

# Creating Stability in a Changing World

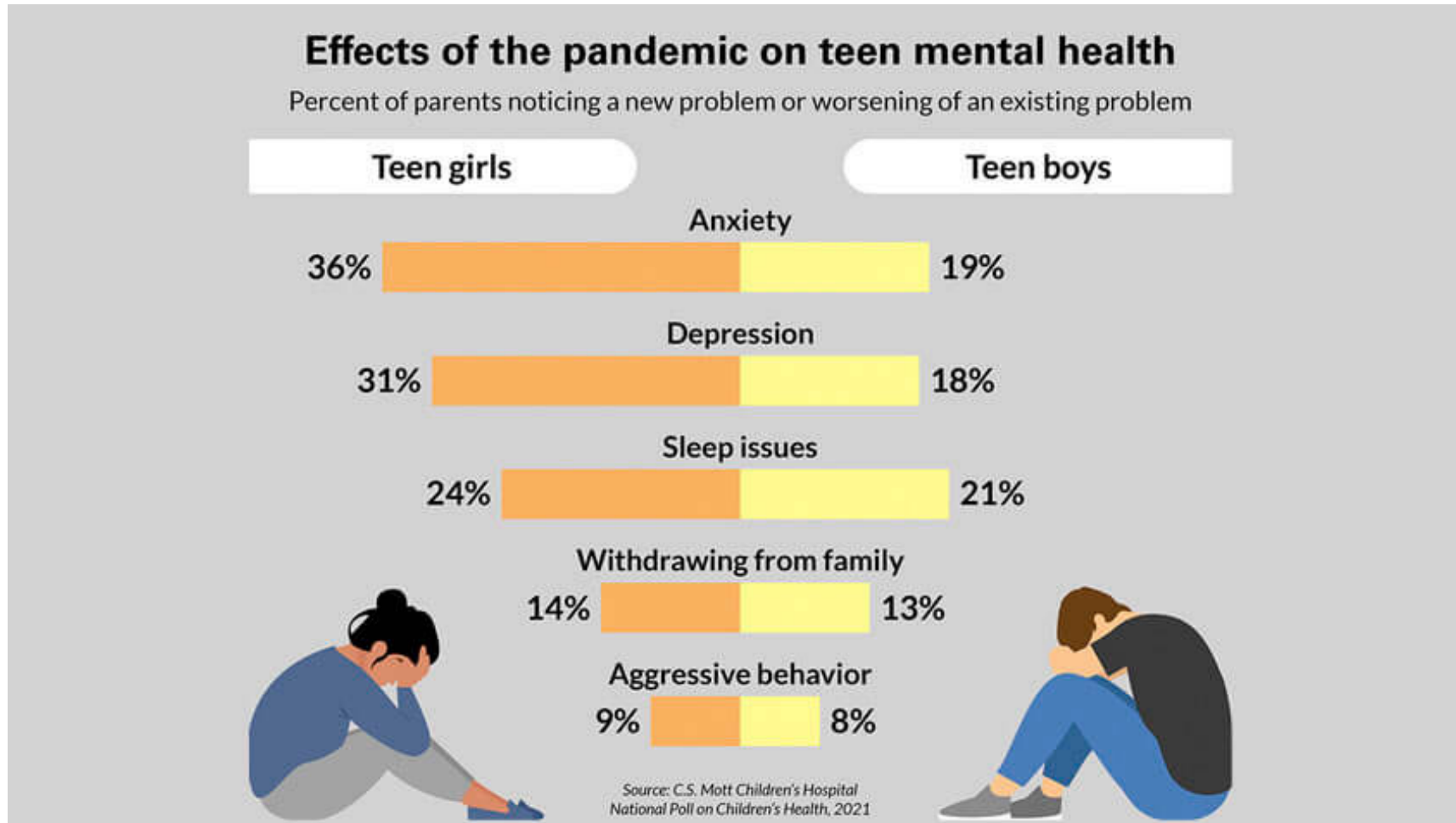
Cultivating Teen Mental Health in 2023

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**Aaron Weiner, PhD**

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# 46% of parents reported a new or worsening problem

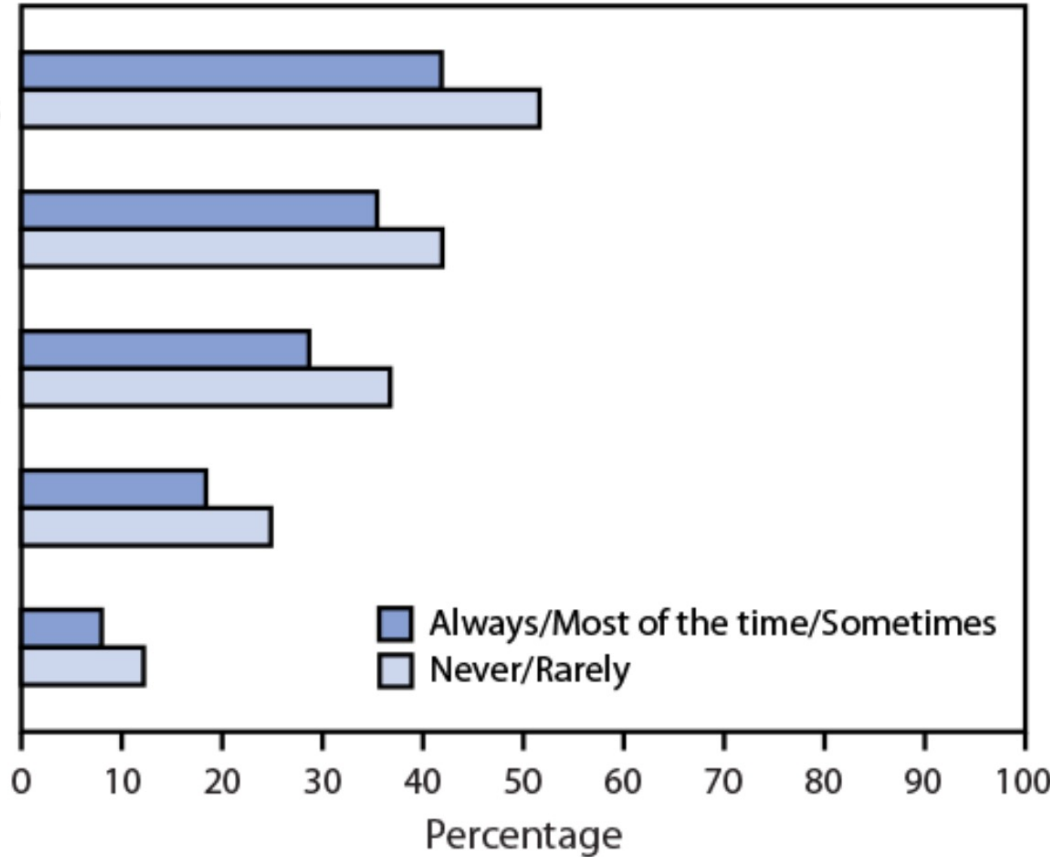
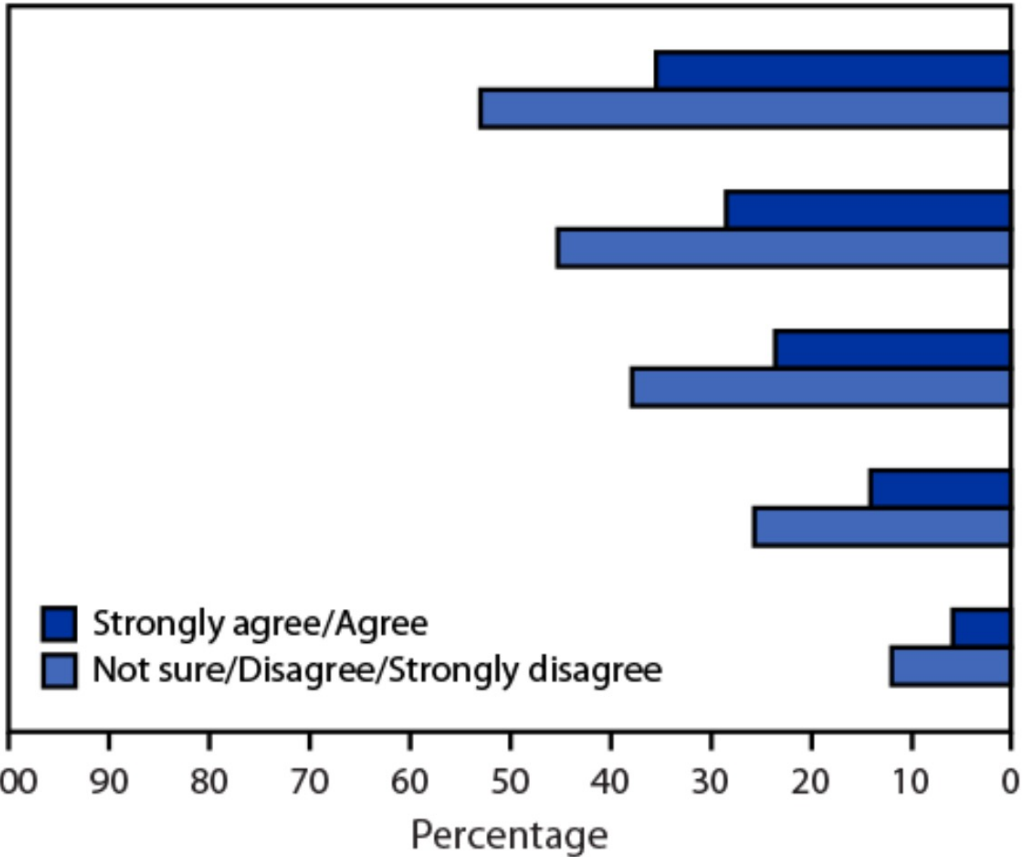


Health insurance claims up 20% for mental health



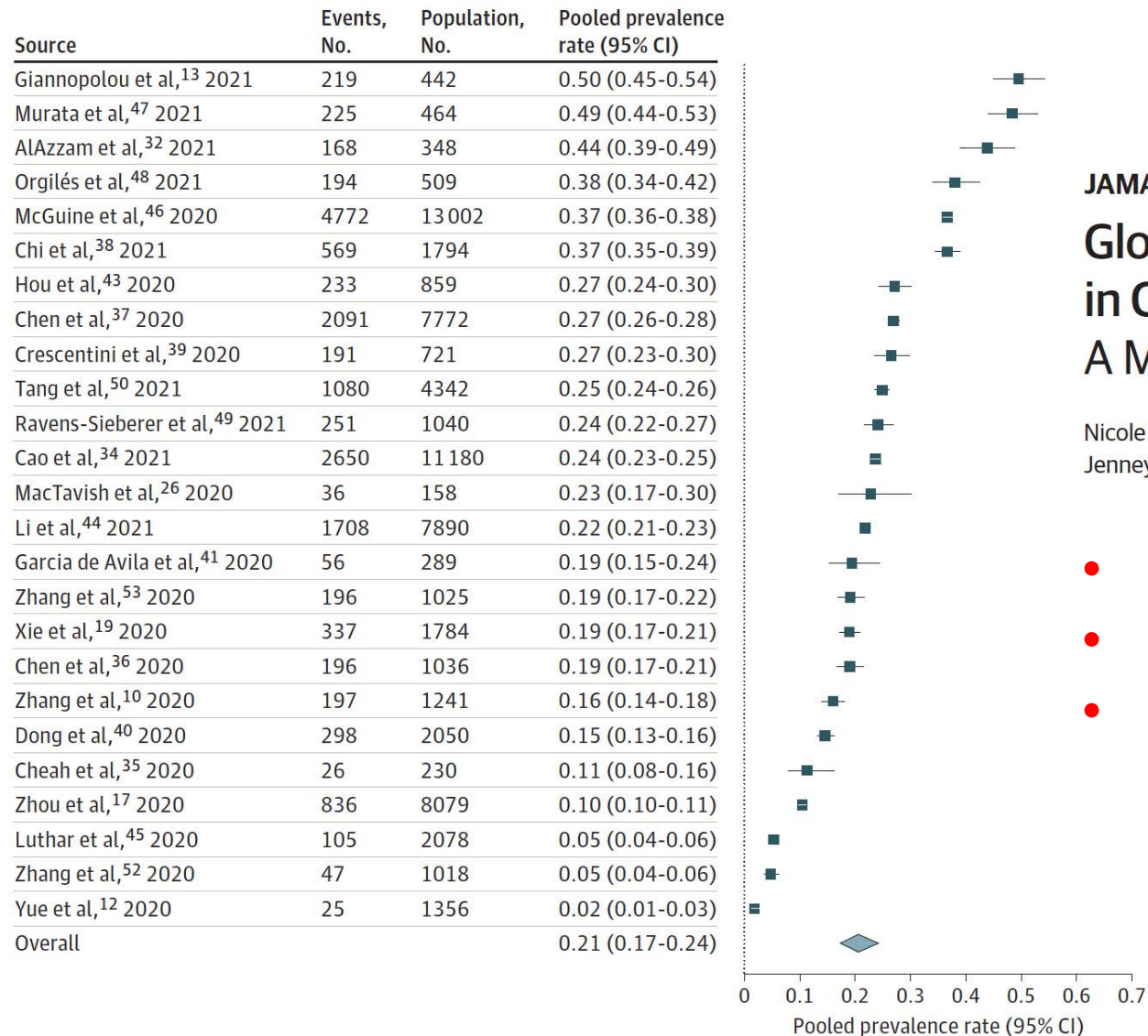
Students who felt close to persons at school

Students who were virtually connected to others



- 44% experienced “persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness”
- 20% seriously considered attempting suicide

Figure 2. Forest Plots of the Pooled Prevalence of Clinically Significant Anxiety Symptoms in Youth During the COVID-19 Pandemic



JAMA Pediatrics | Original Investigation

## Global Prevalence of Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in Children and Adolescents During COVID-19 A Meta-analysis

Nicole Racine, PhD, RPsych; Brae Anne McArthur, PhD, RPsych; Jessica E. Cooke, MSc; Rachel Eirich, BA; Jenney Zhu, BA; Sheri Madigan, PhD, RPsych

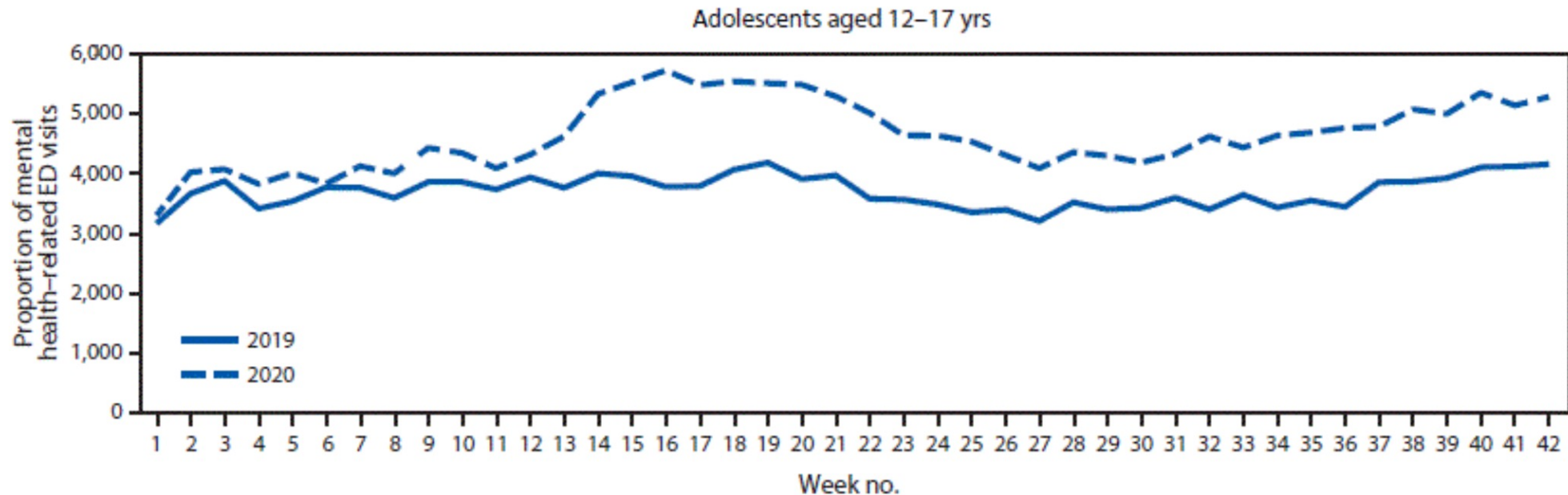
- 20% had clinical levels of anxiety
- 2x higher than pre-pandemic
- Worsening over time

Contributing studies for clinically elevated anxiety symptoms are presented in order of largest to smallest prevalence rate. Square data markers represent prevalence rates, with lines around the marker indicating 95% CIs. The diamond data marker represents the overall effect size based on included studies.

# Pediatricians, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists and Children's Hospitals Declare National Emergency in Children's Mental Health

*AACAP, AAP, and CHA call on policymakers at all levels of government to act swiftly to address mental health crisis*

Washington, D.C., October 19, 2021 – Today, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) and the Children's Hospital Association (CHA) together representing more than 77,000 physician members and more than 200 children's hospitals, **declared** a national state of emergency in child and adolescent mental health and are calling on policymakers to join them.





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# Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health and Brain Maturation in Adolescents: Implications for Analyzing Longitudinal Data

[Ian H. Gotlib](#) • [Jonas G. Miller](#) • [Lauren R. Borchers](#) • ... [Lauren A. Costello](#) • [Jordan M. Garcia](#) • [Tiffany C. Ho](#) • [Show all authors](#)

[Open Access](#) • Published: December 01, 2022 • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsgos.2022.11.002>



PlumX Metrics

“After looking at our data, we realized that they’re not. Compared to adolescents assessed before the pandemic, adolescents assessed after the pandemic shutdowns not only had more severe internalizing mental health problems, but also had reduced cortical thickness, larger hippocampal and amygdala volume, and more advanced brain age.”

# STRESS AND ITS IMPACT ON ABILITY TO FUNCTION



**27%** of all adults said that most days they are so stressed they can't function



% REPORTING THEY ARE SO STRESSED THEY CAN'T FUNCTION

**46%** of those under 35



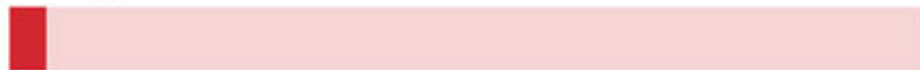
**42%** ages 35 to 44



**16%** ages 45 to 64



**4%** ages 65+



**56%** of Black adults under 35



**46%** white adults under 35



**44%** Latino/a adults under 35



**43%** Asian adults under 35



# Normal vs. Problematic Reactions

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# General signs of emotional distress

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- **Internalizing**

- Academic problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- “Shutting down”
- Social withdrawal
- Somatic problems
- Excessive time in social media or games
- Self-harming behaviors

- **Externalizing**

- Moodiness and defiance
- Alcohol and drug use
- Extreme sensitivity to criticism
- Reckless or self-destructive behavior
- Violence or “acting out”

# Specific concerns

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- Depression
  - Negative thinking, expectancies, and comments
  - Statements of low self-esteem
  - Not enjoying normally pleasurable activities
  - Frequent crying
  - Suicidal indicators
    - Thoughts, statements, or writing about death or suicide
    - Speaking positively about the impact of death
    - Giving away valued items



- Anxiety
  - General sense of overwhelm
  - Avoidance of certain activities or groups
  - Panic attacks

# Eating Disorders

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- Preoccupation with food or weight
- Body dissatisfaction
- Emphasis on control
- Skipping meals or excessive exercise
- Weight change
- Binging
- Leaving after meals
- Excessive time in the bathroom
- Cavities or enamel erosion



# Youth Substance Use

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- By their senior year...
  - 70% have tried alcohol
  - 50% have used some illegal substance
  - 40% will have vaped or smoked a cigarette
  - 20% will have misused a prescription
- 8% of the general population has a diagnosable substance use disorder
  - 90% start during teenage years

# 2019 Monitoring the Future Survey

## Key Findings: Percent Reporting Use of Selected Substances

	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Vaping, Any</b>				<b>Tobacco w/Hookah</b>			
Past Year	20.1	35.7	40.6	Past Year			5.6
Past Month	12.2	25.0	30.9	Past Month	1.3	2.4	4.0
<b>Vaping, Nicotine</b>				<b>Flavored Little Cigars</b>			
Past Year	16.5	30.7	35.3	Past Month	2.2	3.7	7.7
Past Month	9.6	19.9	25.5	<b>Narcotics Other than Heroin</b>			
<b>Vaping, Marijuana</b>				Past Year			2.7
Past Year	7.0	19.4	20.8	Past Month			1.0
Past Month	3.9	12.6	14.0	<b>Marijuana</b>			
<b>Vaping, Just Flavoring</b>				Past Year	11.8	28.8	35.7
Past Year	14.7	20.8	20.3	Past Month	6.6	18.4	22.3
Past Month	7.7	10.5	10.7	Daily	1.3	4.8	6.4
<b>Cigarettes</b>				<b>Alcohol</b>			
Past Month	2.3	3.4	5.7	Past Month	7.9	18.4	29.3
Daily	0.8	1.3	2.4	Daily	0.2	0.6	1.7
½ Pack +/-Day	0.2	0.5	0.9	Binge	3.8	8.5	14.4

Change from 2018 to 2019

■ Significant Increase

■ Significant Decrease



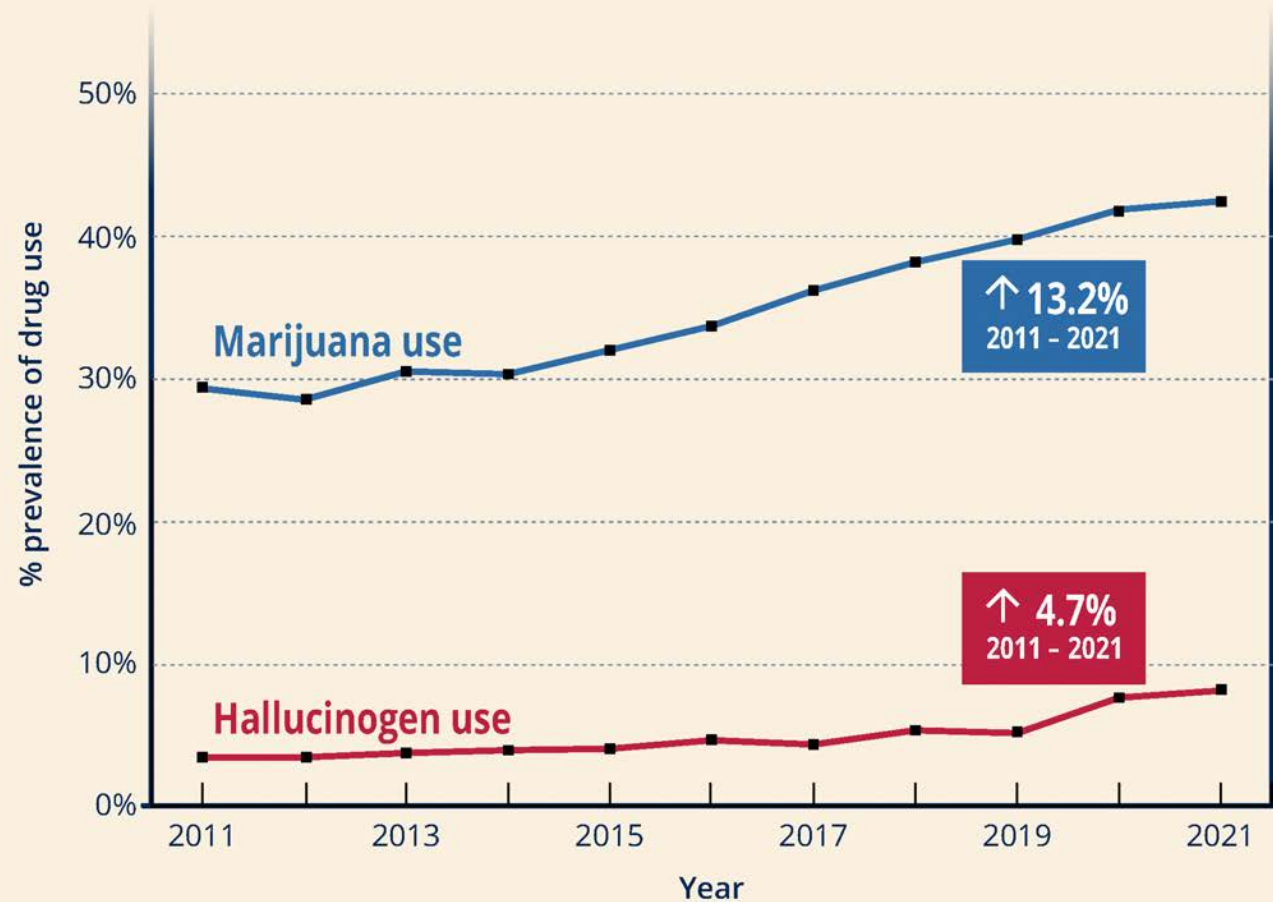
# E-cigarette use among teens increases 21% over previous year, study finds

*Almost 28% of those reporting use said they used e-cigarettes every day.*

**TABLE. Prevalence of current (past 30-day) e-cigarette use,\* overall and by selected characteristics and school level — National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2022**

Characteristic	Overall		High school		Middle school	
	Estimated weighted no.†	% (95% CI)	Estimated weighted no.†	% (95% CI)	Estimated weighted no.†	% (95% CI)
<b>Among all students (N = 28,291)</b>						
Current use of e-cigarettes	2,550,000	9.4 (8.0–11.1)	2,140,000	14.1 (12.4–16.0)	380,000	3.3 (2.6–4.2)
<b>Among current e-cigarette users</b>						
<b>Frequency of use during past 30 days</b>						
1–5 days	1,030,000	40.6 (37.2–44.1)	790,000	37.2 (33.4–41.1)	230,000	60.0 (53.3–66.3)
6–19 days	430,000	17.1 (14.2–20.4)	360,000	16.8 (13.9–20.2)	70,000	19.3 (12.7–28.3)
20–30 days	1,080,000	42.3 (38.5–46.3)	980,000	46.0 (41.6–50.4)	80,000	20.8 (15.8–26.8)
<b>Daily e-cigarette use<sup>§</sup></b>	<b>700,000</b>	<b>27.6 (24.5–31.0)</b>	<b>640,000</b>	<b>30.1 (26.6–33.9)</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>11.7 (8.0–16.7)</b>

# Historic Highs in Past-Year Marijuana and Hallucinogen Use Among Young Adults (Ages 19-30) in 2021



Source: 2021 Monitoring the Future Panel Survey



BLUEBERRY ICE POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [13 Reviews](#)

**\$6.99**  
Regular Price  
~~\$7.99~~



MANGO FROST POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [10 Reviews](#)

**\$6.99**  
Regular Price  
~~\$7.99~~



PINK LEMONADE POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [6 Reviews](#)

**\$6.99**  
Regular Price  
~~\$7.99~~



LUSH ICE POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [12 Reviews](#)

**\$6.99**  
Regular Price  
~~\$7.99~~



COOL MINT POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [6 Reviews](#)

**\$6.99**  
Regular Price  
~~\$7.99~~



PINEAPPLE SLUSH POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [15 Reviews](#)

**\$6.99**  
Regular Price  
~~\$7.99~~



# More THC, More Consequences

## Percentage of THC and CBD in Cannabis Samples Seized by the DEA from 1995-2018

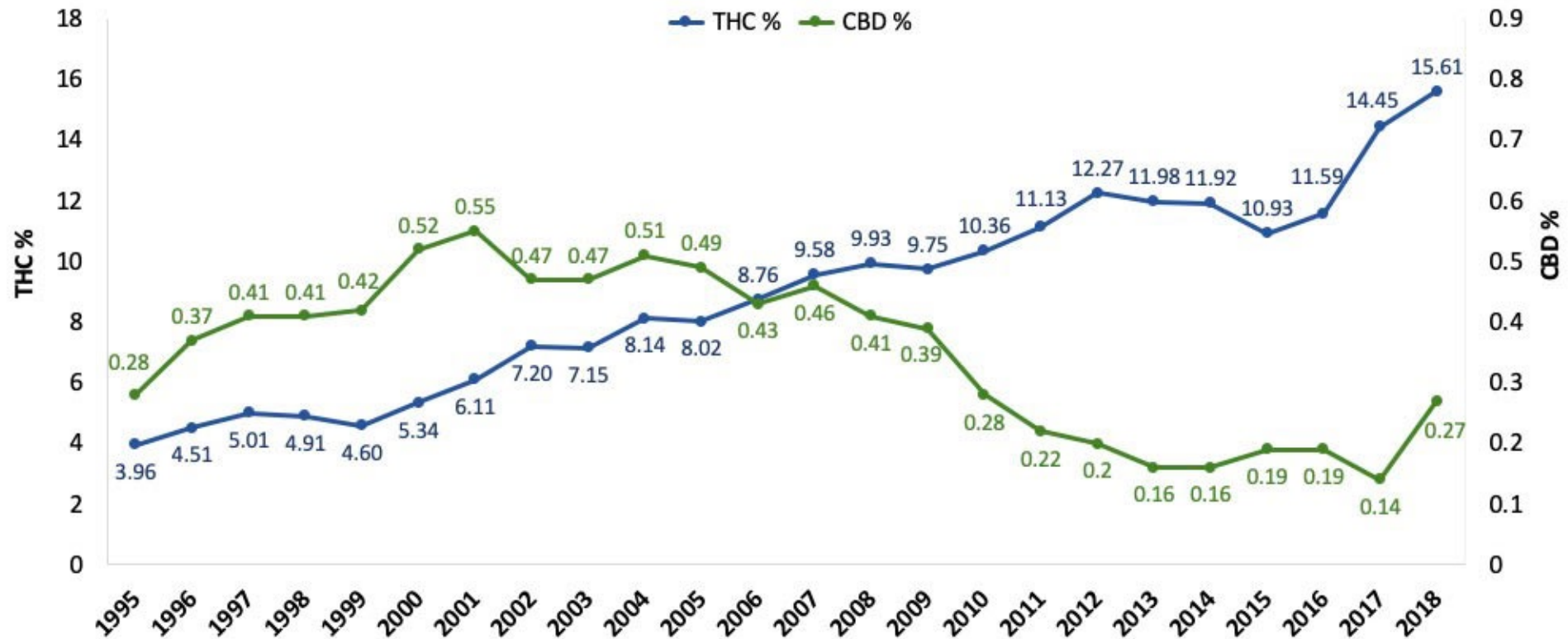


Fig 3. Proportion of products with different levels of THC per state.

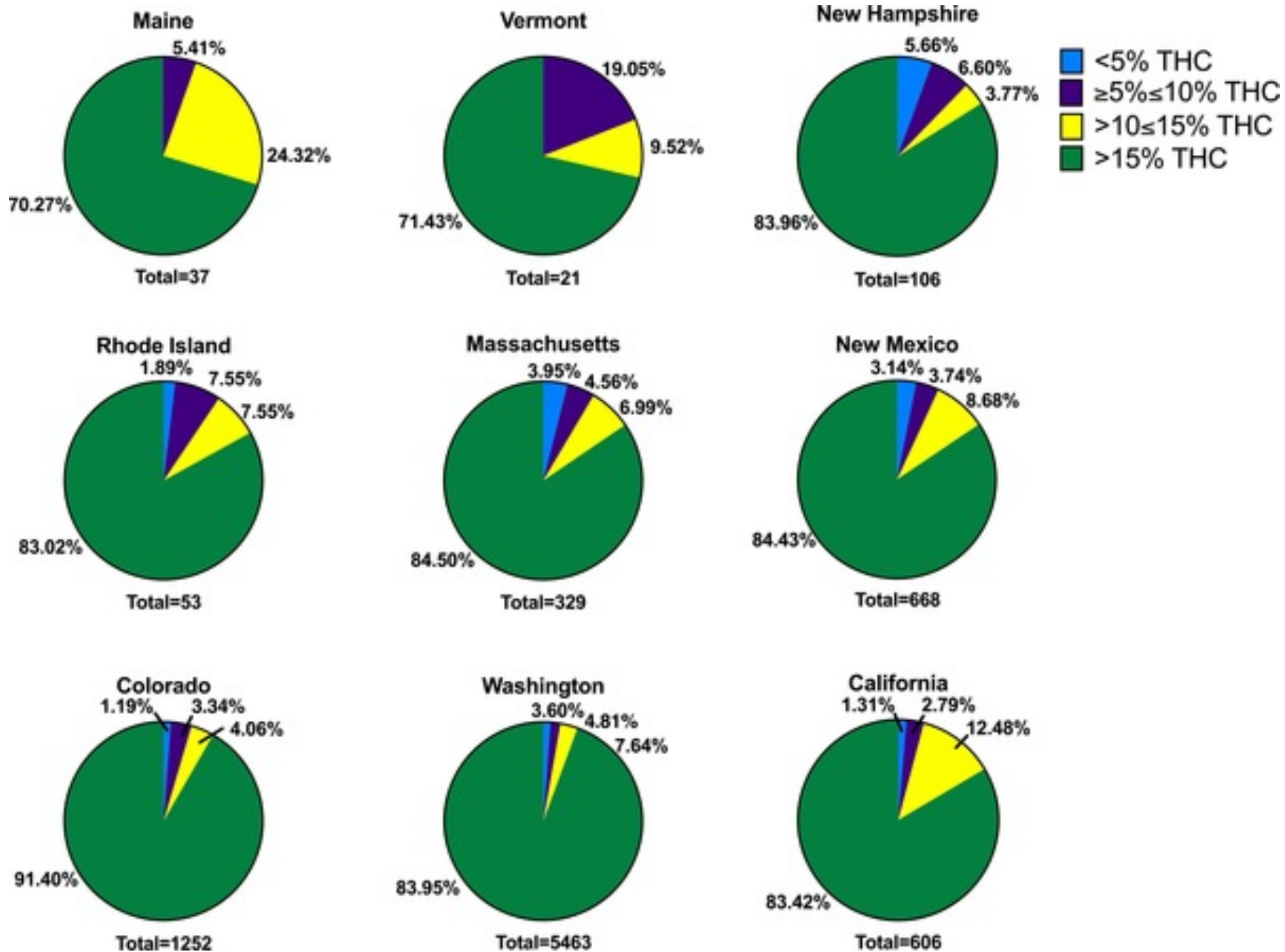
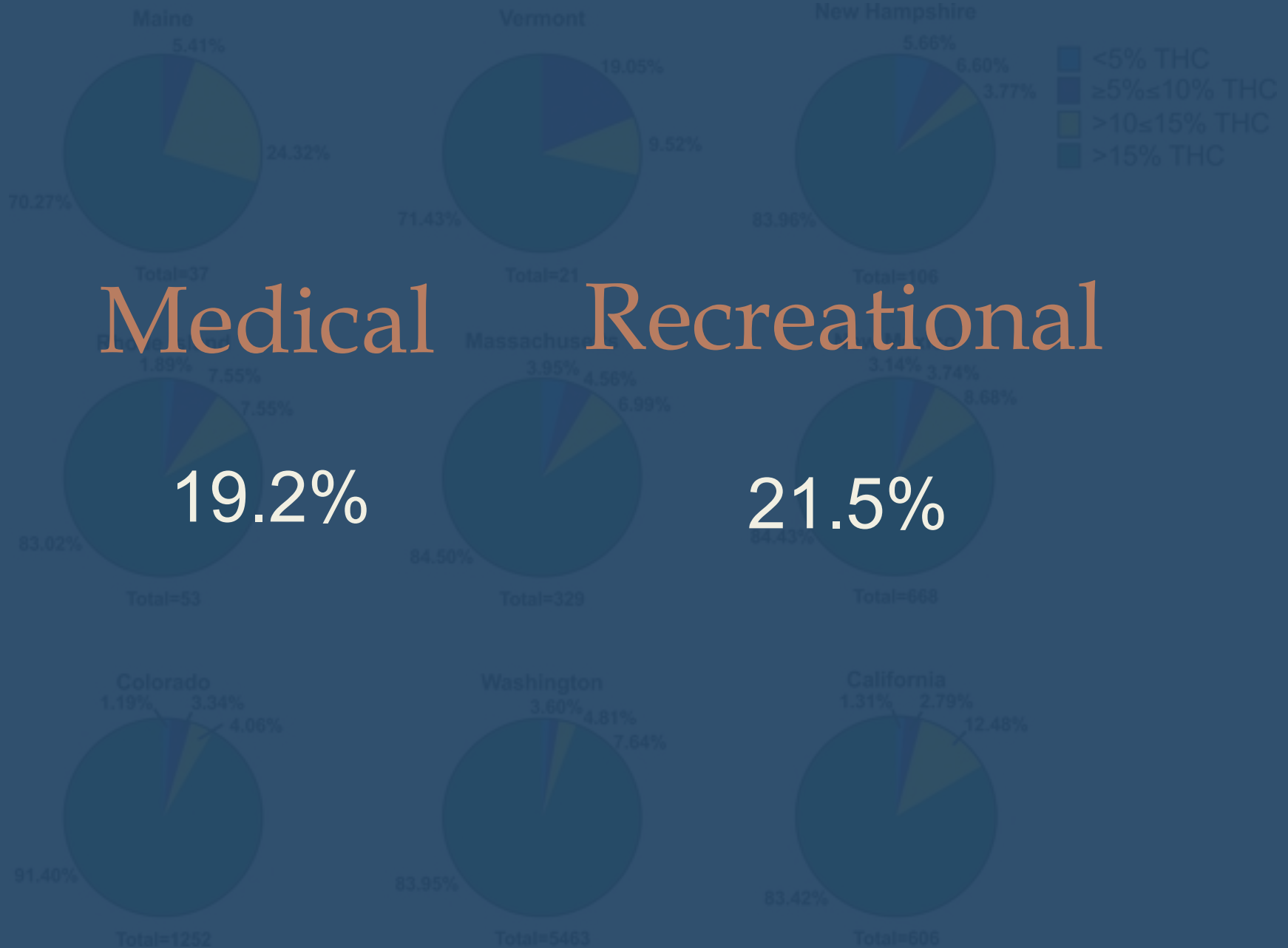


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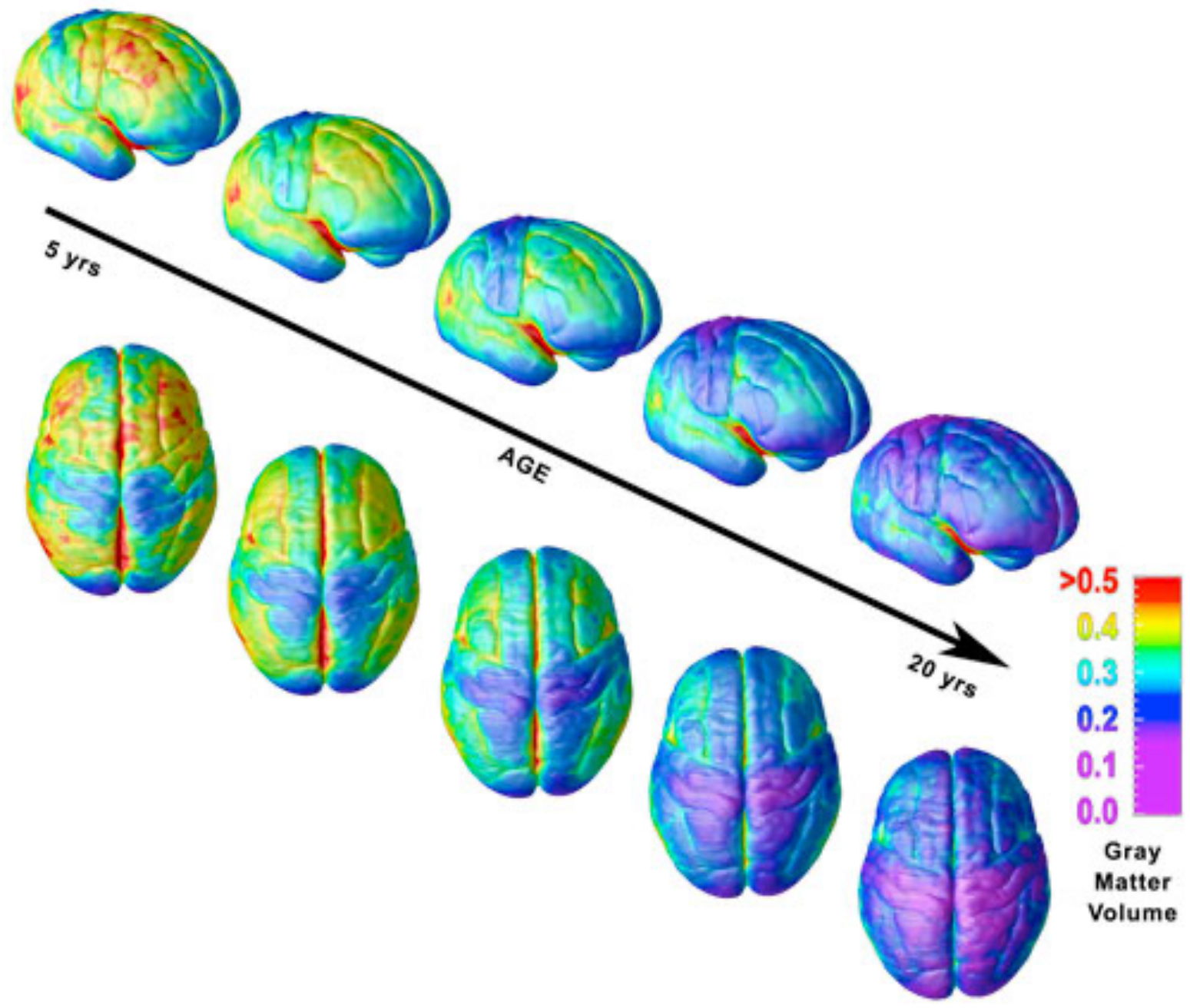
# Marijuana – Flavors, Edibles, & Marketing



Why do we “choose” to cope poorly?









Behavior is **purpose-driven**, even  
if it doesn't seem to make sense

So, how can we help?

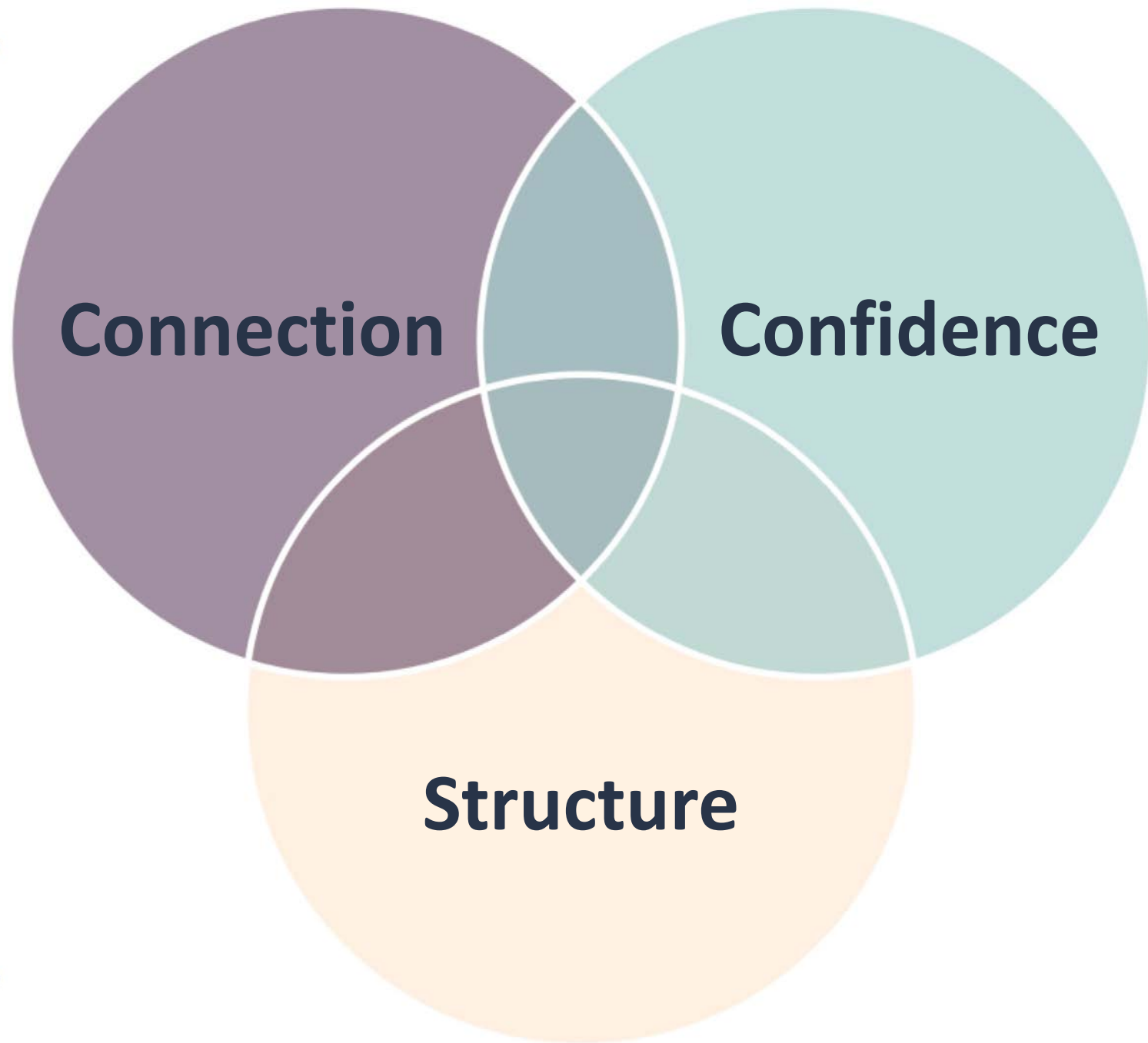
# Demonstrating Emotional Safety

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- Communicate with **LOVE**
  - **L**istening
    - Open-ended questions, reflections
  - **O**ffering
    - Feedback sandwich
      - Ask permission
      - Provide information
      - Ask for reactions
  - **V**alidating
    - Reinforces self-efficacy, self-trust
  - **E**mpathizing
    - Be in the hole with them
- Have persistence and don't get discouraged

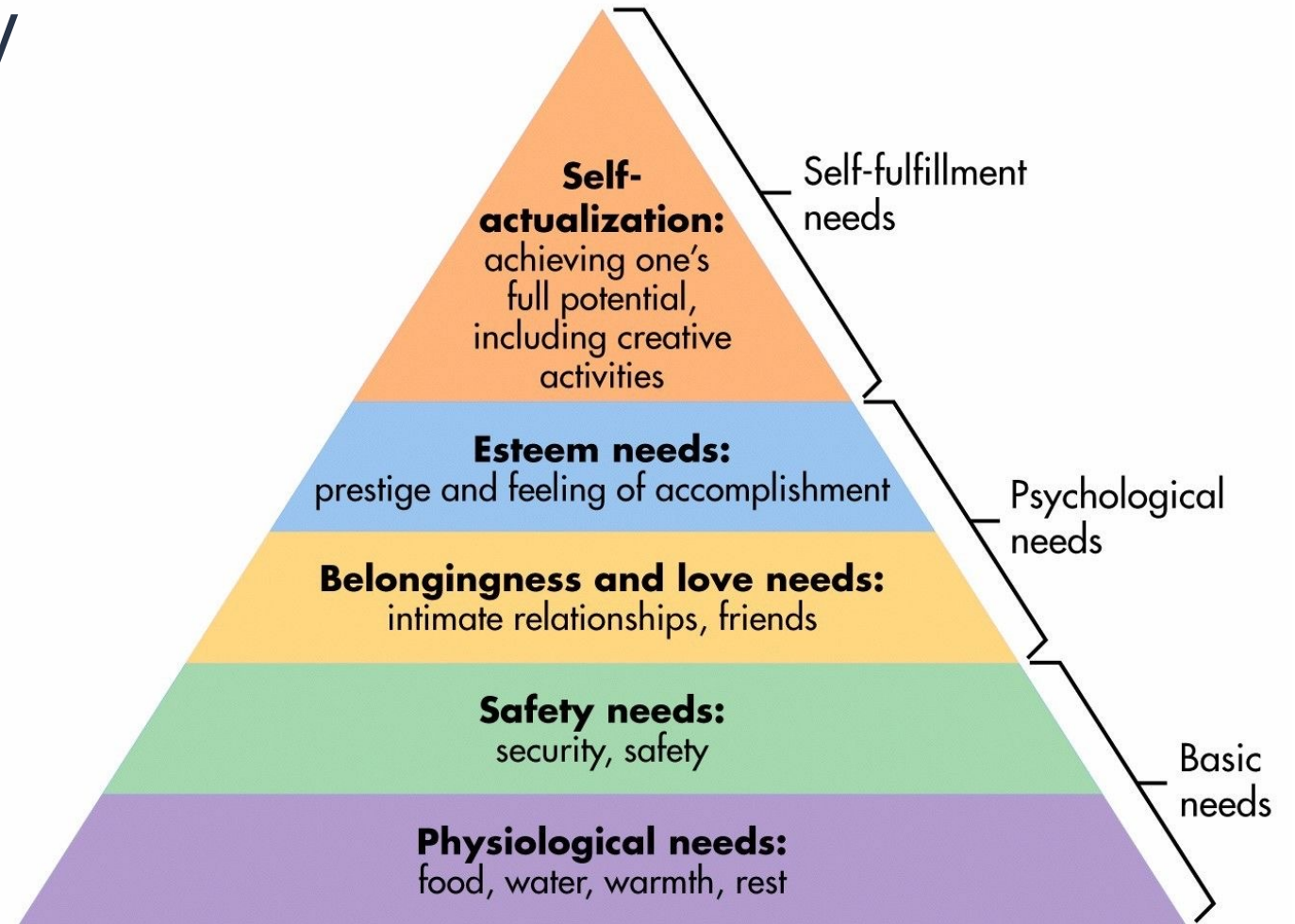


**Stability**



# Building Security in Structure

- Routines & Predictability
  - Stable foundation
  - **Choice** to reach further
- What should be stable?
  - Schedules
  - Discipline
  - Basic and psychological needs
- Rituals and traditions



# Destructive Family Dynamics

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- Enabling
- Avoidance / Fear
- Parental splitting
- Normalizing chaos / Lack of consequences
- Negative impact on other children
  - Modeling
  - Neglect
  - Chronic stress

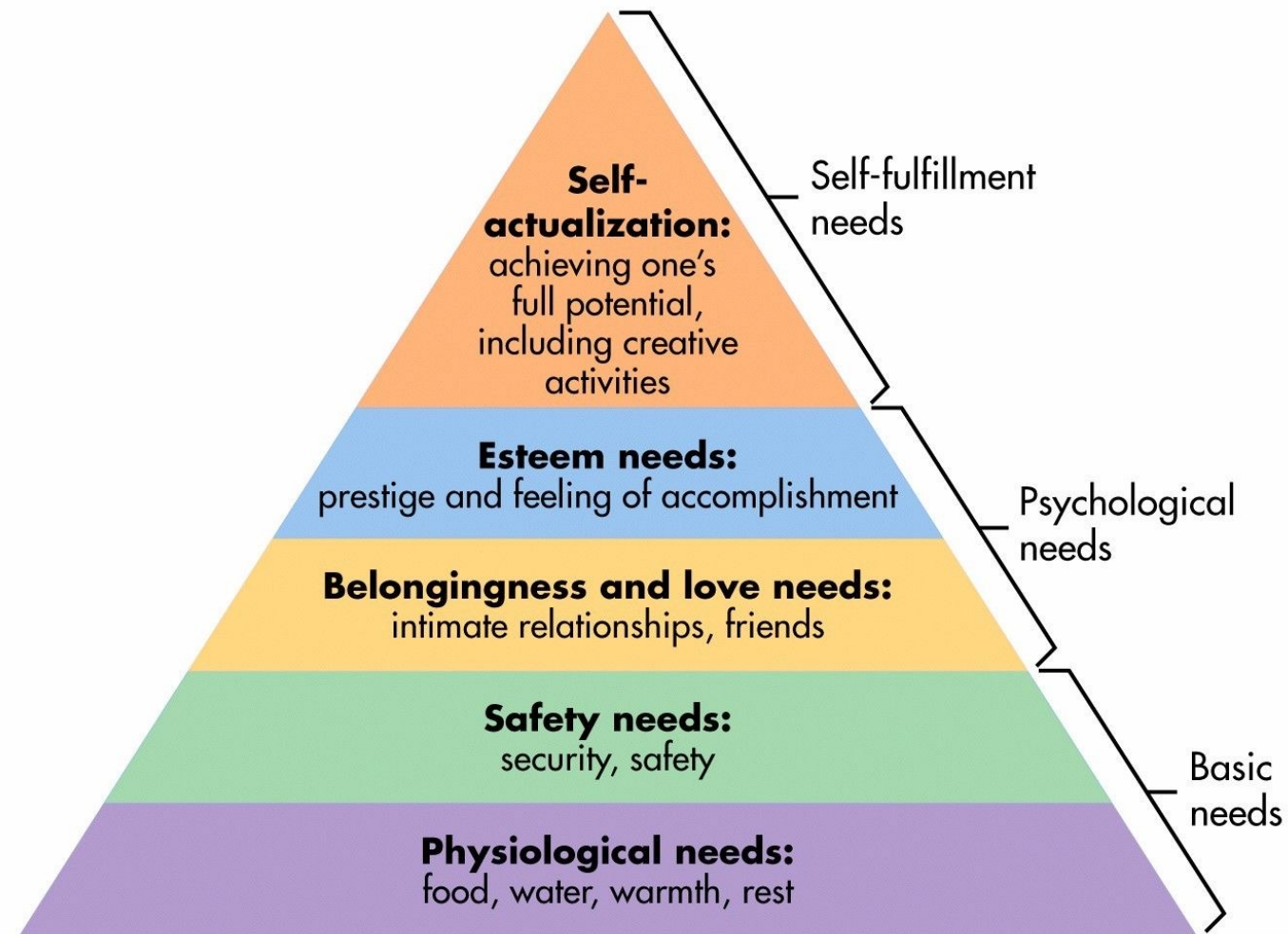
## Millennials 101: How to Enjoy Your Parents' Basement

Bloomberg **Opinion**



Credit: Maureen Downey

Structure provides **security** and is the launchpad for a **positive identity**



# Encouraging Healthy Connectivity

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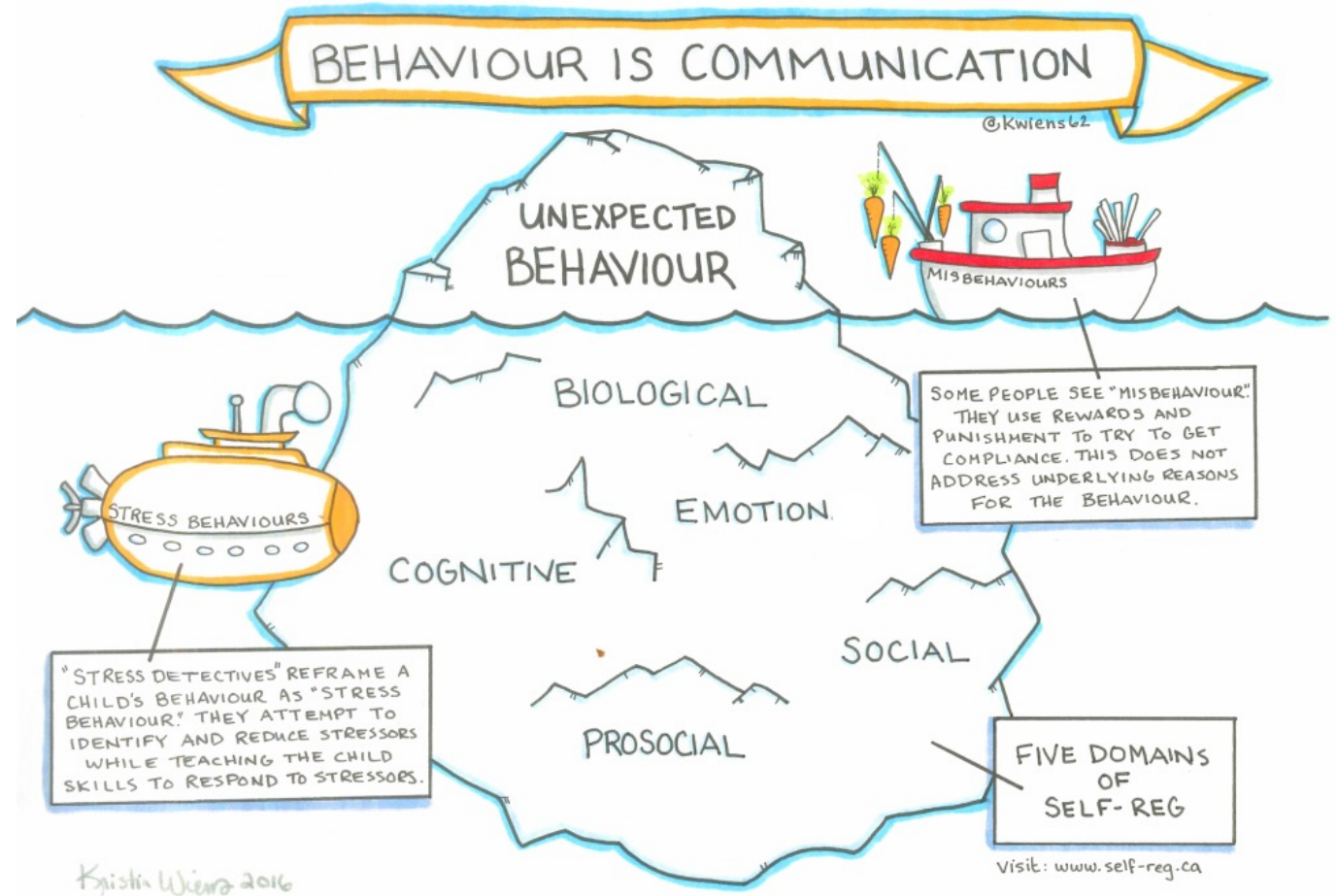
- Social
  - Face time is important
  - A part of the household, not apart from the household
  - Other healthy adult role models
- Behavioral
  - If you act depressed, you feel more depressed
- Emotional
  - Being unable to identify and express emotions can lead to unhealthy routes of expression





# Reframing “Bad Behavior”

- Behaviors are the tip of the iceberg
- Lens shift – “acting out” is a child trying to complete their stress cycle and self-regulate
- Focus on **why**, not what
- Self regulation vs. Self control

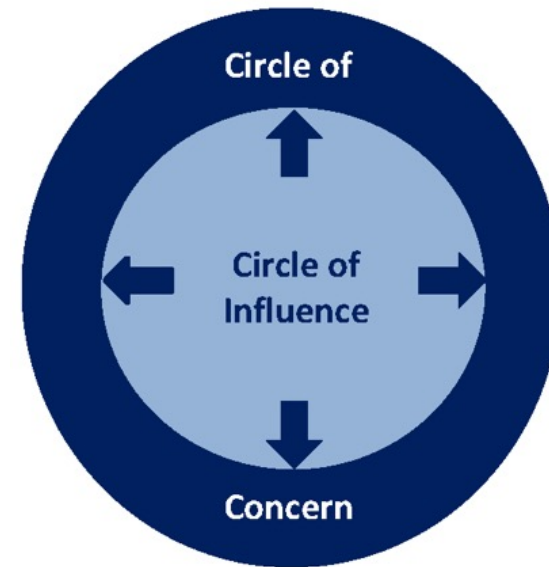


Connection provides self-understanding of...

- Who you are (and who you want to be)
- Where you belong
- What you like to do
- Why you feel the way you do
- How to navigate your emotional world

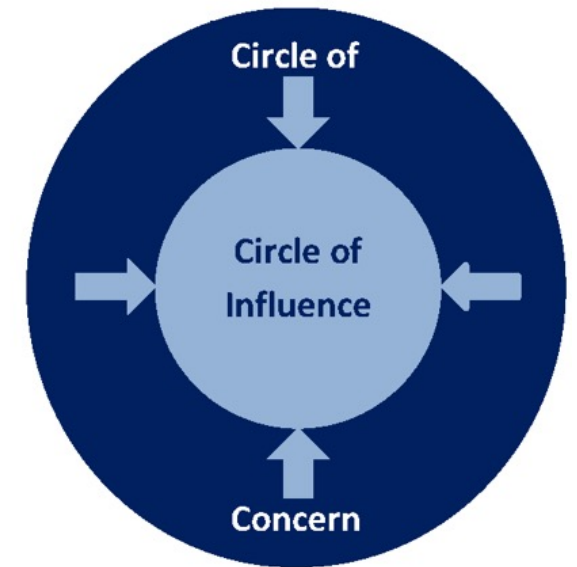
# Building Inner Strength through Confidence

- Confidence comes from **real-life experiences confirming positive beliefs**
  - Not from logic!
- Work within circle of influence to raise self-efficacy
- Mindset shift: “Can I?” vs. “How can I?”
- Intellectual understanding helps...but then you still need to explore



**Proactive Focus**

Positive energy enlarges Circle of Influence



**Reactive Focus**

Negative energy reduces Circle of Influence

# Understanding and Resolving Anxiety and Stress

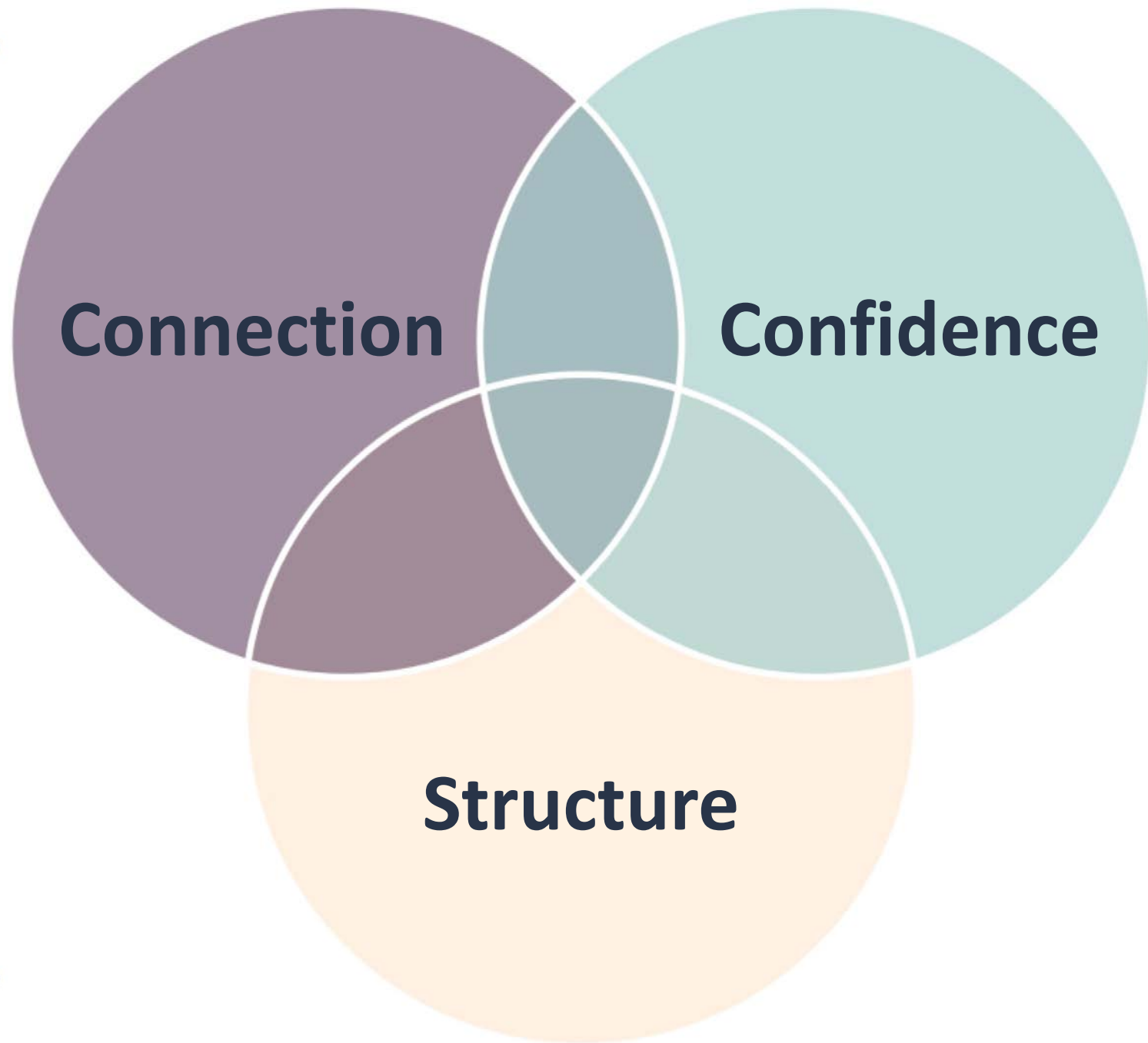
- Threat perception/fixation leads to anxiety and stress
  - Meant to be adaptive!
- Stress = Biological / Physical
  - Driven by nervous system activation
- Anxiety = Psychological
  - Driven by thoughts
- Avoidance feels **good**...  
...but it also locks anxiety into place
- Safety behaviors
  - **Prevent learning**



# Confidence provides...

- Emotional foundation for action and growth
- Initiative to correct imbalances
- Conviction through strong self-efficacy
- Intrinsic sense of safety and security

**Stability**



What can I do if I think I need help?

# Apps



# Books






# Real Therapy is Different than DIY



## Stop Knee Pain Now! 5 Exercises To Strengthen Your Knees

4.6M views • 1 year ago

 Tone and Tighten

Five of the best home exercises for knee pain presented by a doctor of physical therapy. Perfect for beginners and those ...

4K





# Therapy Directories

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**Psychology Today**

# Emergencies

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# Summary

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- Our kids need our support, now more than ever
- Stay tuned-in to your child – if you know what normal looks like, you'll know when it changes
- Keep warning signs in mind, and seek help if necessary
- Emotional stability comes from **emotional safety, structure, connection, and confidence** – all of which can be built at home!
- If you need help, please reach out – resources are here!

# Thank You!

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