

Institute on Disability/UCED



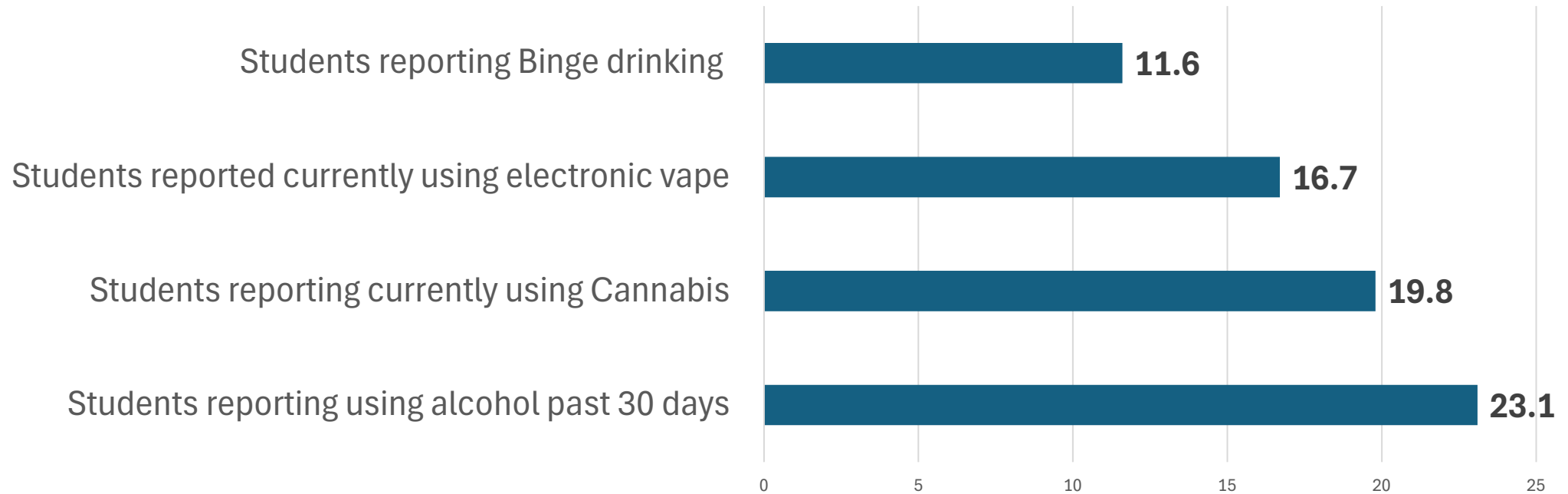
University of
New Hampshire

The Power of Peer Support: NH Alternative Peer Groups Offer an innovative Approach to Addressing Youth Substance Use

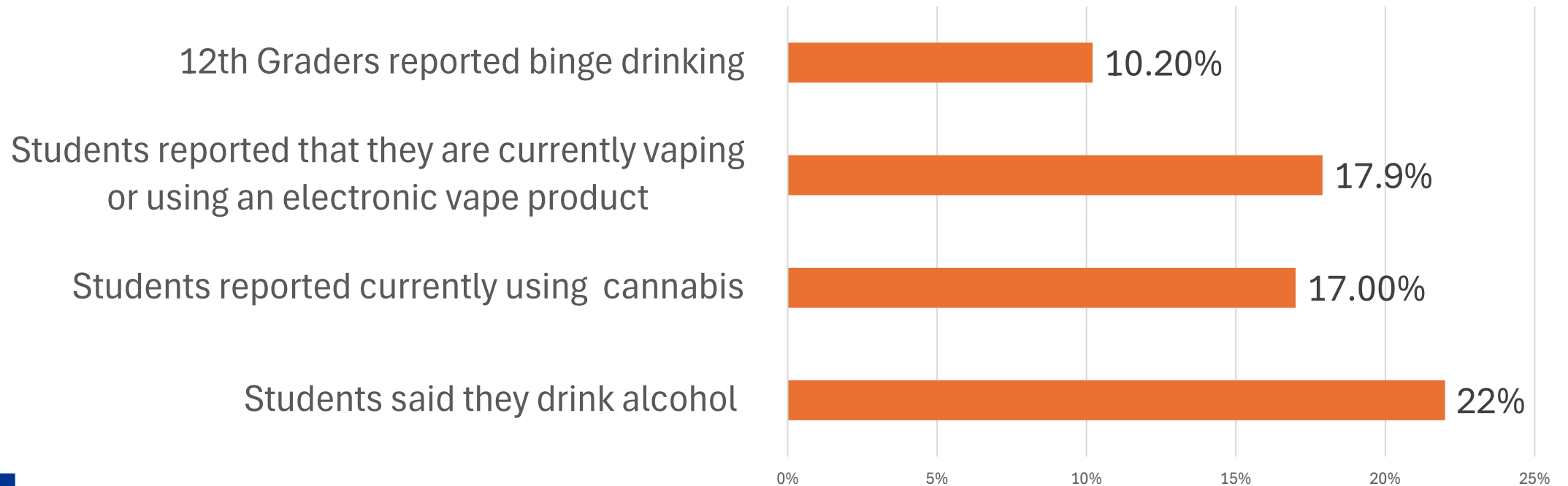
Heidi Cloutier, University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability
Michelle Lennon, Archways Community Resource Centers

NH Student Alcohol, Nicotine and Other Drug Use, 2023 YRBS

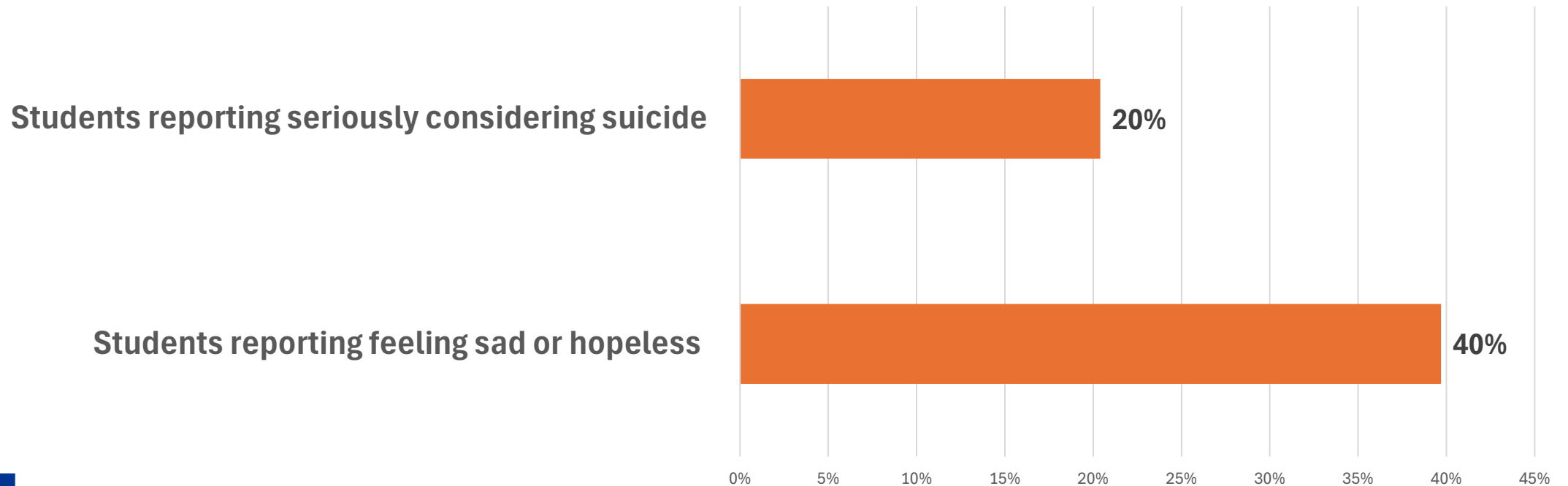
NH YRBS Alcohol & Drug Use 2023



National Student Alcohol, Nicotine and Other Drug Use, 2023 YRBS



2023 NH Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Mental Health



Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

80% of minors in state juvenile justice systems were under the influence of drugs or alcohol when committing their crimes, test positive for drugs, were arrested for committing an alcohol or **drug offense**, admitted to having substance abuse or addiction problems

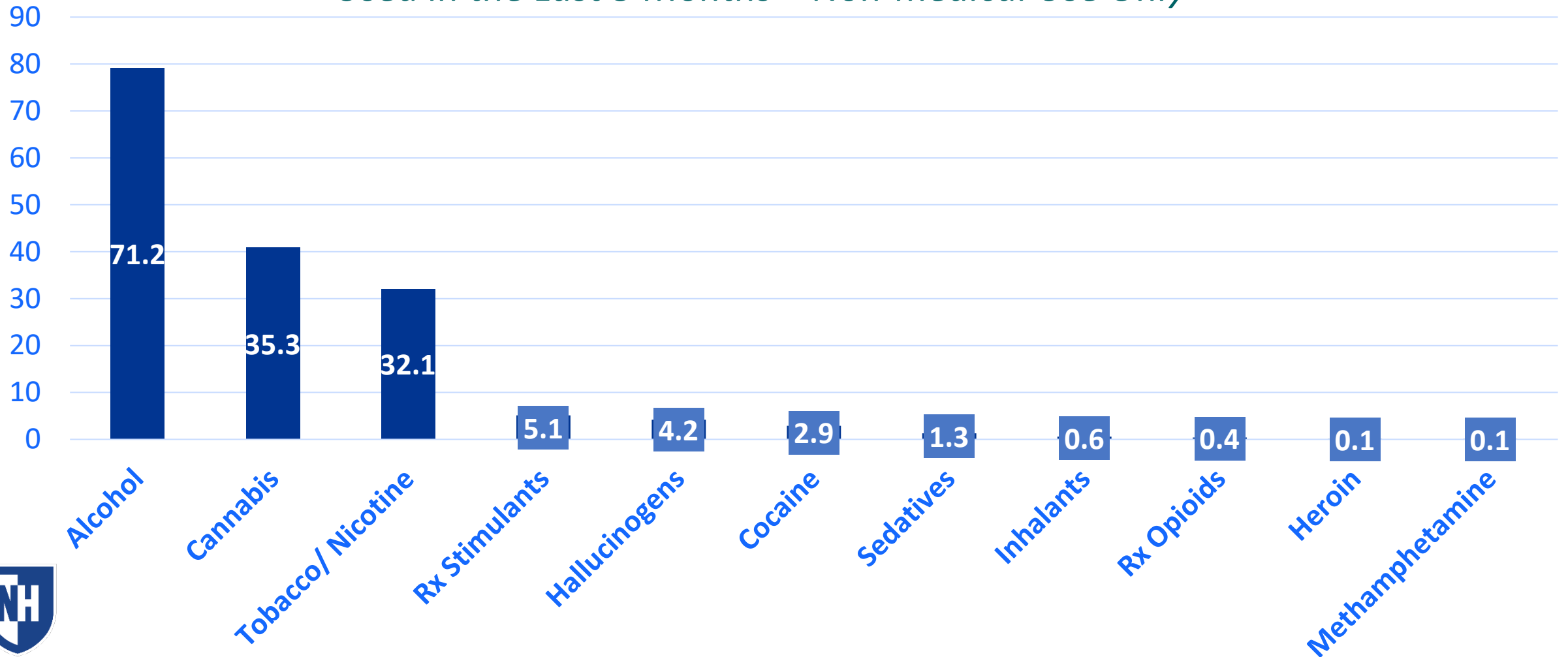
1.9 to 2.4 million of the minors in the juvenile justice system have substance abuse or addiction issues and only 68,000 receive treatment (Child crime and Safety Center, 2024)

*National Council on Alcoholism, and Drug Dependence, Inc.

Source: NCHA-ACHA III, Fall 2023

Data: UNH Students Reported Use in the Last 3 Months by Substance (%)

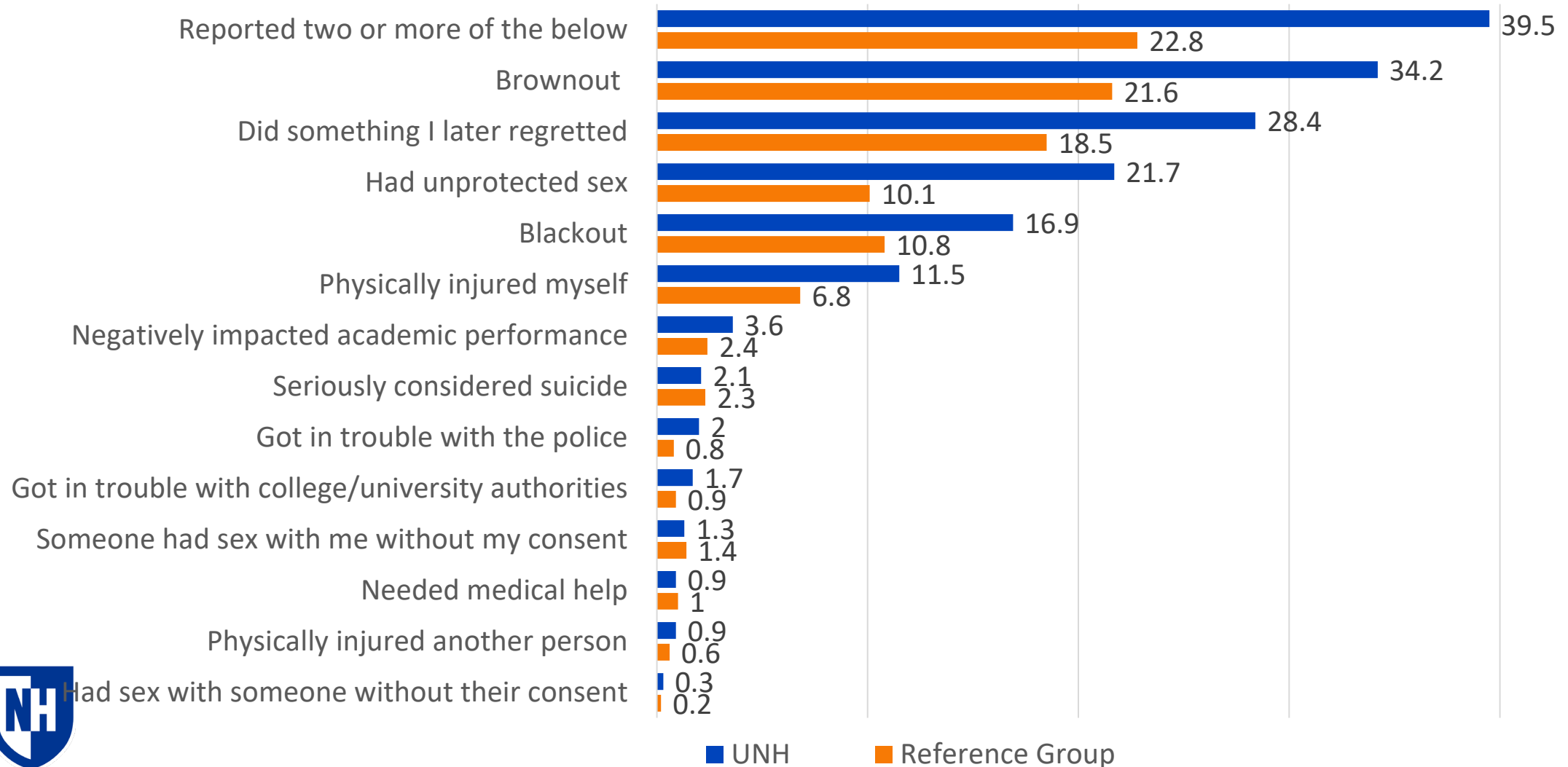
Used in the Last 3 Months – Non-medical Use Only



Source: NCHA-ACHA III, Fall 2021

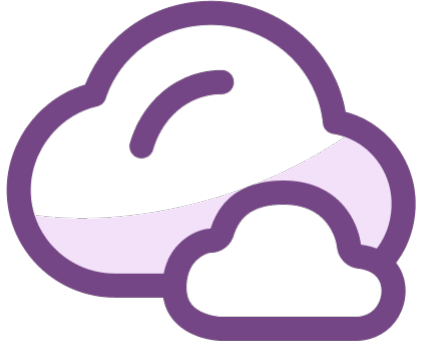
1,696 UNH respondents; 23.9% response rate

Data: UNH Students Reporting Negative Impacts of Alcohol vs. Reference Group (%)



* College students who drank reported experiencing the following in the last 12 months when drinking alcohol.

slido



**Why do you think youth use Alcohol,
Nicotine or other Drugs?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

There are many reasons why youth use alcohol, nicotine and other drugs:

- Want to fit in with (or may be pressured by) certain friends or groups.
- Like the way it makes them feel.
- Believe it makes them more grown up.
- Want to escape from their problems. For example, some teens may use drugs to try to:
 - Avoid the symptoms of mental health conditions, such as anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or depression.
 - Ease feelings of insecurity.
 - Forget about past trauma or abuse.



Some People Are at Higher Risk of Developing a SUD

Risk Factor	Examples
Family...	History of use, genetics, attitudes, absence, rejection
Life Stressors...	Academics, Chaotic environment, big life events
Marginalized Groups...	Discrimination, harassment, trauma experiences
Peer Group...	Social pressure, normalizing use
Adolescent Onset of Use...	Changes to brain development, as a result of early use primes brain for addiction





Behavioral Health Access Video Project

Goals

1. Strengthen the capabilities and services of NH's behavioral healthcare system to address disparities.
2. Advance health equity in underserved and disproportionately affected populations.
3. Produce 7 short videos that amplify the voices of those from historically marginalized communities who have experienced challenges accessing behavioral health services.
4. Help create dialogue for individuals, schools and organizations to begin to ask questions like, **What can I do? How can I help?**

*Funded by the Endowment for Health & a portion through NH DHHS



**Let's view one video addressing
Substance Use Treatment &
Support Access**

Notice:

1. The video participants shared their personal experiences with substance use. What about their stories surprised you?
2. How did bias or stigma impact their experiences?
3. How did participants needs vary?

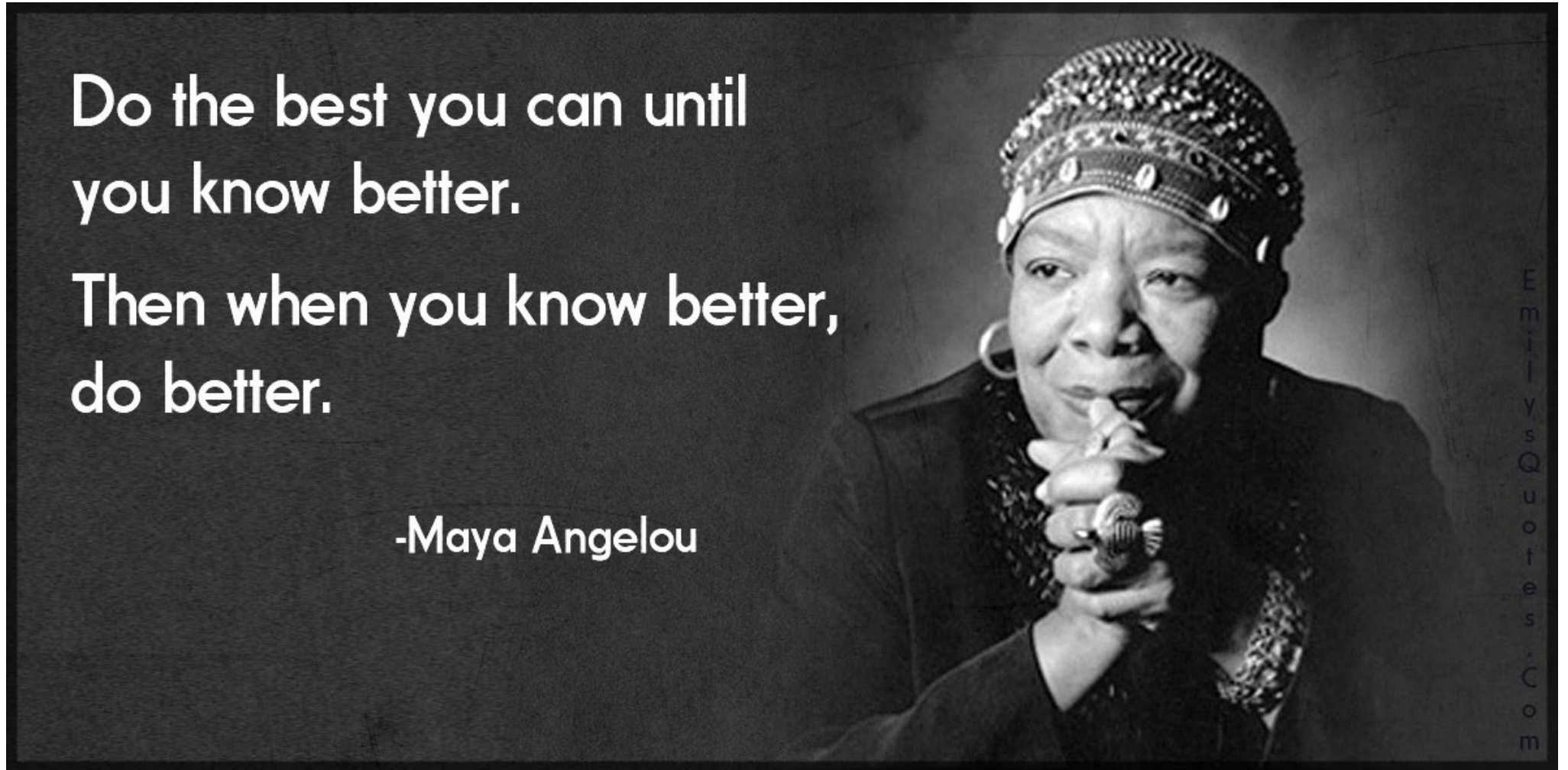
Barriers to Accessing Substance Use Supports

No Shame or Blame....

Do the best you can until
you know better.

Then when you know better,
do better.

-Maya Angelou



Emily's Quotes . Com

Turn and Talk: Discuss 5-7 mins

- In what ways can stigma and bias affect access to treatment and supports? What do you see within your community?
- What are some things that you can do to counteract stigma and bias?
- What is something you can do to honor or amplify the voice of an individual with lived experience with Substance Use Dependence?

In This Next Video, Notice....

- What were some examples of individuals needing or finding support outside of a medical facility or treatment clinic?
- What were some examples of supports the participants mentioned that may not normally come to mind when you think about substance use or recovery services?
- How can we utilize Peer Supports more to assist youth & families?

The Power of Peer Recovery Supports

Small Group Discussion (10 mins): Reactions/ What did you notice?

Reflect...

- What are some of the consequences of not providing access to substance use treatment & supports?
- What can you or your organization do to improve access and supports for youth who use drugs and those seeking supports?
- Some participants describe a “harm reduction” approach. This is different from “zero tolerance” – it means caring for people’s health and safety regardless of whether they are practicing abstinence. What do you think about that?



Small Group Discussion (10 mins): Reactions/ What did you notice?

- How can partnering with people who are impacted by substance use help improve services and how those services are delivered?
- Why is ongoing support and follow-along care important when treating SUD? What are some consequences to taking a “one and done” approach?
- How can you help create the type of environment and community that the participants said was helpful?



Lessons Learned

- Partner with those impacted to understand what's helpful to them
- Hire people with lived experience
- Embrace all paths to recovery
- Invest in community building & recovery capital
- Care coordination is essential
- Harm reduction saves lives
- It takes a village

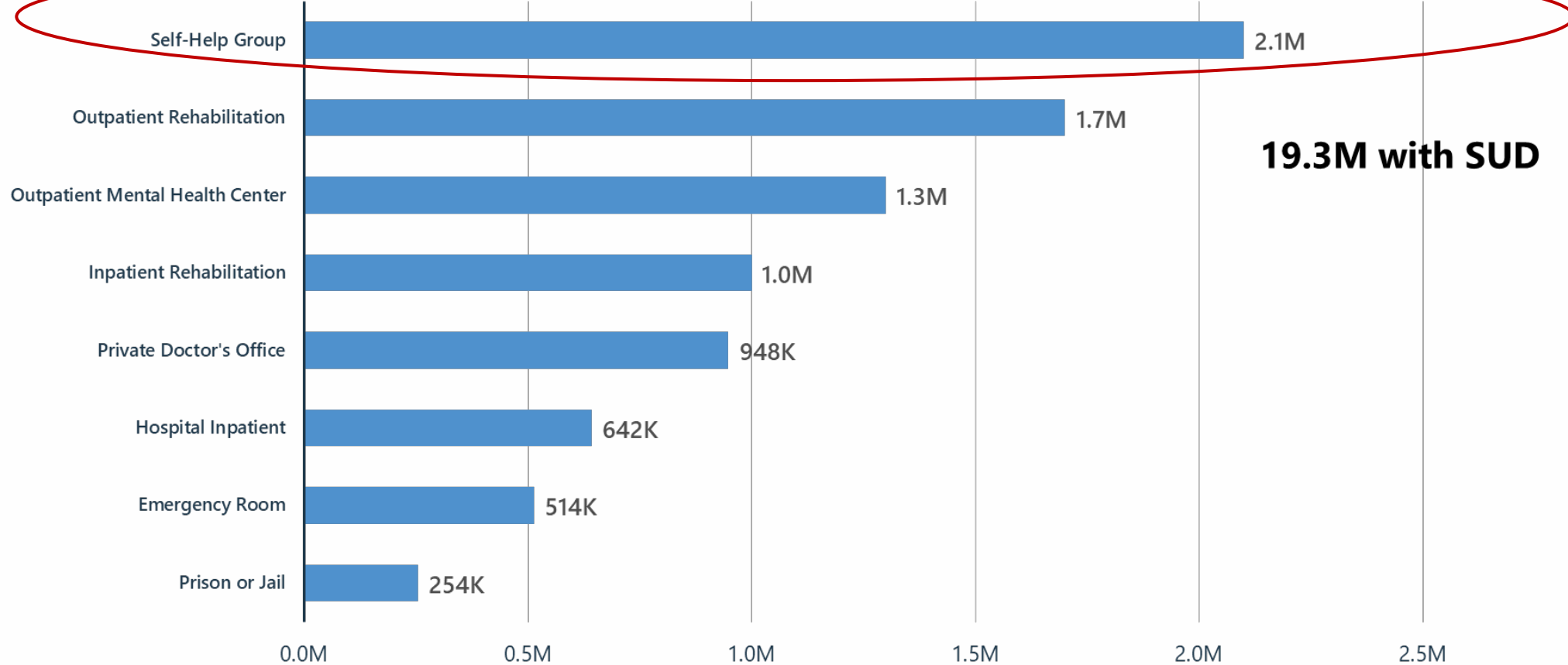
The NH Alternative Peer Group (APG) Model



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Locations Where Substance Use Treatment was Received

PAST YEAR, 2019 NSDUH, 12+



Locations where people received substance use treatment are not mutually exclusive because respondents could report that they received treatment in more than one location in the past year.

4 Essential Components to APG Model



Mentoring/
Facilitation by trained
Peer Recovery
Professionals



Peer support among
group members



Caregiver support



Prosocial activities
among youth &
families



Alternative Peer Groups (APG's)

- At least 1 leader with lived experience with substance misuse/ recovery
- Facilitators are fairly compensated for their time (Paid staff)
- Facilitators are trained, supervised and supported
- Learning community facilitated monthly for facilitators to connect with others, problem solve and learn from each other
- Group Peer recovery, 1:1 Recovery coaching, referral to higher levels of care if needed, social opportunities/ investment in building recovery capital & Family support/ community supports available
- Coordination across the community to address stigma, invest in harm reduction, education and coordinated supports
- Grow Leaders from within the group



How Do APGs Help?

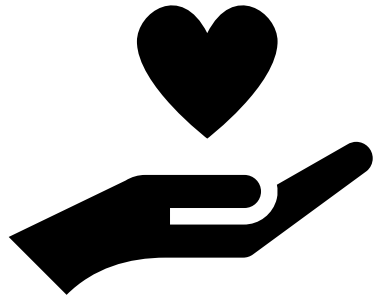
Alternative Peer Groups provide...

-  Safe, supportive peer environment
-  Fun, substance free activities
-  Family support
-  Sense of belonging
-  Reduce stigma of being in recovery

A photograph of five young adults (three women and two men) smiling and laughing together, representing a supportive peer environment.

Actions that Have a Positive Effect, According to the Center for Disease Control

- Promote mental health & wellness for youth in schools and community.
- Making school environments safer and more supportive for youth.
- Increase positive connections to school and community.
- Ensure quality of education, access to needed services and safe and supportive learning environments.



What is harm reduction?

Ways to practice substance use harm reduction on campus



Use substances in moderation



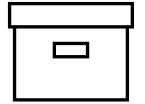
Use the buddy system



Carry Narcan or Naloxone



Take medication only as prescribed



Dispose of materials safely

Examples of other forms of harm reduction



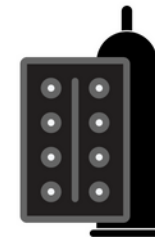
SUN SCREEN



SEAT BELTS



SPEED LIMITS



BIRTH CONTROL



CIGARETTE FILTERS



Harm Reduction Education is Essential



Judgement Free



Builds Trust



Safe
environment



Allows Youth to
explore why
they are using
drugs



Helps Youth
Connect to a
community that
can help them



Successful Implementation of Alternative Peer Groups (APG) Includes:

- Agency Implementation/ Oversight Team
- Led by and for young people in Recovery (require Facilitators to be 18+)
- APG Facilitator Training grounded in SAMSHA's Recovery Competencies
- Data Collection tools and processes developed, staff trained to use
- Statewide APG Learning Communities for APG Facilitators and Administrators



Examples of Meeting Topics

Understanding addiction

Understanding & Managing Fear

Handling Peer Pressure and Social Influence

Family Dynamics

Harm Reduction

Cultivating Mindfulness

Dealing with Change and Uncertainty

Fostering Community and Belonging

Building Resilience for Life's Challenges

Exploring Creative Expression

Understanding and Expressing Emotions

Body Image and Self-Acceptance

Nurturing Positive Thinking

Managing difficult feelings

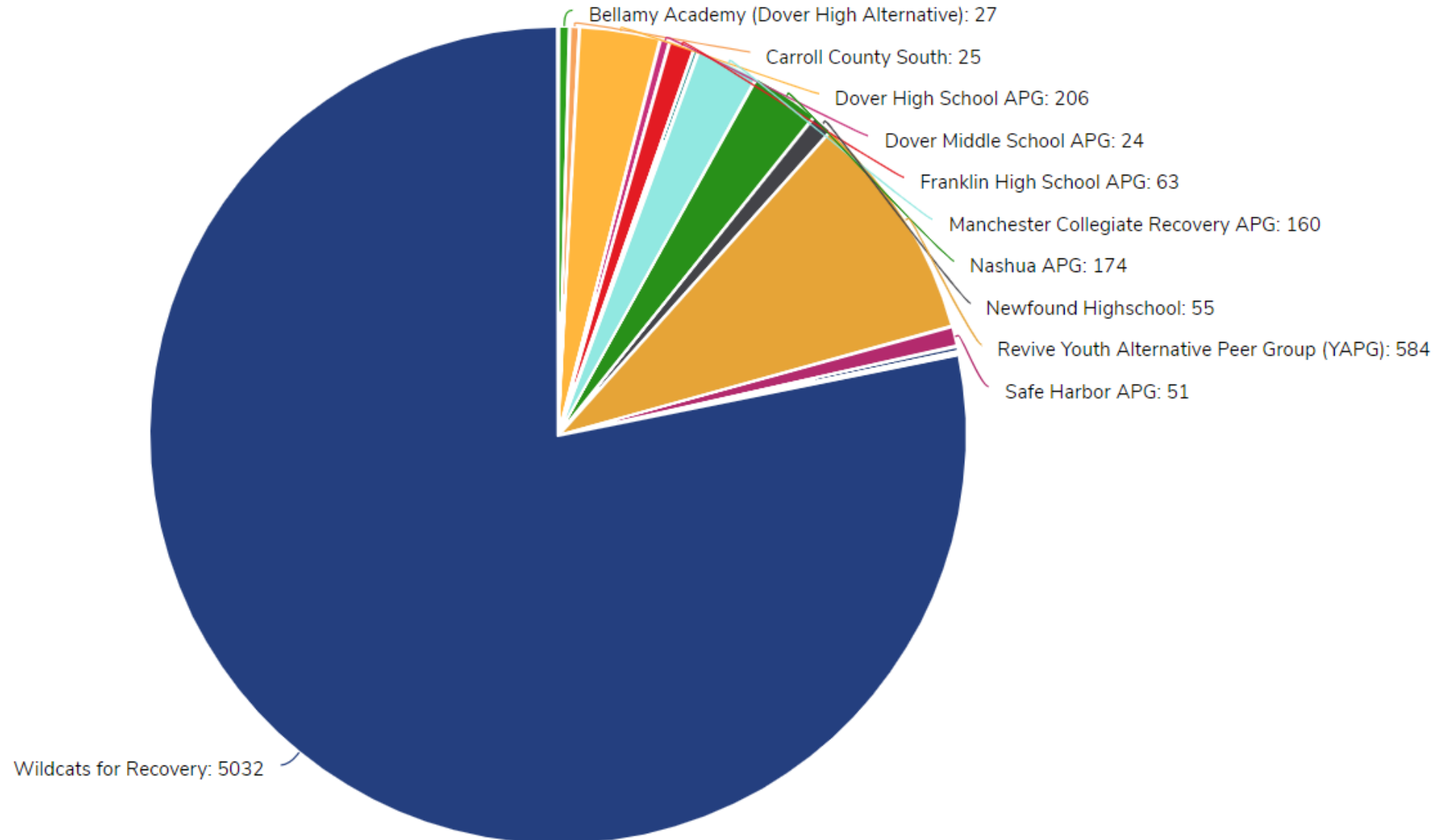
Pros and cons of using

Finding balance



NH Youth Engaged Across the 11 APGs since 2023

9 Middle/ High School, and 2 Collegiate Recovery programs



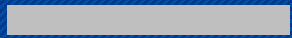
Before Getting Started

- Invest in Community Collaboration & Get Buy in (Belief in), including with Youth & families
- Importance of well educated & supported workforce & adequately train them
- Use the APG Implementation Checklist as a resource
- Develop policies and procedures for how you will handle situations as they arise- There are ethical scenarios and sample policies on the Oversight Team section of the NH APG website





Questions?



How to Gain Access to the 7 We are Here Videos

1. Any individual or group that wants to access to the videos must first complete a User Agreement located on the [“We are Here” website](#). All videos are free and open access.
2. Once you complete the User agreement, you will gain access to the videos where you can view the videos online as well as access the Discussion Guides & trainer resources.
3. Questions? Contact contact.iod@unh.edu

**Scan QR Code to Access Videos
& Film Discussion questions**



NH Children's Behavioral Health Resource Center


Welcome to the Children's Behavioral Health Resource Center!

Linking children, youth, young adults, and caregivers that experience mental health or substance use concerns and the people who support them to high quality, proven practices.

Welcome Families!

Look here to find services and supports, resources, or to learn more about NH's System of Care.

[EXPLORE](#)



Welcome Providers!

Providers can look here to find upcoming behavioral health training and technical assistance opportunities.

[LEARN MORE](#)





Resources for Support

[Health & Wellness
Wildcat Recovery
Education and Resources](#)

[Health & Wellness
Alcohol, Nicotine and
Other Drug Education
and Counseling](#)

[T-Break: Take a Cannabis
Tolerance Break | Center
for Health & Wellbeing at
UVM | The University of
Vermont](#)

[The Little Book of College
Sobriety » Susan Packard](#)

[Welcome | The Doorway
\(nh.gov\)](#)

[SAMHSA's National
Helpline | SAMHSA](#)

[SAFE Project - Stop the
Addiction Fatality
Epidemic](#)

[Addiction Recovery Apps
| Hazelden Betty Ford](#)

[Let's Talk Addiction &
Recovery on Apple
Podcasts](#)

[National Sober Active
Community | The
Phoenix](#)



Community Resources

- [211](#)
- [988](#) *If you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, help is available 24/7. Call or text 833-710-6477*
- [NH Harm Reduction Coalition](#)
- [Home - NAMI New Hampshire \(naminh.org\)](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Support | Seacoast Outright - New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts](#)
- [Mental Health | New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services \(nh.gov\)](#)

 [Peer Support Agencies | New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services \(nh.gov\)](#)



Resources

[Think Cultural Health Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Service \(CLAS\) Standards](#)

[US Health & Human Services Office of Minority Health](#)

[University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability Website](#)

[Behavioral health implementation guide for the national standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health and health care](#)

[US Department of Labor Communication Access Resources](#)

[Video: Spotlight on Youth Voices](#)

[Video: Young, Gifted and Black](#)

[Take a Test \(harvard.edu\) Implicit Bias Test](#)

[DeepL Translate: The world's most accurate translator](#)

[Class Dojo Translate](#)



Additional Resources

[American Psychological Association Best Practices for Mental Health Facilities Working With LGBT Clients](#)

[Guidelines of Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) Patients](#) by the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association

[LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity Center of Excellence](#)

[The Welcoming Project Free Printable Signs](#)

[Practice Brief September 2018 "Providing Services and Supports for Youth who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex or Two-Spirit", The National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University, Washington, DC](#)

[Practice pronouns.com](#)



Resources to Help With Youth Behavioral Health Collaborations

- [APG Coaches Resources](#)
- [APG Facilitator Resources](#)
- [Oversight Team](#)
- [APG Activities on APG website](#)
- [You and Substance Use](#)
- [Creating Connections NH](#)
- [MOU School Template](#)

[Effective School-Community Partnerships to Support School Mental Health](#)

[Supporting Mental health in Schools \(American Academy of Pediatrics\)](#)

[Center on PBIS | Opioid Crisis and Substance Misuse](#)

[Resource: Fact Sheet— Interconnected Systems Framework 101: An Introduction](#)



Resources continued

[Opioid Crisis & Substance Misuse PBIS.org](#)

[US Department of Education Guidance Around the Opioid Crisis](#)

[Using the PBIS Framework to Address the Opioid Crisis in Schools](#)

[CVS Health Pharmacists Teach online resources](#)

[Treatment Considerations for Youth and Young Adults with Serious Emotional Disturbances and Serious Mental Illnesses and Co-occurring Substance Use](#)

[Reducing Vaping Among Youth and Young Adults](#)

[SAMSHA Treatment Considerations for Youth & Young Adults with Serious Emotional Disturbances and Co-Occurring Substance Use](#)

[Drug Guide for Parents from Partnership for Drug Free Kids](#)

[Drug Guide for Parents from Partnership for Drug Free Kids \(Spanish version\)](#)

[Medicine Abuse Project's Parent Talk Kit](#)



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