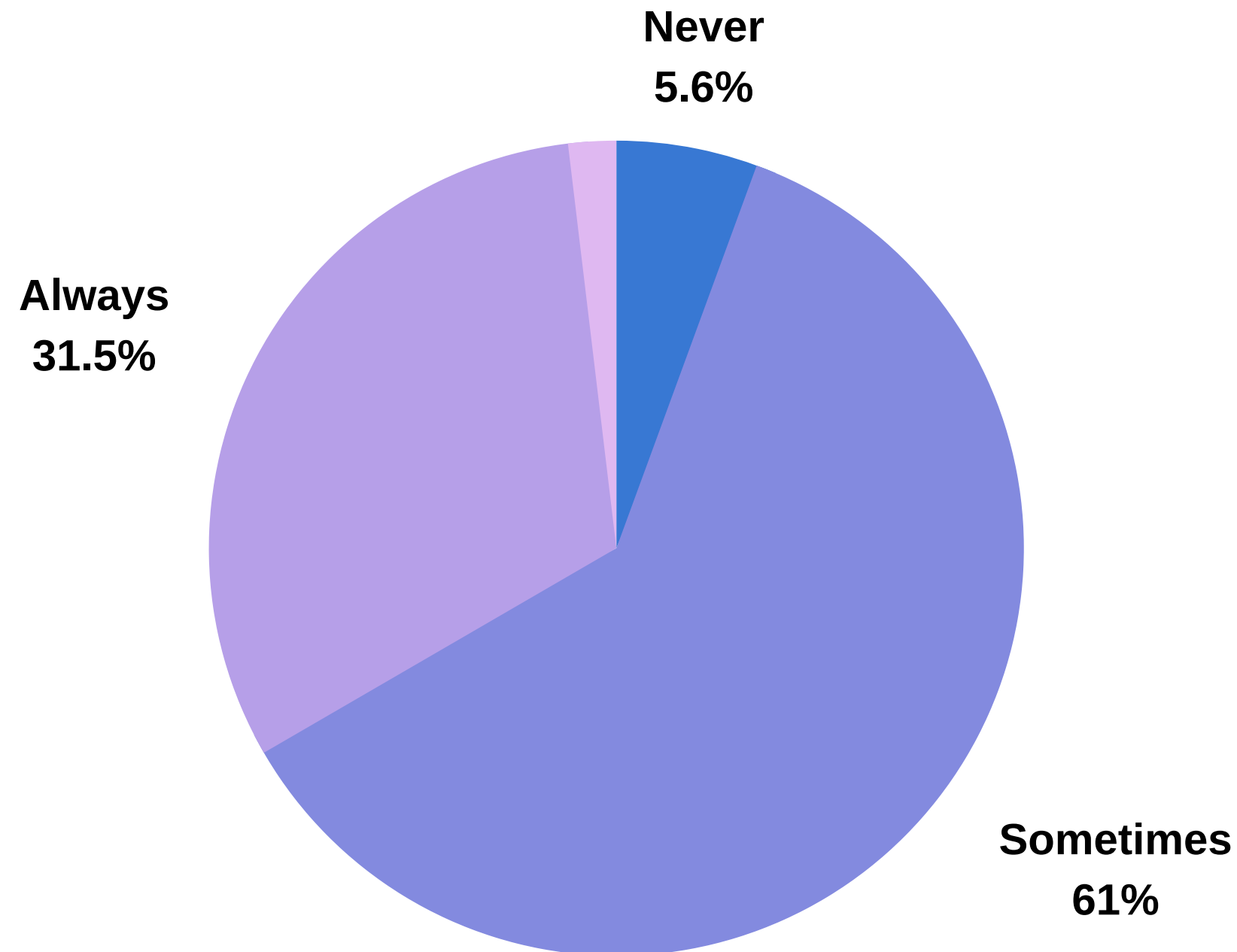
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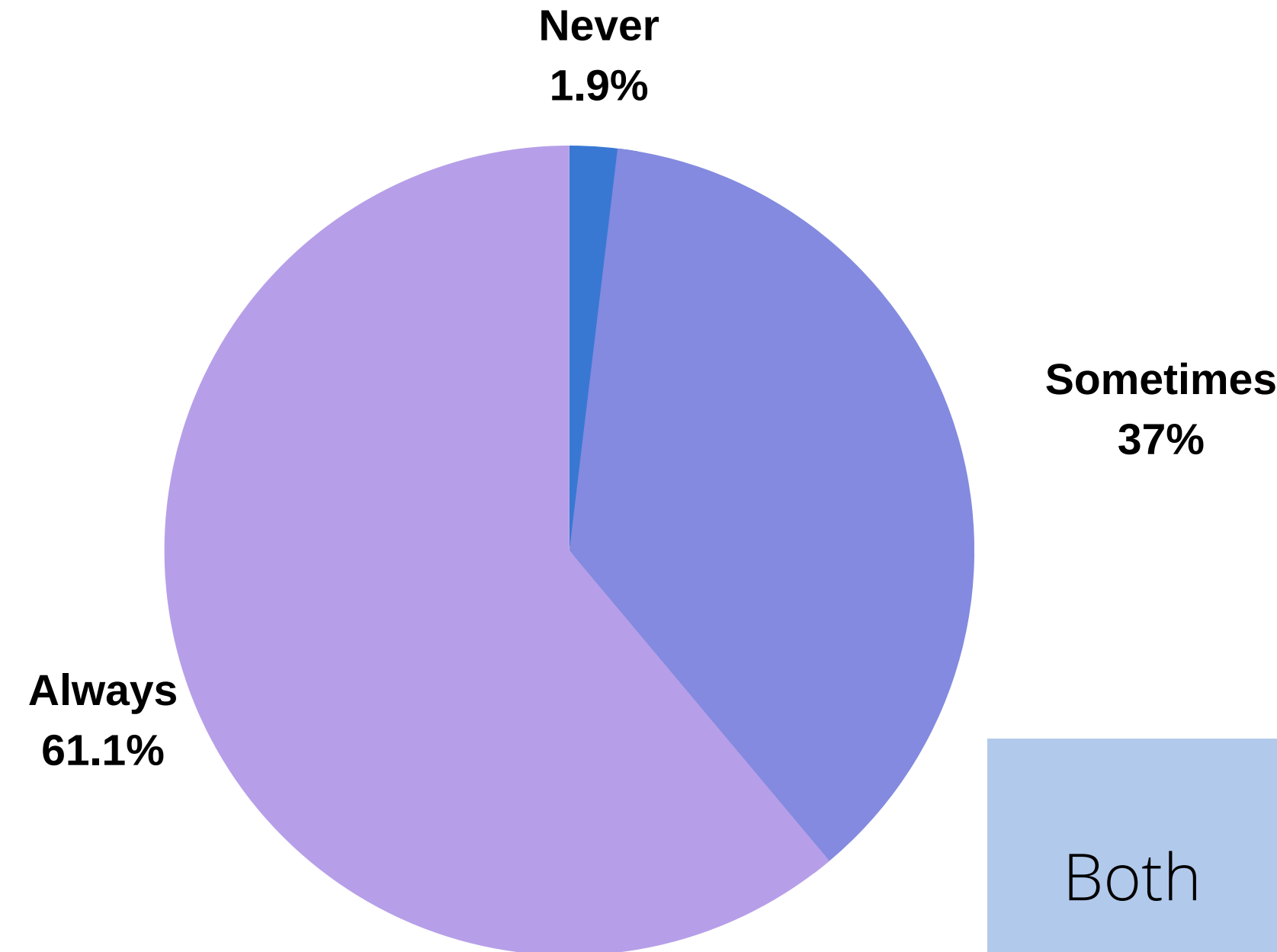
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**In your opinion, does racial background play a role in how open and comfortable people are talking about mental health needs and services?**



**In your opinion, does culture play a role in how open and comfortable people are talking about mental health needs and services?**

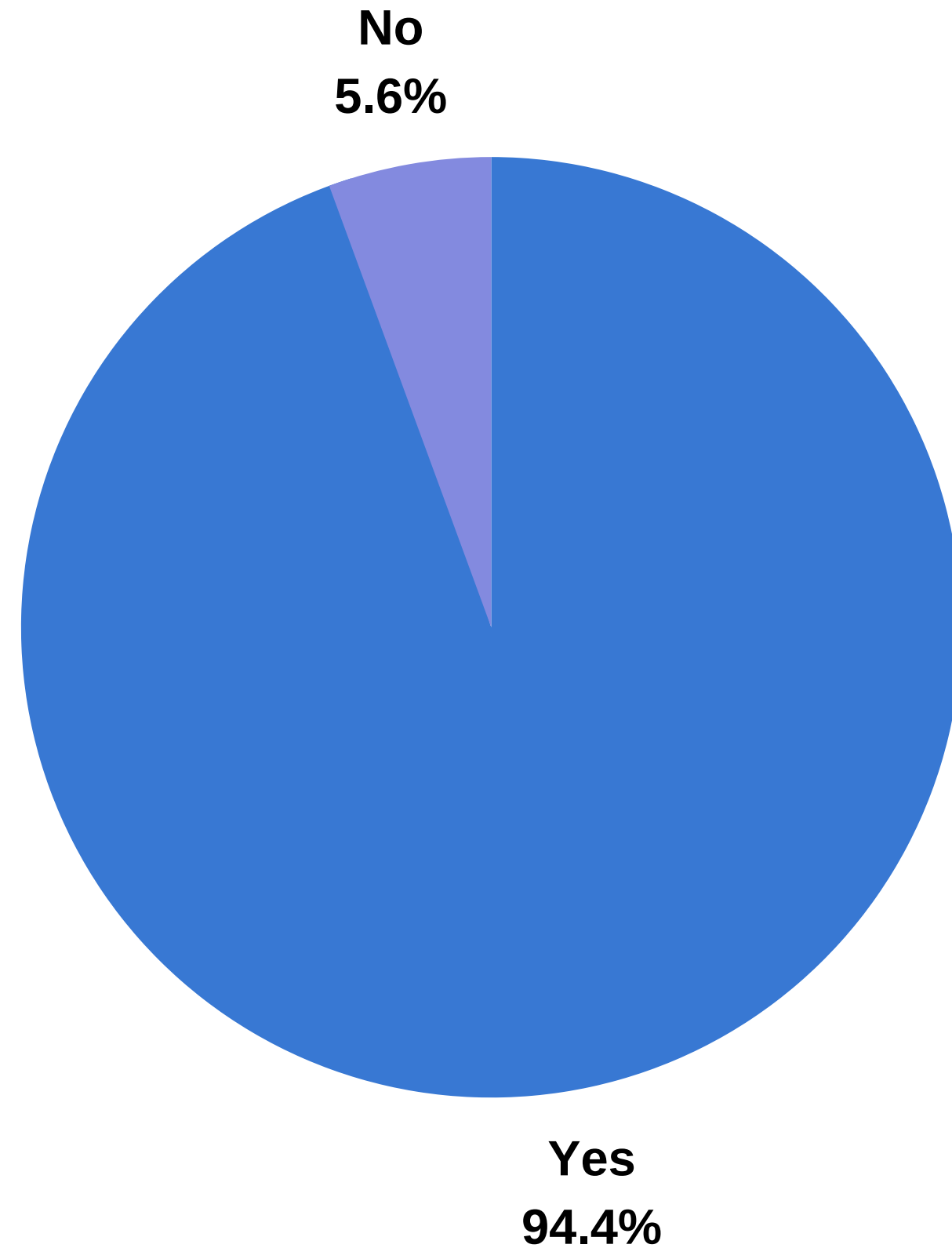


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# Do you believe mental health stigma exists?



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# Why do you think stigma exists when it comes to mental health?

People believe what they see. And when it comes to mental health it's not something one can physically see so people don't often believe it is real.

Stigma exists because of the intense need to feel normal and accepted in society. A group of five friends may function well, but if one reveals they have a mental illness, it could cause a feeling like they're an "outsider."

There is a misunderstanding that those of us with mental health issues maybe unstable.

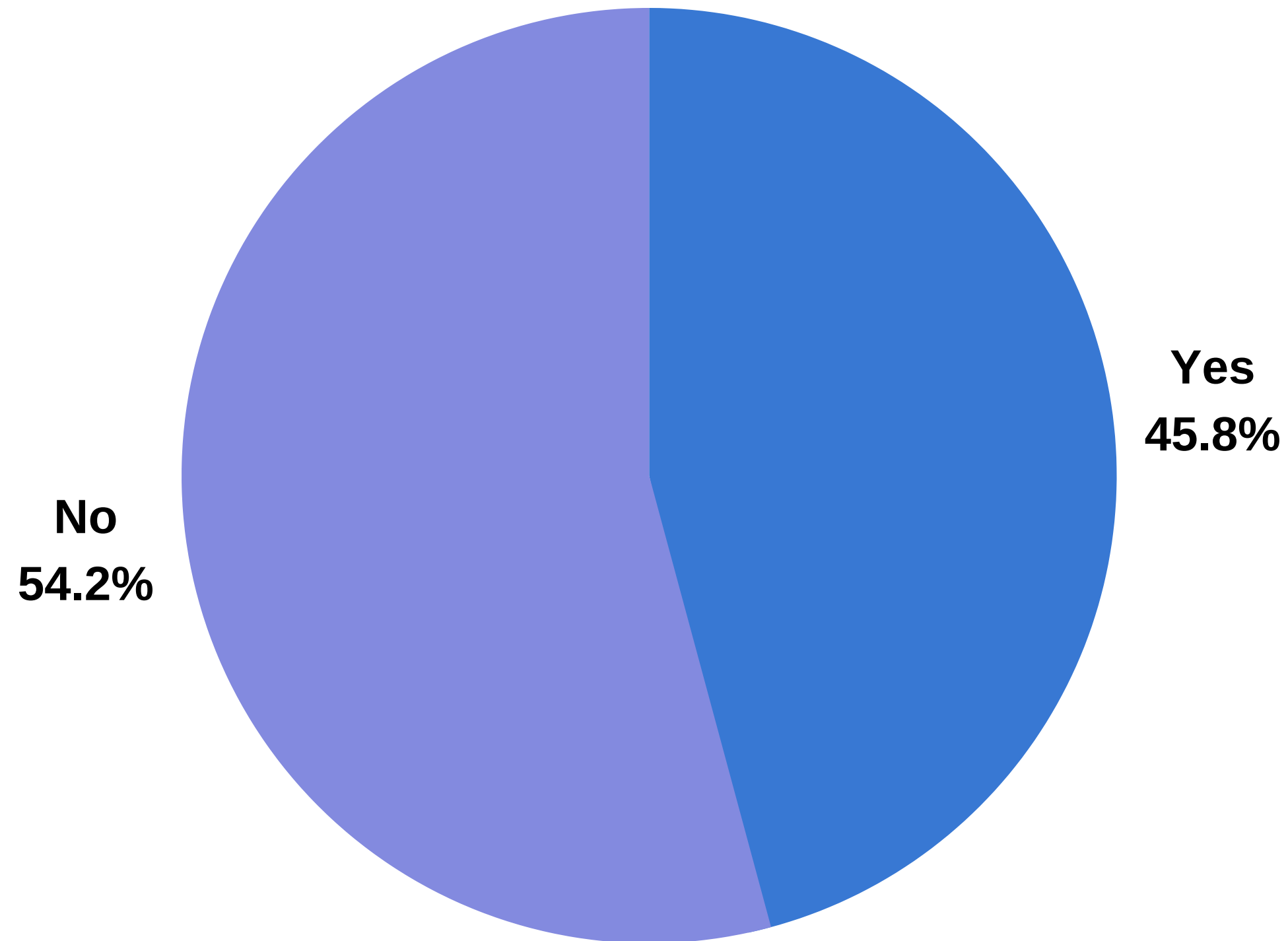
We are generally uneducated about mental health and it is not taught enough in schools. Stigma exists because people make assumptions about something they're ill informed about.

I think people think that it is something preventable or something that could be taken care of if people tried hard enough.

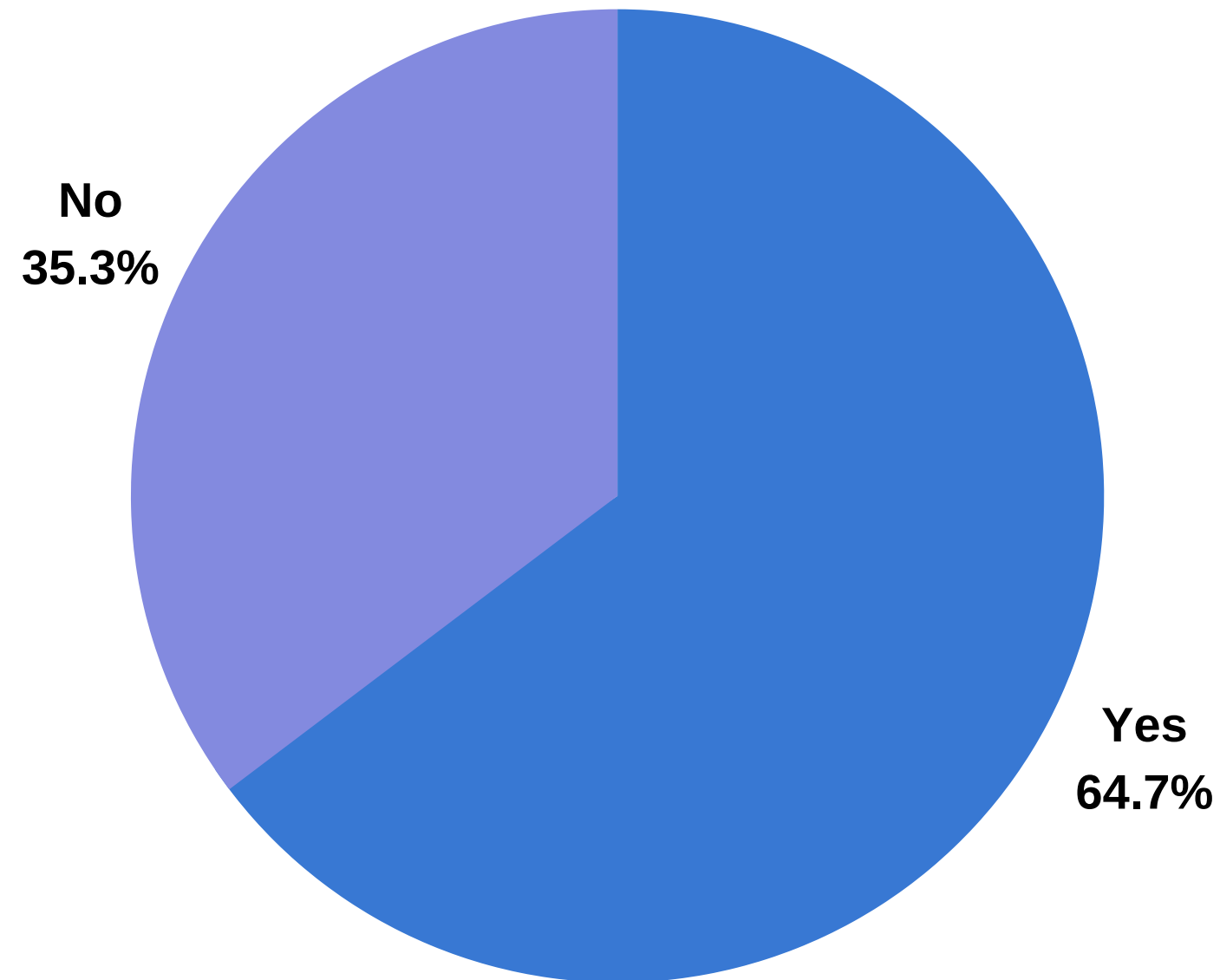
Seems the topic of mental health is new. Older generations didn't see it discussed in their lives.

Both

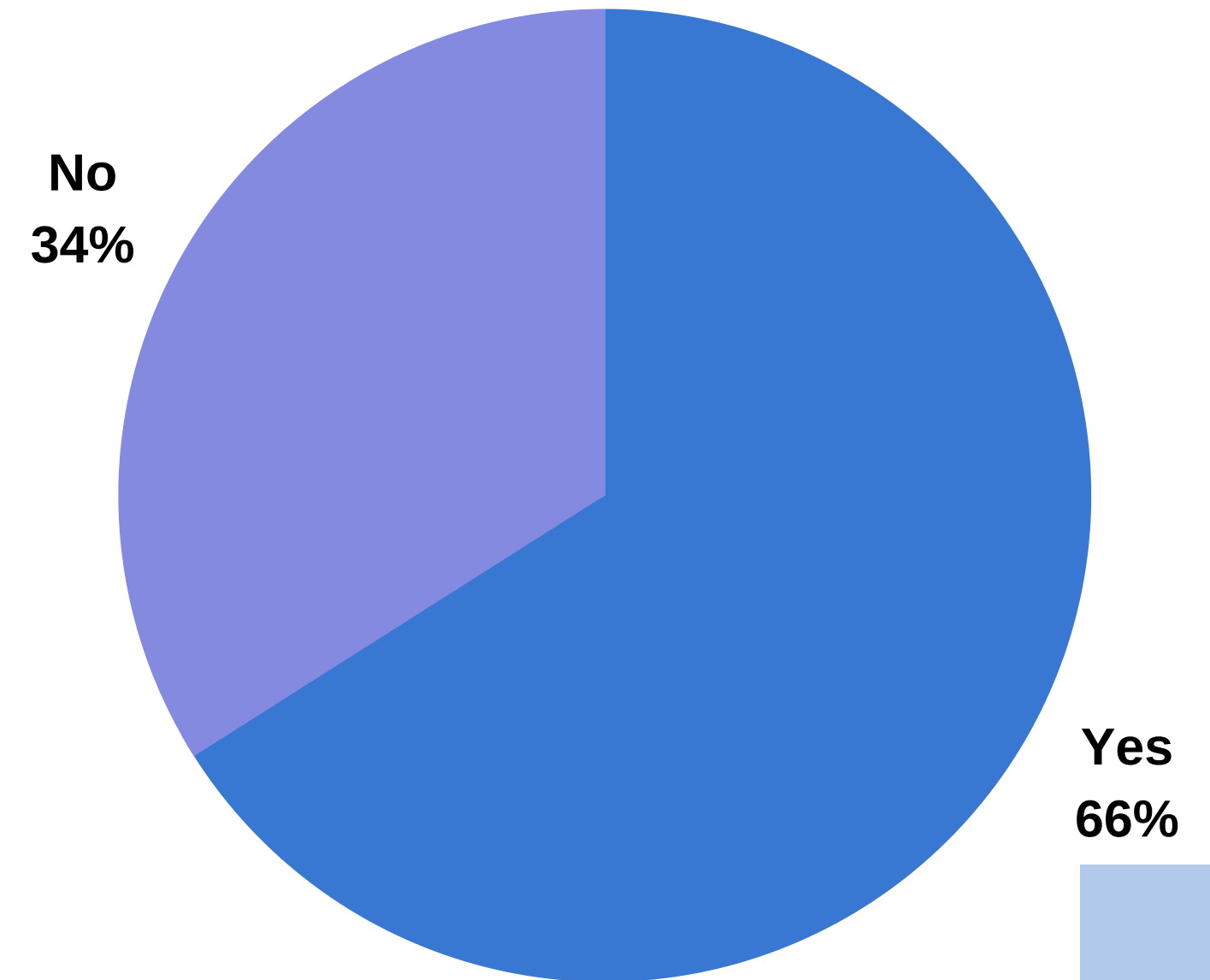
# Have you experienced any stigma or discrimination because you sought mental health care?



**Do you feel mental health stigma would prevent you or has prevented you from talking about your mental needs or seeking mental health services?**



**Have you noticed any stigma towards someone talking about their mental needs or seeking mental health services?**



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# How would you change mental health stigma?

I'd make it normal. Like you have DID? Okay cool. What's your favorite pizza topping. Mental health doesn't define a person.

Media campaign

I think I would like to pull together all of the studies done on mental health in the kids in generation z and educate older generations. We deserve to be heard.

As people become more educated about it, they realize there's nothing actually wrong with improving your mental health. Making it a topic of regular conversation should aid in changing mental health stigma.

Having a presentation at the beginning of the year, that addresses how to use mental health resources and the parts of each mental health illness.

Teaching emotional intelligence to students; having them be aware of their emotions, the emotions of others, and be able to find help when their situation seems out of control.

Talking to the public, having activities based on the certain issues.

Both



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# What is your advice to health centers to reduce stigma around mental health?

Posters, campaigns, and taking time to inform students on each aspect of mental health.

Be supportive, normalize it, mention how there is still so much research being done on the human brain and how complex of an organ it is that is completely normal to have mental health issues.

Need to educate the public more widely. Teach people that even though one could have anxiety for example that they are still capable and hard workers.

Engaging older generations in the discussion so that parents, grandparents, teachers, and community members are aware and able to recognize biases they might have too.

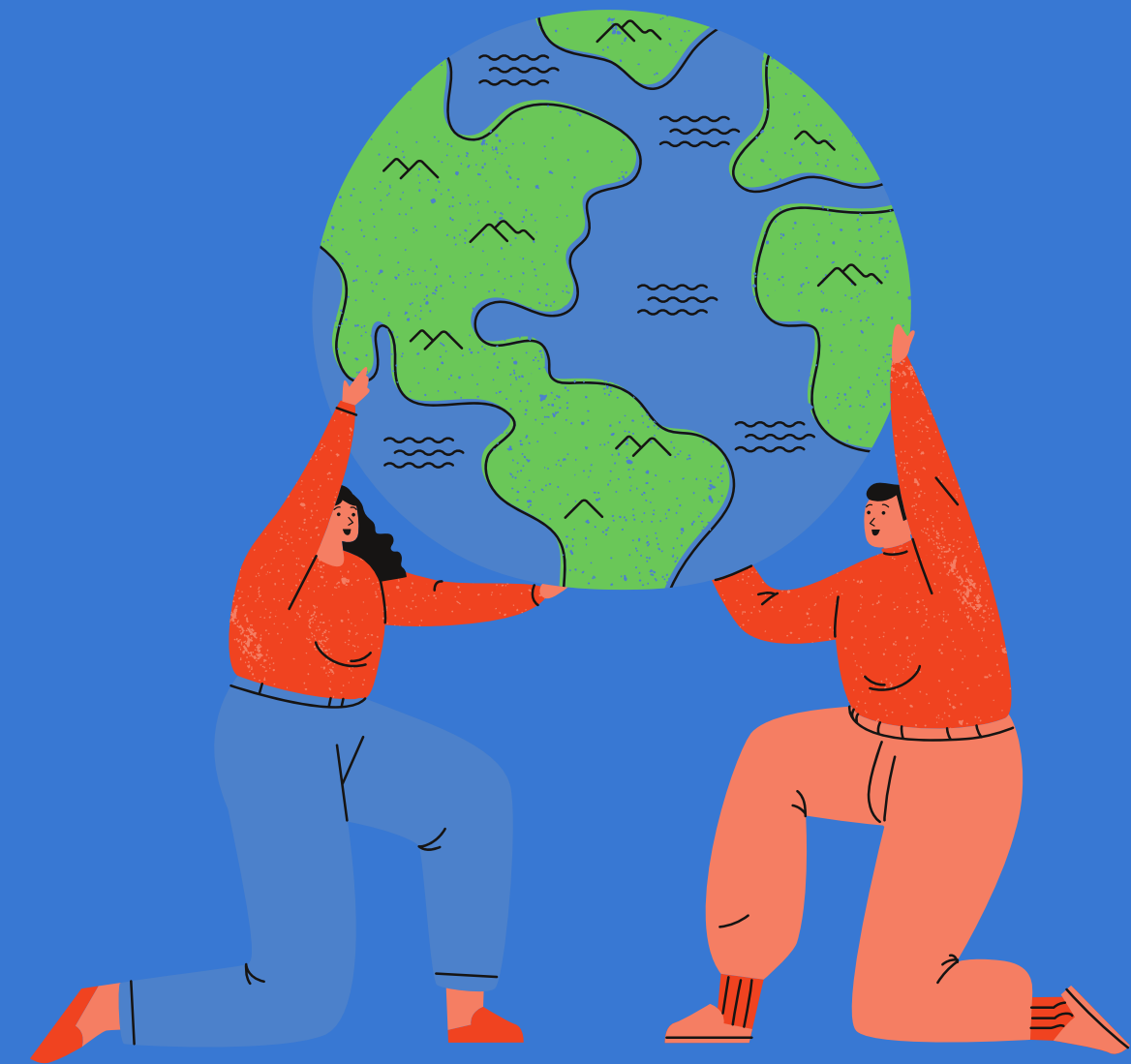
Don't make it seem like you're **unreachable**.

Ensure that mental health education is also part of your school's curriculum. If that's not possible, create your own education series or discussions. Have campaigns and events that show people your SBHC is a safe space to learn about and discuss mental health.

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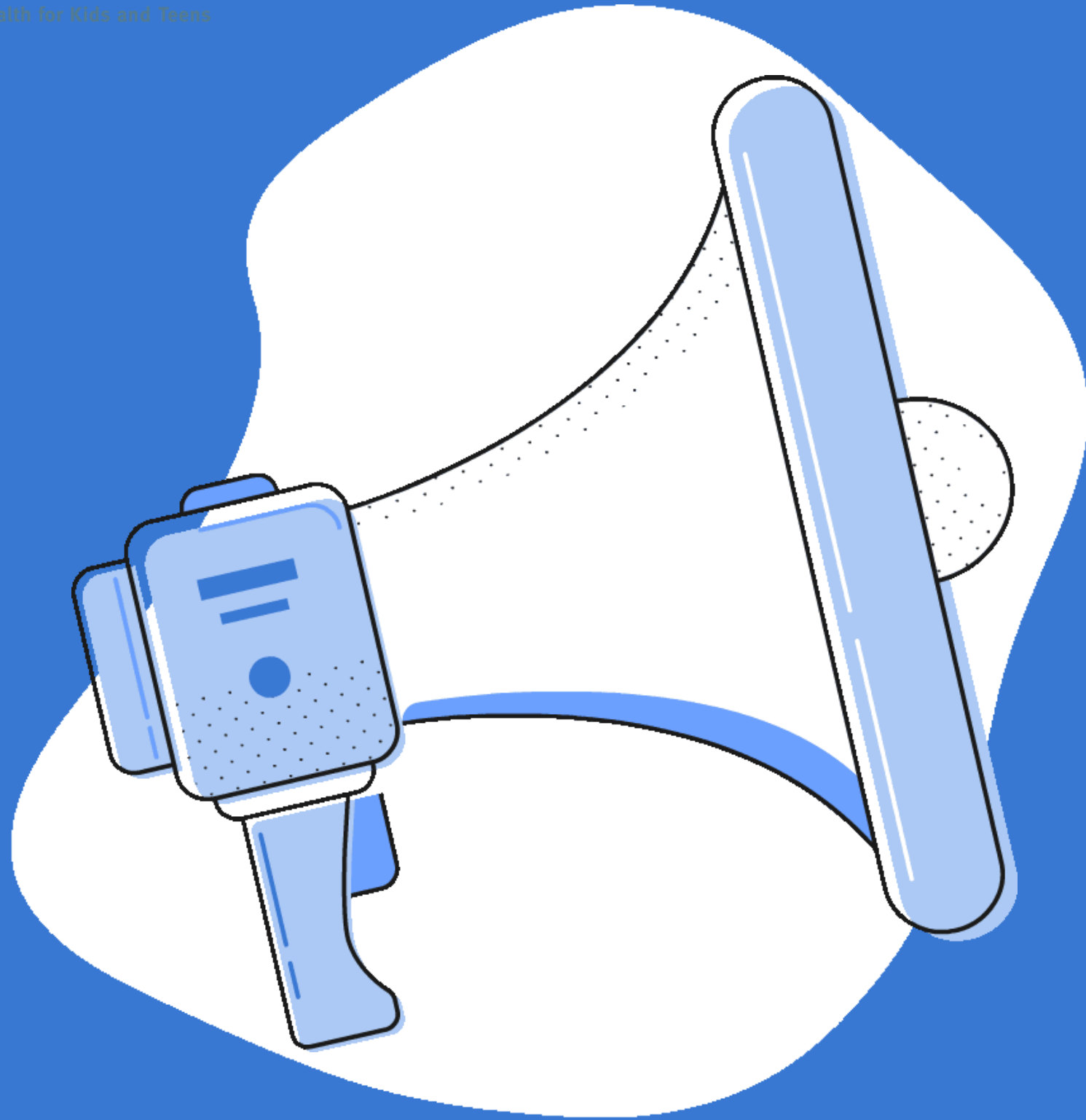
# What Is The Big Idea?

- Mental Health stigma is still a barrier to fully embracing mental health as just another component to health care
- Awareness is key to bridging the gap within communities, cultures, and campuses (marketing, integration in schools, and proper assessment of care within medical facilities)
- Despite differing views on Mental Health, it is just as important as physical health





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# Intervention Case Studies



# SAMPLE CASE 1

Nick is 15. He comes from a large family of older brothers who are all now at university. He has never done as well at school as his brothers, and over the last year, his father has been making him bring in his homework after he's finished it and sometimes there are big fights afterwards. Lately, when he goes to do his homework, he feels sick, gets headaches, and sometimes feels really dizzy. Last week on the way home, he had to get off the bus because he got so nervous at the thought of going home that he couldn't breathe and thought he was going to throw up.





# Question:

Please answer the following question in the chatbox!

01

What are ways youth and adults can help Nick in this situation?

# Question:

Please answer the following question in the chatbox!

02

How would you develop a youth-led intervention in your SBHC or school to prevent situations like Nick?



# SAMPLE CASE 2

Fred, a high school student, struggles with depression and bullying. He posted threats on social media of shooting up the school, and the next week, opened fire at the school. The school shooting killed and wounded many students and staff members. The community is shaken up after the school shooting and many students claim they are haunted by flashbacks, anxiety, and PTSD.



# Questions:

Please answer the following question in the chatbox!

01

After such a tragedy has happened, how can we create a healing community and help students who are experiencing flashbacks, anxiety, and PTSD?



# Questions:

Please answer the following questions in the chatbox!

02

How would you develop a youth-led intervention to prevent incidents like these from happening and encourage a safe space without stigma?



# SAMPLE CASE 3

Communities nationwide are dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, causing stress and anxiety among the youth population. Teenagers report feeling very overwhelmed during this outbreak, from school closures and cancelled events being to seeing devastating news about the coronavirus. Feeling isolated at home, and being scared, this is invoking more anxiety.





# Questions:

Please answer the following question in the chatbox!

01

How can we step up to help our communities, especially youth during this pandemic, specifically mental health services?

# Questions:

Please answer the following question in the chatbox!

02

How would you develop a youth-led intervention that both educates students on what to do during this pandemic and decrease the stigma of receiving mental health services?





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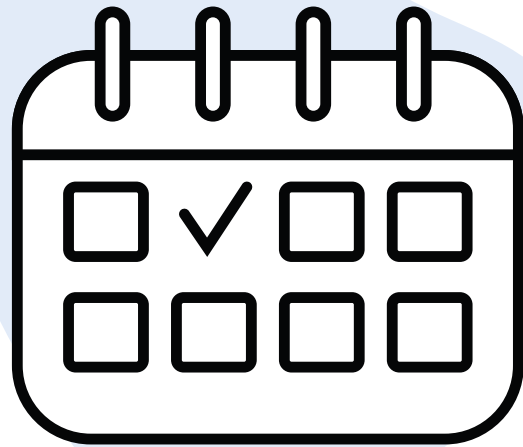


# Strategies for Creating a Youth-led Intervention

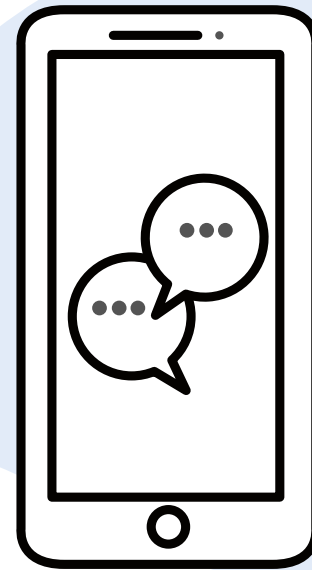


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# Ideas from School-Based Health Centers



Schedule an  
Event



Create a  
Campaign



Post on  
Social Media

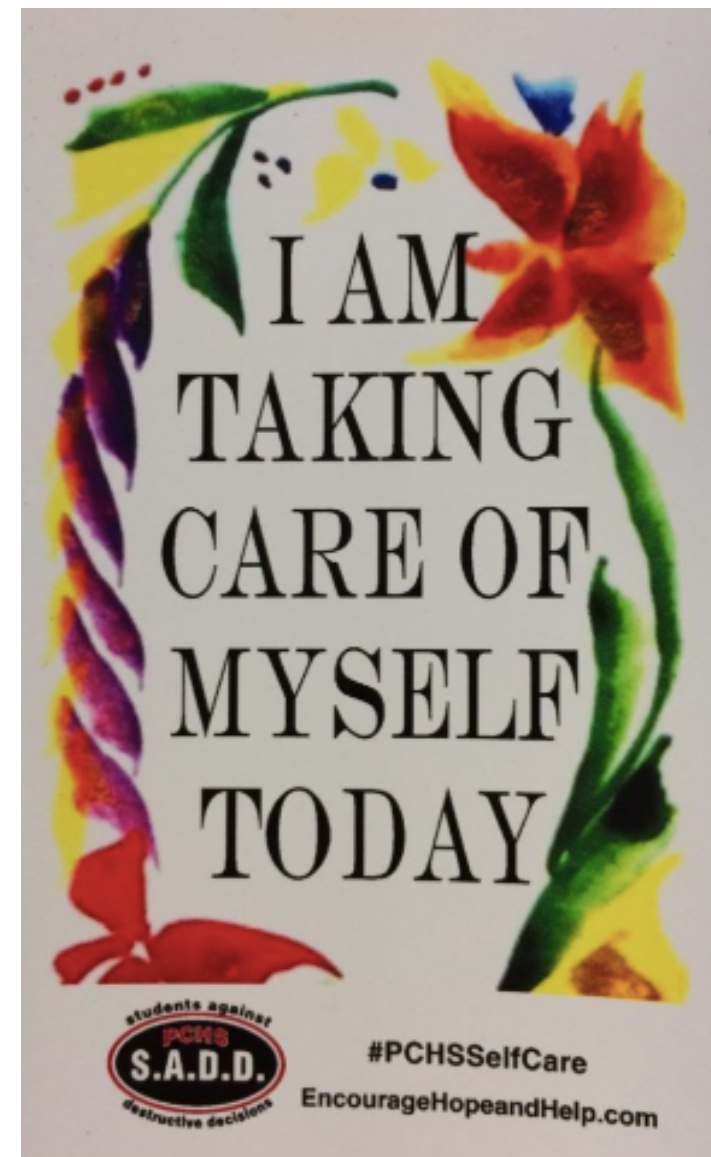
# Campaigns and Clubs for Mental Health

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## Campaigns for Awareness

- Stress Less Week
- NAMI Walks

## -How Full is Your Cup?



## Clubs Throughout the Nation

### -Bring Change 2 Mind

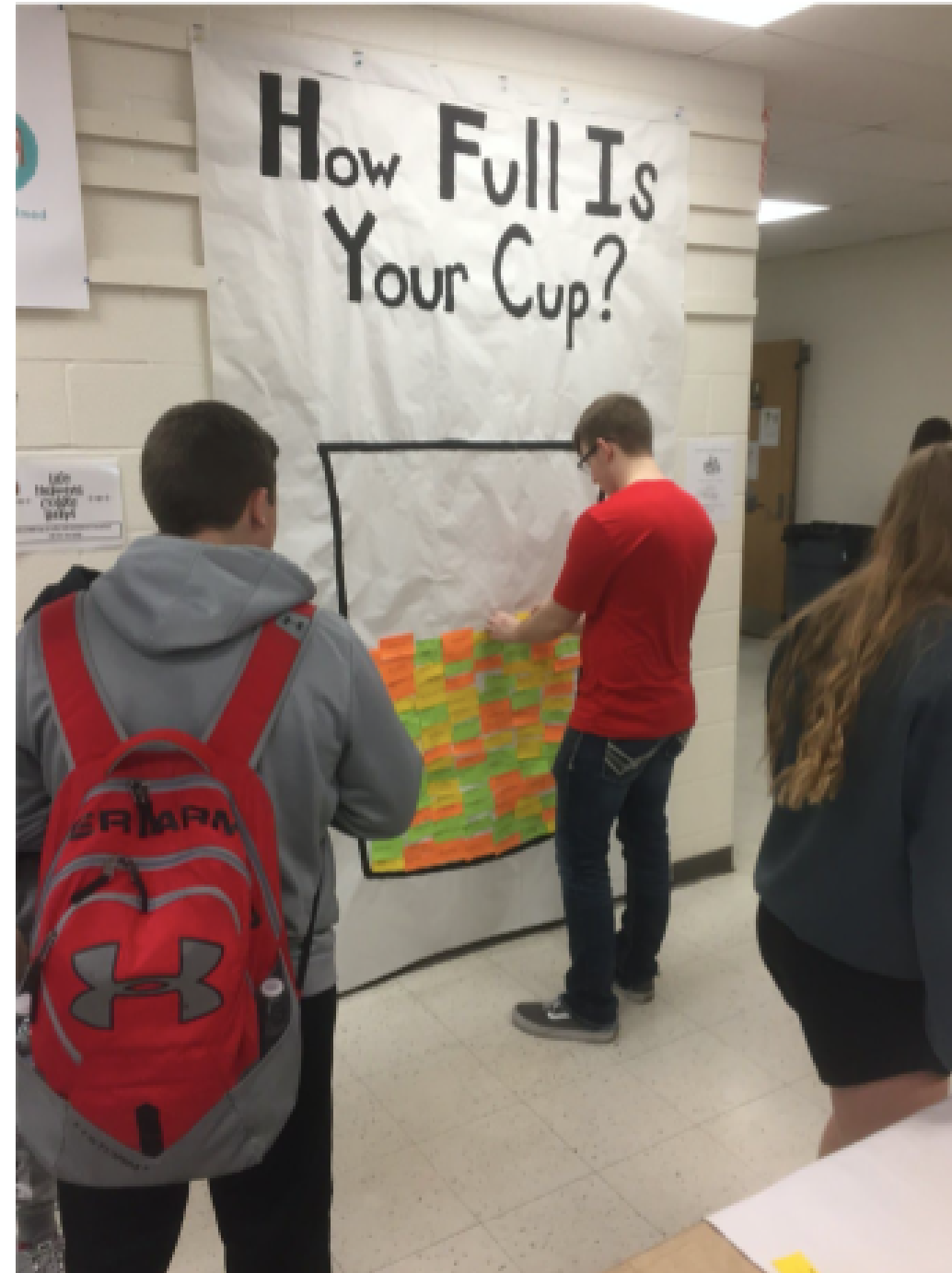
- MINDFest 2020
- East San Gabriel Valley



# How Full is Your Cup?

## What is it?

How Full is Your Cup? is a campaign developed by Lawson students. The object of the campaign is to help their peers not engage in risky behaviors, related to stress. It helps students identify the impact their stressors are having in their lives.



## The Impact on Students

Students were able to understand themselves better, while knowing that they are supported.

## How Was It Started?

The project was funded by AT&T in their efforts to support youth mental health.



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# Bring Change 2 Mind

## What is it?

Bring Change 2 Mind is a club that helps bring awareness to the stigma on mental health through mentoring and student involvement.

## Student Impact

Students are able to advocate for their peers, through school and community events.



## Getting Started

When creating a club at your school, BC2M will provide various resources. These resources include an annual \$500 grant for activities, and an invitation to the BC2M Student Summit.



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# MINDFest

## What is it?

MINDFest is a day in April that invites people to see all of the different resources for mental health in the area.

## How Did it Start?

It was started by the MINDCoalition organization, in hopes of increasing resources and breaking the stigma.

## Community Impact

Individuals in the community are made aware to the mental health resources that surround them.





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# Funding Your Youth-led Intervention

The 2020  
Overnight Walk  
is **Going Virtual**

For more information, visit:  
[TheOvernight.org](http://TheOvernight.org)



- Grants
- Fundraisers
- Donations
- Community Events

bring  
change  
to mind



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# What Can You Do?

*"At the root of this dilemma is the way we view mental health in this country. Whether an illness affects your heart, your leg or your brain, it's still an illness, and there should be no distinction."*

*- Michelle Obama*







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**YOU(th)** break  
mental health stigma!



Reach Out to Us:

Email: [youthadvisorycouncil@sbh4all.org](mailto:youthadvisorycouncil@sbh4all.org)

Instagram/Twitter: @sbhayac