



***The Impact of Covid-19 on Mental  
Health and Safety in Maine Students***

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# Impacts of Pandemic

This pandemic has impacted us all, every day in so many ways.

- Our daily schedule
- *Access to food and materials*
- *Our finances*
- *How we do our professional work*
- *Access to health and mental health care*
- *How (or if) we socialize*
- *Our sense of safety*
- *Our sense of hope*

*We have been unable to find solid common ground*



# Impacts of Pandemic

For our youth, all those impacts and more.

- Their daily schedule and structure
- Critical out of home supports
- *Access to peer interactions*
- *Uncertainty about the future*
- *Access to health and mental health care*
- *Sports and other group activities suspended*
- *Their sense of safety*
- *Their sense of hope*

***And they watch their adults unable to agree***

# EVERYBODY IS AFFECTED





# Supporting Mental Wellness in the Pandemic

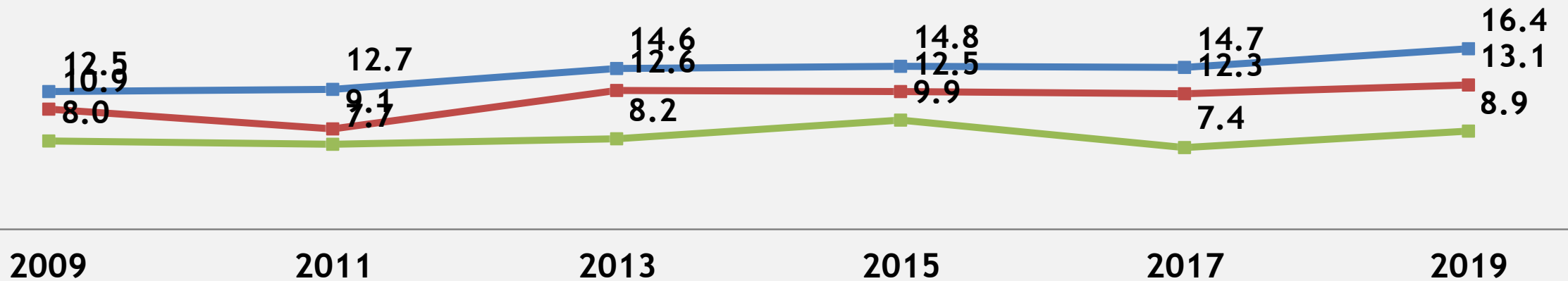
## *The Challenges*

- Depression and Anxiety have increased
  - Increased from a base-rate of 10% to 20% or more
  - Isolation, uncertainty and fear are the drivers...
- Substance use is up across the board.
- Contagion safety leads to social isolation and also increased anxiety
  - Those already struggling have exacerbated anxiety.
    - For those living in unsupportive situations, it is particularly hard
- The uncertainty and polarization also makes each step more challenging...

# Since 2009, there has been a significant increase in suicide ideation among Maine high school students.

Prevalence (%) of Maine High School Students Who Considered, Planned or Attempted Suicide in Past 12 Months, 2009-2019

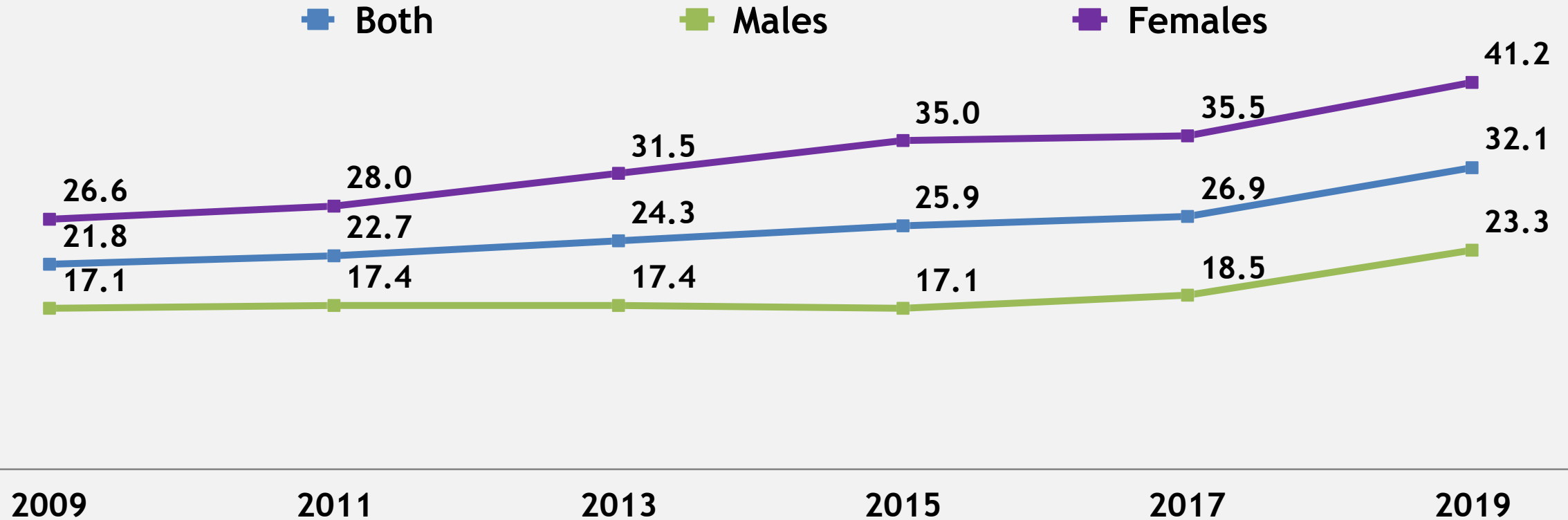
■ Considered      ■ Planned      ■ Attempted



Data source: Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), 2009-2019.

# The significant increase in depression among Maine high school students between 2009 and 2019 was mostly driven by female students.

Prevalence (%) of Depression among Maine High School Students, 2009 - 2019  
(Students reporting being sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks in the past 12 months)

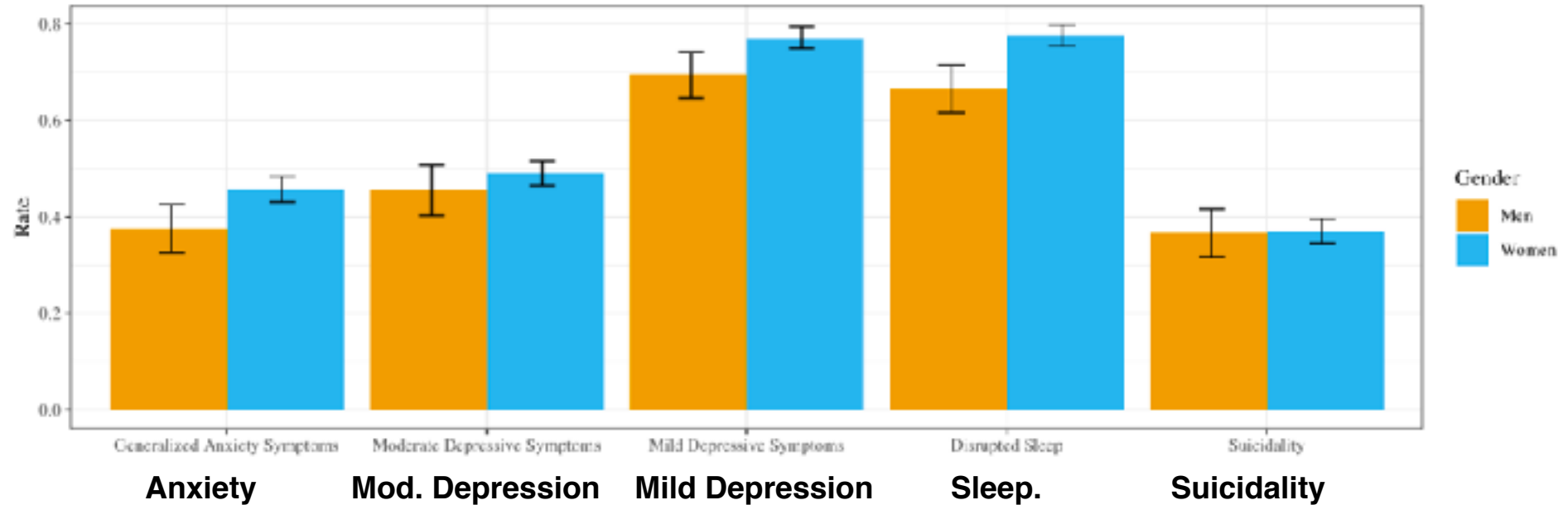


Data source: Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), 2009-2019

# Recent US survey of 18-24 y/o

## Prevalence of Mental Health Symptoms Among Young Adults by Gender

October survey wave ending 10/23/20

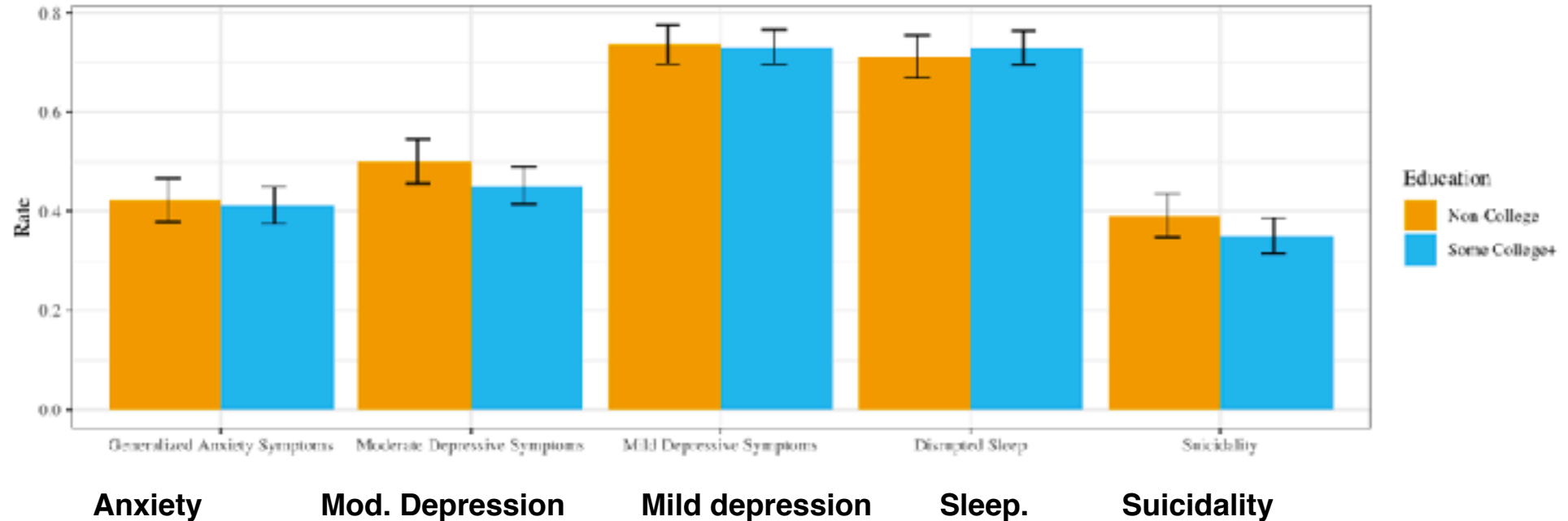




# Recent US survey of 18-24 y/o

## Prevalence of Mental Health Symptoms Among Young Adults by Education

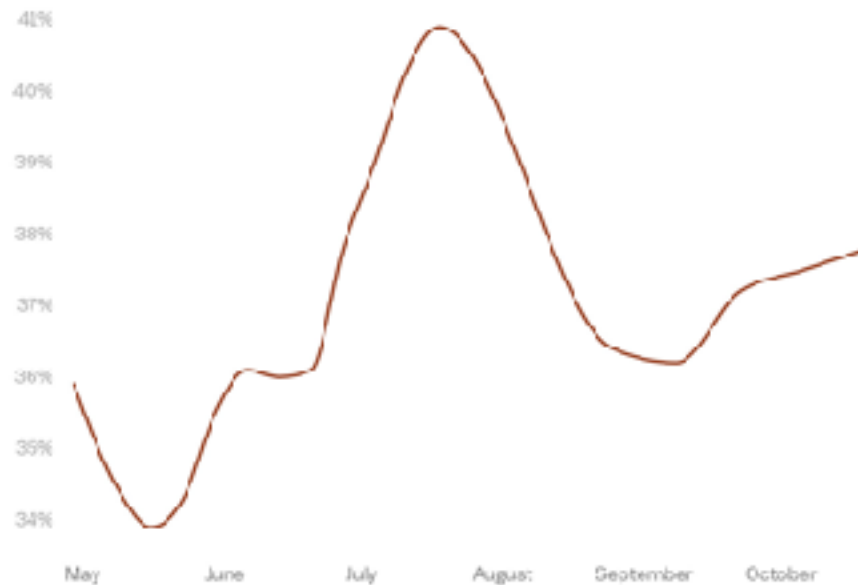
October survey wave ending 10/23/20



# Anxiety and depression are following a similar curve to Covid-19 cases



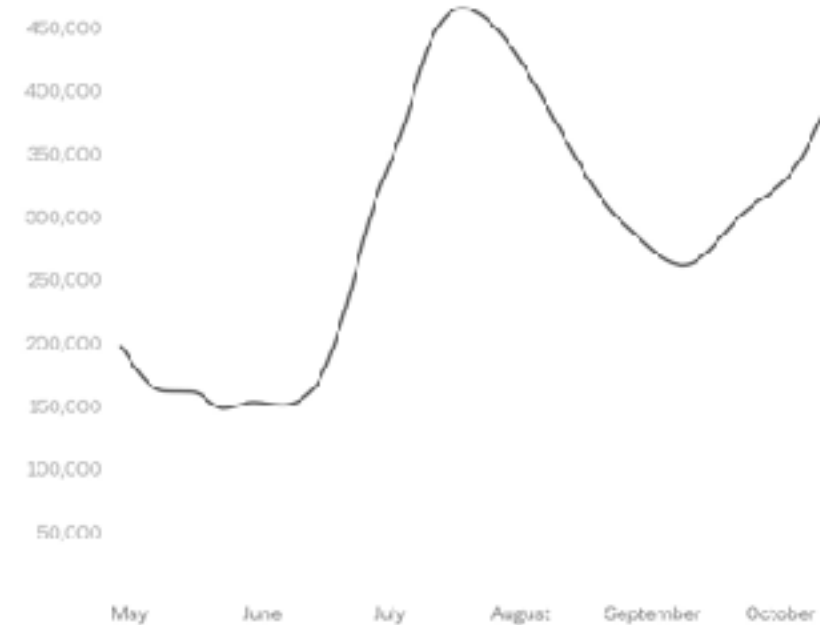
Reported symptoms of anxiety and depression in summer and fall



Fraction of people reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression, including data from Phase 2 of the Pulse survey.

Chart: Isaac Sebenius • Source: CDC Household Pulse Survey

US weekly Covid-19 cases in summer and fall



The number of new Covid-19 cases in the US during the surrounding week.

Chart: Isaac Sebenius • Source: New York Times

Vox

EMERGENCY PHONE AND CRISIS COUNSELING

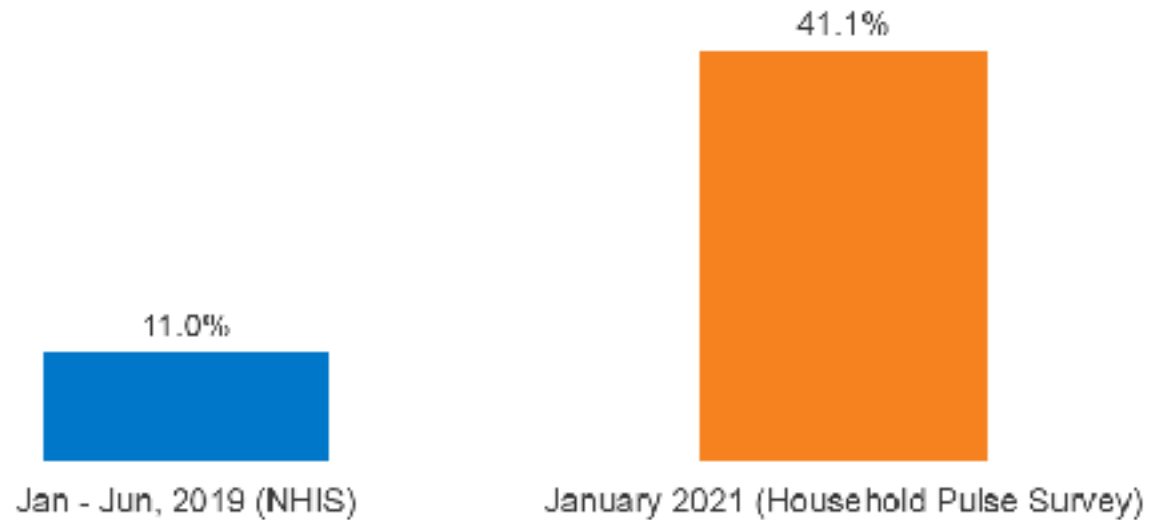
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# Impact on Anxiety and Depression



Figure 1

Average Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety Disorder and/or Depressive Disorder, January-June 2019 vs. January 2021



NOTES: Percentages are based on responses to the GAD-2 and PHQ-2 scales. Pulse findings (shown here for January 6–18, 2021) have been stable overall since data collection began in April 2020.

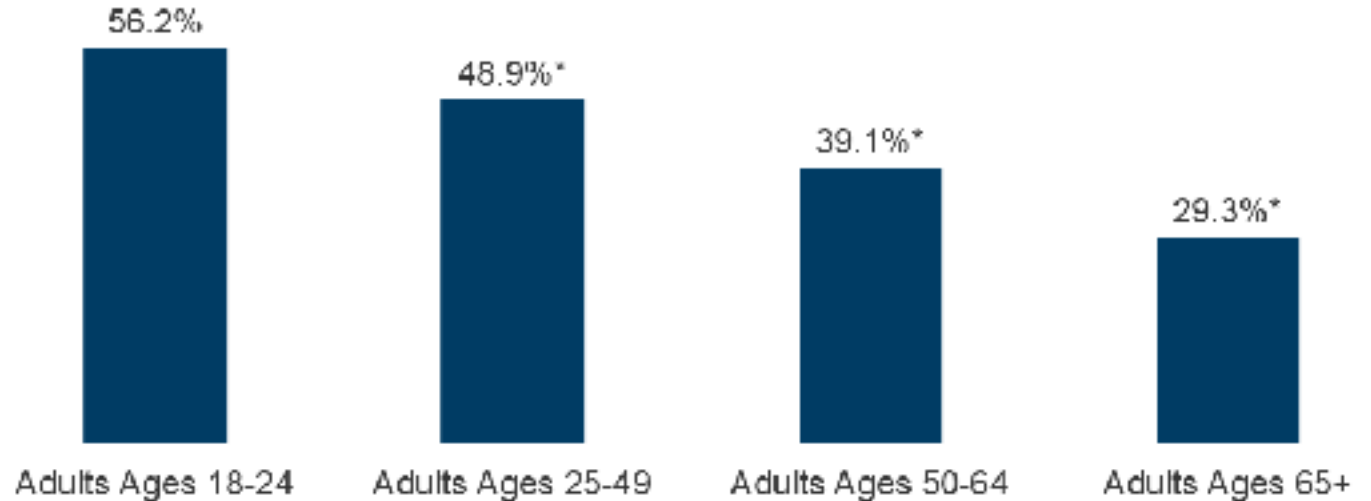
SOURCE: NHIS Early Release Program and U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey. For more detail on methods, see: [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/ERmentalhealth\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/ERmentalhealth_508.pdf)

# Impact on Anxiety and Depression



Figure 3

Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety and/or Depressive Disorder During the COVID-19 Pandemic, by Age



NOTES: \*Indicates a statistically significant difference between adults ages 18-24. Data shown includes adults, ages 18+, with symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder that generally occur more than half the days or nearly every day. Data shown is for December 9 – 21, 2020.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, 2020





# Drivers of Mental Health Challenges in the Pandemic

*What increase risk for negative mental health outcomes?*

- Isolation from social outlets, friends, activities
- Isolation from supports
- *Stressful or unsafe home environment*
- *Uncertainty about the future; little predictability*
- *Anxiety about the pandemic*
- *Missing key milestones (eg. Graduation)*
- *Underlying vulnerabilities/ trauma*
- *Duration of the pandemic*

*Remote students perhaps most of all*





# Drivers of Mental Health Challenges in the Pandemic

*What increase risk for negative mental health outcomes?*

- Lack of engagement in remote learning
- Lack of Internet connection
- Family instability d/t pandemic
- Stresses in Covid safety/distancing
- Apathy/motivation
- Lack of control
- Lack of hope for future
- Masks/ no visual cues

*Special needs students perhaps most of all*





EMERGENCY  
PHONE  
AND  
CRISIS  
COUNSELING

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# SUICIDE PREVENTION

NAMI Maine holds Maine's suicide prevention training and technical assistance contract. Trainings are provided to communities, schools, health and mental health clinicians and media outlets.

- *Increases awareness about suicide prevention*
- *Builds skills for managing suicidal behavior*
- *Supports best-practice models of suicide management*
- *Provides resources and support in the aftermath of suicide*
- *Works to reduce suicidal behavior in the state*

**Supporting school clinicians and staff in virtual work!**



## **A PEER SUPPORT TEEN TEXT LINE**

- Open 12pm – 10pm
- Designed for 14 – 20 year olds
- Staffed by youth under 23 years of age



# YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Designed to teach audiences working with youth the skills

to assist individuals between the ages of 12-18 who are

experiencing a mental health crisis or challenge.

- *Additional topics relevant to youth mental health, include disruptive behavior disorders and eating disorders.*
- *Designed for a wide range of audiences, including parents, family members, caregivers, school personnel, peers, neighbors, and human services*





# SOURCES OF STRENGTH



Sources of Strength is an evidence-based program that trains student peer student leaders and adult advisors on suicide prevention, resiliency-building, and hope and recovery in order to bring mental health programming to the school

- *Peer leaders are nominated by school personnel*
- *Peer leaders and adult advisors are trained in a 6-hour session*
- *Sources of Strength offers messaging and programming templates*
- *Brunswick High School and Mt Ararat first schools in Maine to implement Sources of Strength!*
- *New grants supporting many new schools!*



# FIND HELP. FIND US.

Call us: (800) 464-5767

- *Press 1 for the Help Line*
- *Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm*

Find us online: [www.namimaine.org](http://www.namimaine.org)

- Sign up for membership and classes
- Browse support and resources
- Find you local affiliate and support groups

