

Community College Student Mental Health: New Findings from The Healthy Minds Network



June 2014 | Presented by Sarah Ketchen Lipson

The Healthy Minds Network

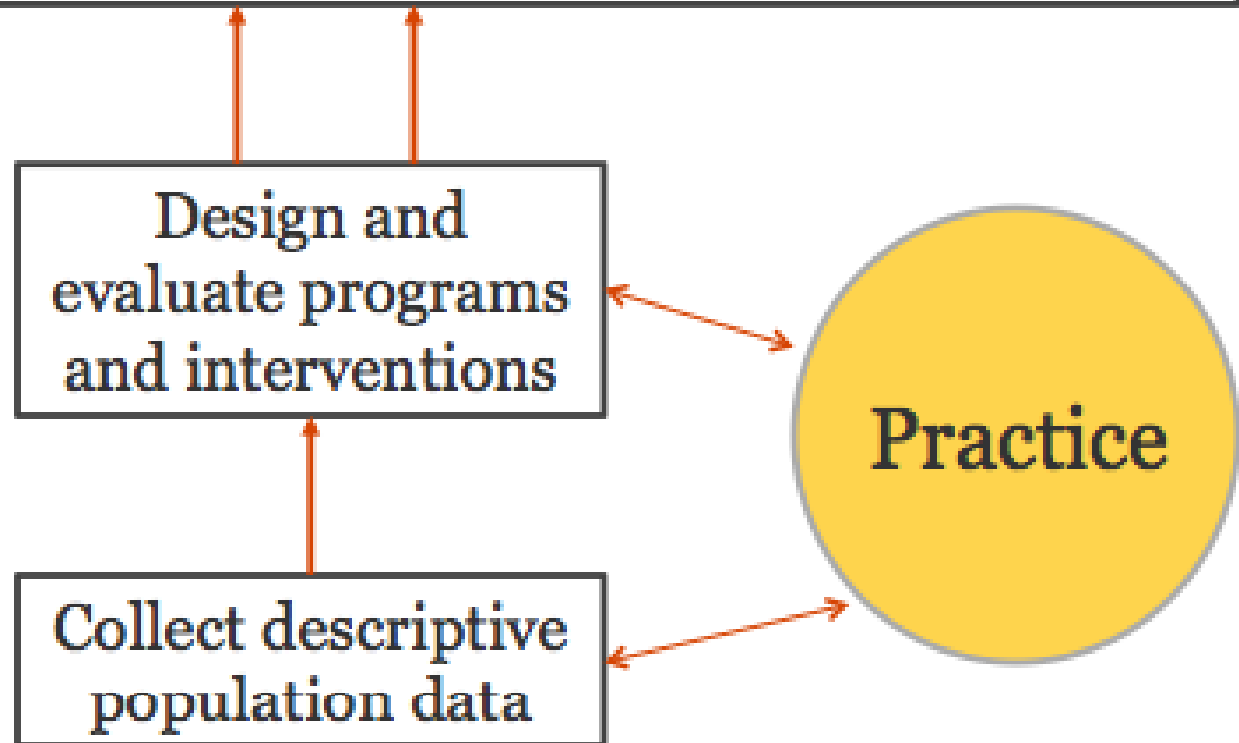
Building a collaborative, international network

- (1) produce knowledge (*research*)
- (2) distribute knowledge (*dissemination*)
- (3) use knowledge (*practice*)



Research-to-Practice Agenda

How to invest most efficiently in health (and long-term success and wellbeing) in youth populations?



Prior Research on Community College Student Mental Health

- Little known about the mental health of community college students
- Lack of mental health resources (Wood, 2012)
- Top concerns of students (Gallagher, 2012):
 - Depression
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Stress

Wood, M. (2012). The State of Mental Health on College Campuses. *Inquiry (Journal of the Virginia Community Colleges)*, 17(1), 5-15.

Gallagher, R.P. (2012). National Survey of Counseling Center Directors. Alexandria, VA: International Association of Counseling Services.

Healthy Minds Study (HMS)

About HMS

- Began in 2005
- Fielded at >100 four-year campuses
- >100,000 survey respondents to date



Main Measures

- Mental health (depression, anxiety, self-injury, suicidality, positive mental health)
- Health behaviors (e.g., substance use, exercise, sleep)
- Attitudes and knowledge about services
- Service use
- Academic and social environment

HMS at Community Colleges

Winter/spring 2014

- Beginning of focus on community colleges (CCs)
- Funding from University of Michigan and NEOMED (Ohio)
- Today: data from 3 CCs in Ohio

Fall 2014

- Consortium of ~20 CCs
- Funding: SingleStop USA, University of Wisconsin (Professor Sara Goldrick-Rab), Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)
- Modified survey to focus on low-income students
 - Housing and food insecurity, use of public services

About Today's Data

- 2014 CC data
 - 3 CCs in Ohio
 - Invited sample=9,121
 - Survey completers=1,419 students
 - Overall response rate=15.6%
- Comparison data from 2013 four-year schools
 - 16 schools
 - Invited sample=59,162
 - Survey completers=17,563 students
 - Overall response rate=29.7%
- Adjusted for non-response bias



Sample Characteristics

2014 Community Colleges (N=1,419)	
Age (18-22)	41.2%
Female	47.3%
White	80.7%

2013 Four-Year Institutions (N=17,563)	
Age (18-22)	74.6%
Female	53.0%
White	72.2%

Prevalence of Mental Health Problems

CC Student Perspectives [1]

- “I feel anxious a lot due to the pressure and amount of school work...**finding time to do the work and stay afloat financially is a burden!**...I do sometimes feel so overwhelmed, stressed, and anxious, and sometimes sad...It becomes emotionally overwhelming at times and I lose motivation to do school work the next day and will procrastinate and take naps because I’m mentally drained”
- “**I am now at a level of depression that I have isolated myself from most people.** If I could afford to stay home and not work I prefer to do it but financially I have to work since I am sole provider for my two kids...I rarely see family other than my kids and I have no friends.”
- “Even though, most of the time I feel internally down, it doesn’t always seem that way, externally. **I put on a brave face** when I’m in public...but I must admit it gets pretty tough, makes me want to cry.”



CC Student Perspectives [2]

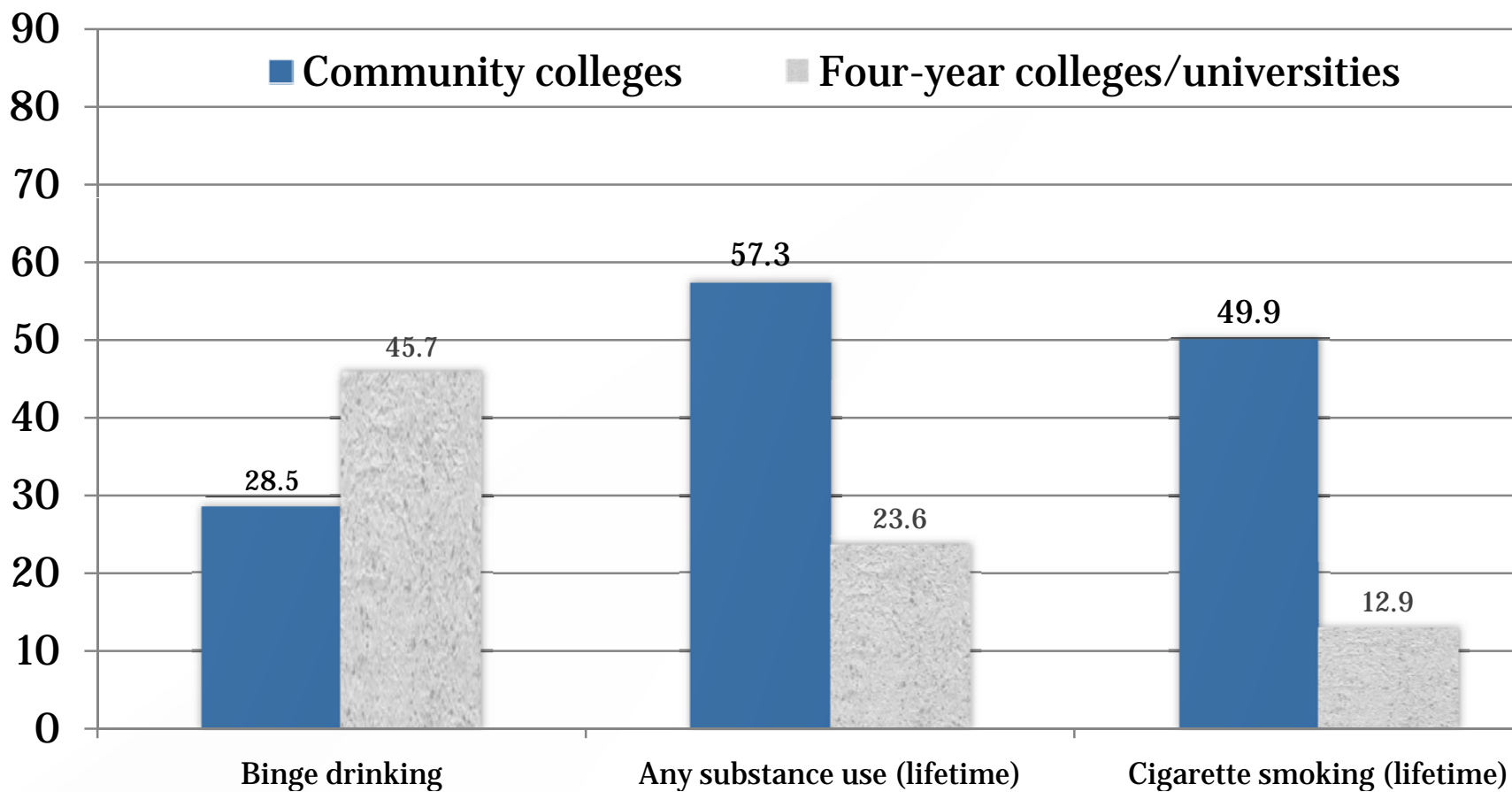
- “School can be very stressful on students. Especially those (including myself) who have to **work 45 hours a week, have a child at home, and still go to school 4 nights a week.** Time management is very important.”
- “This year our **house was foreclosed on and we have been looking for a new place,** this is a very emotional time, but I am not depressed, because I do believe the living arrangements will work out.”



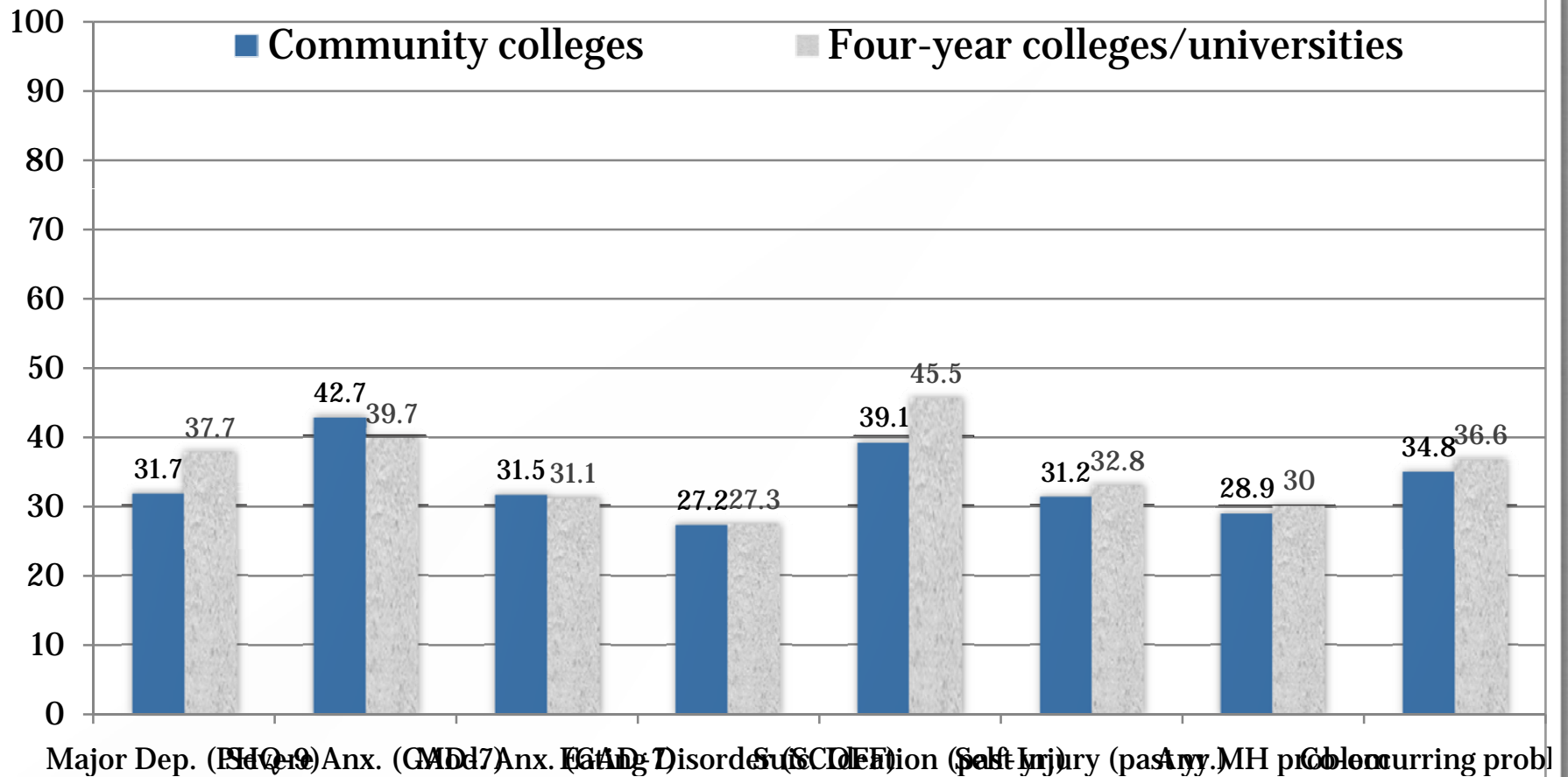
CC Student Perspectives [3]

- “I have a high sense of purpose, the problem is I have not got a clue of how to fulfill that purpose. **My mental health issues revolve around my financial situation** and lack of it. While receiving financial aid my stress levels were down and grades were up. Now with working a job I hate, making not even enough to survive, my stress is way up and my grades are way down, just adding stress on top of stress.”
- “I am 36 years old and have spent, on and off, the **last twenty years of my life in pursuit of a 2 year degree that will have virtually no benefit in today's saturated job market**. I had a 12 year successful career that I loved, only to become medically/ physically unable to continue to perform daily tasks and had to leave the field. Because of my relentless pursuit of that now-ended career, I have approximately 2 friends within 1000+ miles and do not see or speak to them very often due to family/ class commitments. I also currently work in a dead-end position for a company that does not value their employees in any regard (benefit cuts in every possible way, constant layoffs, 5-7x increased workload with no salary increase for anyone in 6 years, poorly maintained building, etc.) As such, I have felt frustrated and **fed up with pretty much all aspects of life aside from my family** (loving wife and 3 yr old child) with very little outlet for release or clear direction towards the future. Therefore I have **little to no sense of purpose** at the moment.”

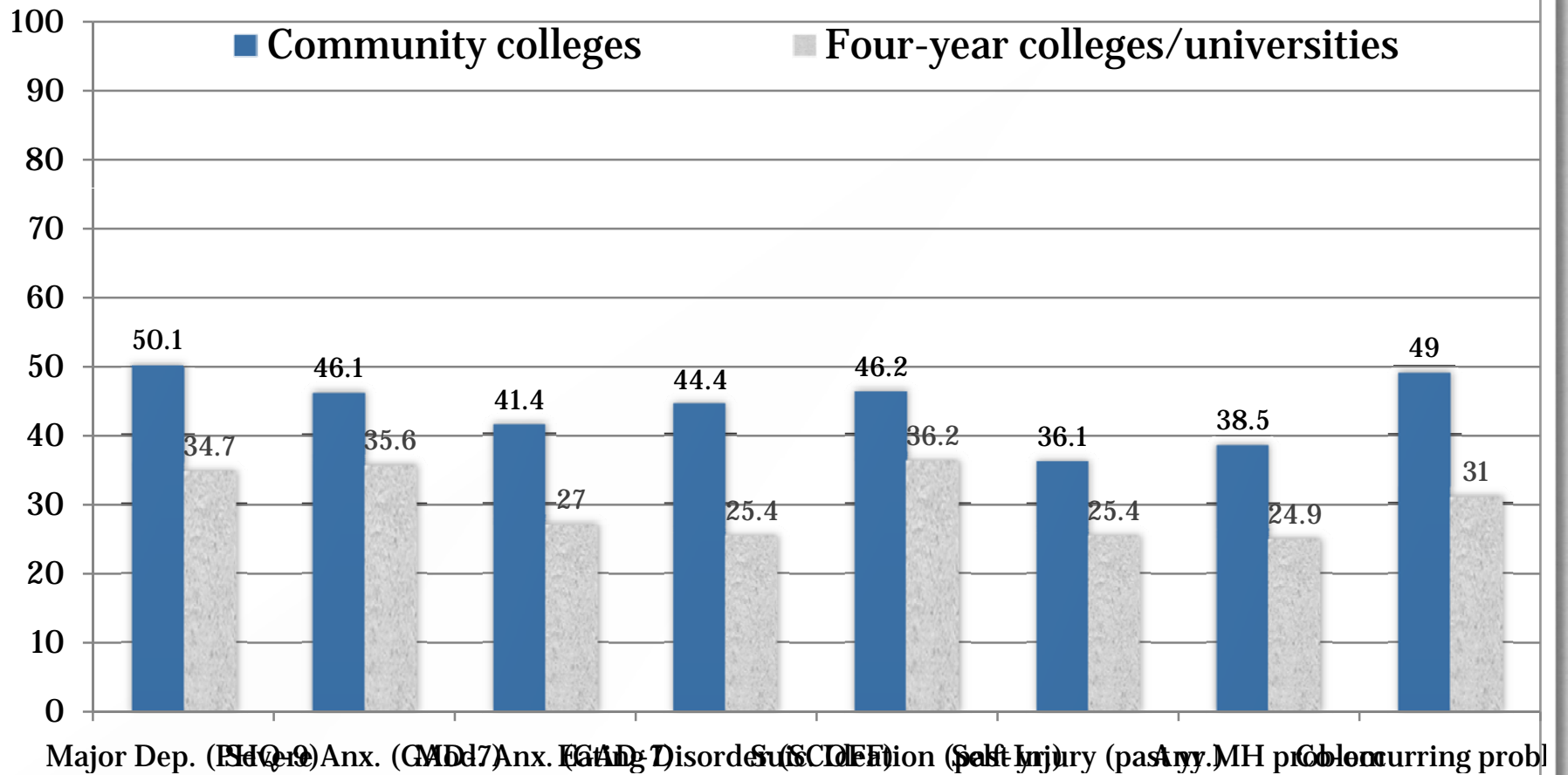
Substance Use



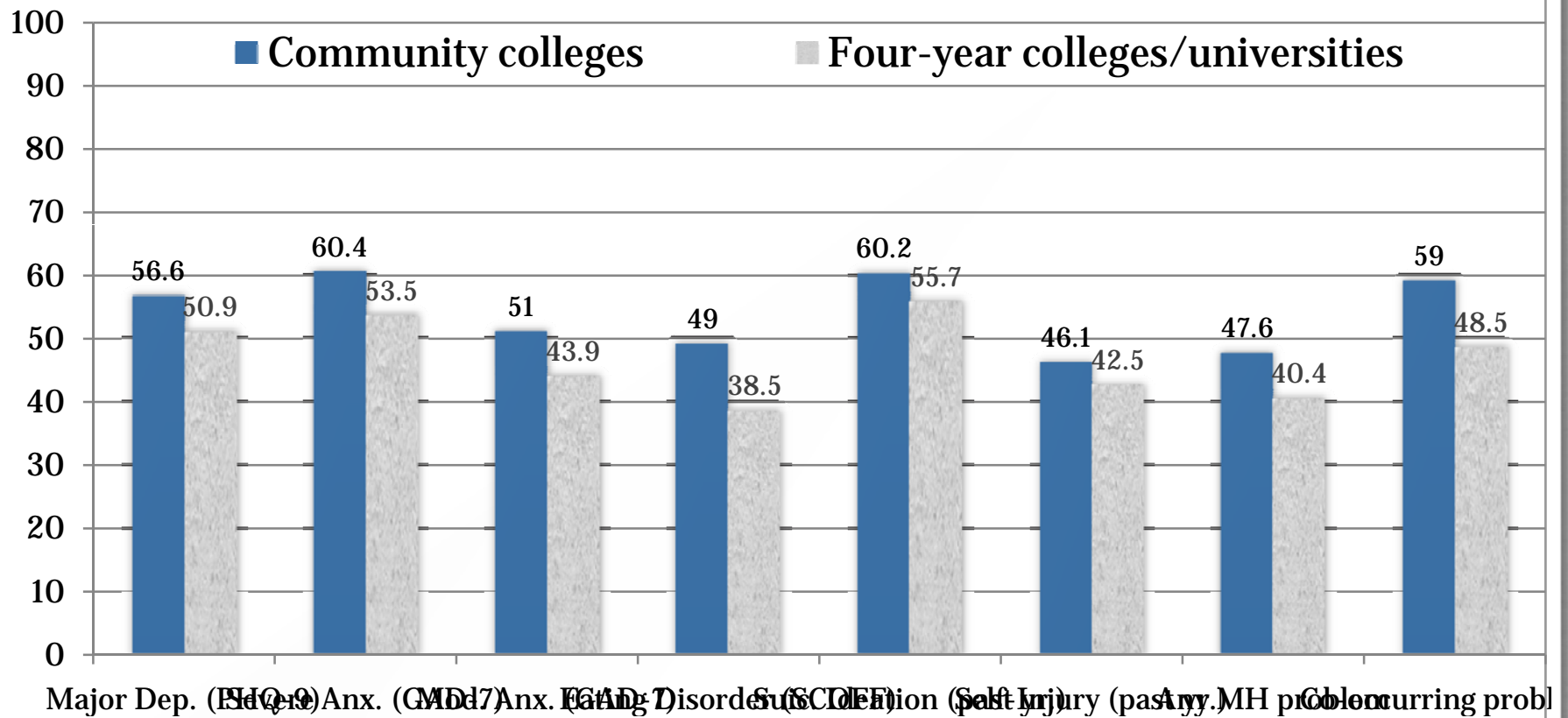
Therapy among Students with Apparent Need



Medication among Students with Apparent Need

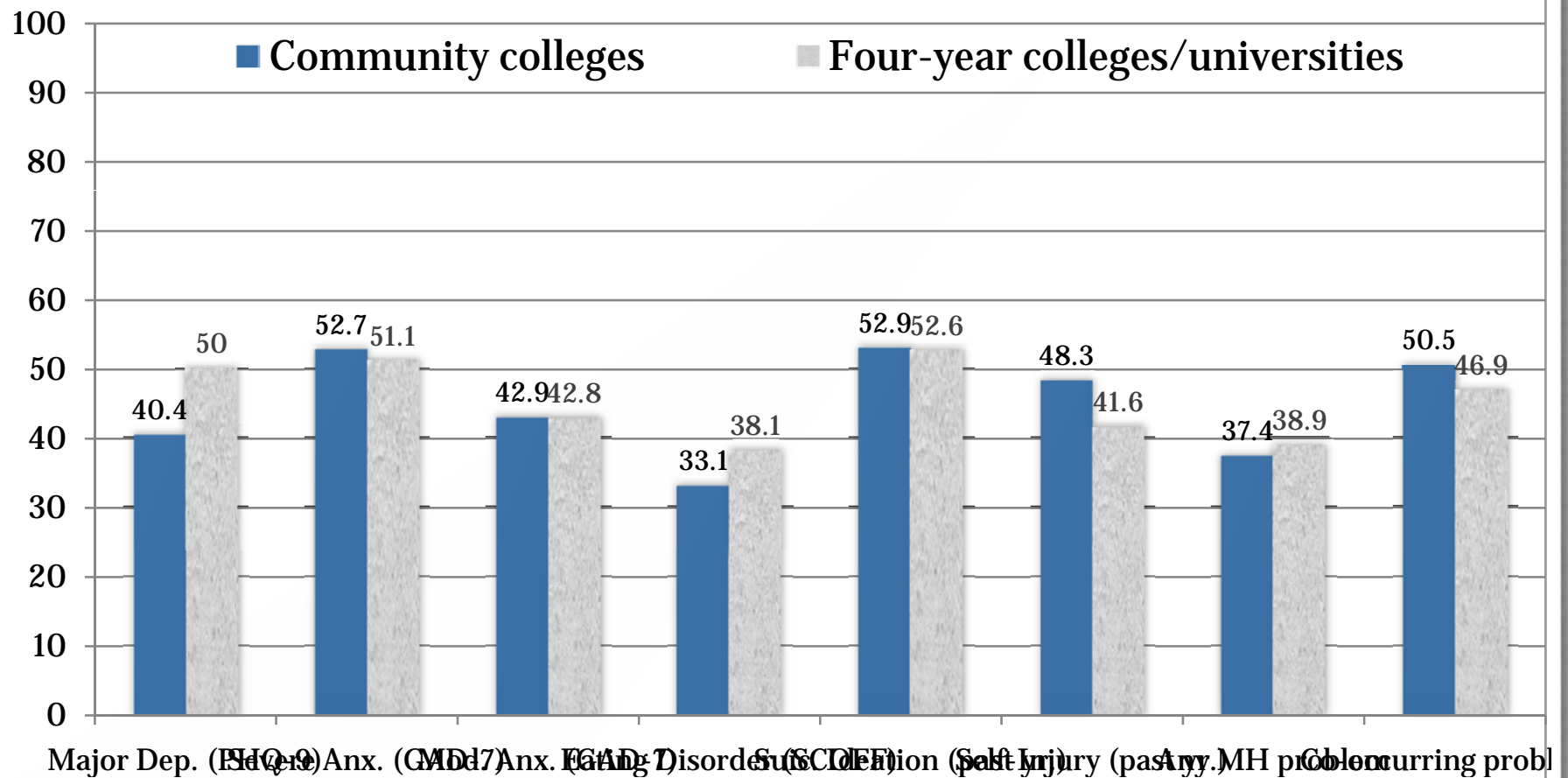


Any Treatment among Students with Apparent Need



52.9% of CC students report receiving informal counseling/support for mental and emotional health (e.g., from friends/family).

Any Treatment among Students with Apparent Need (ages 18-22)



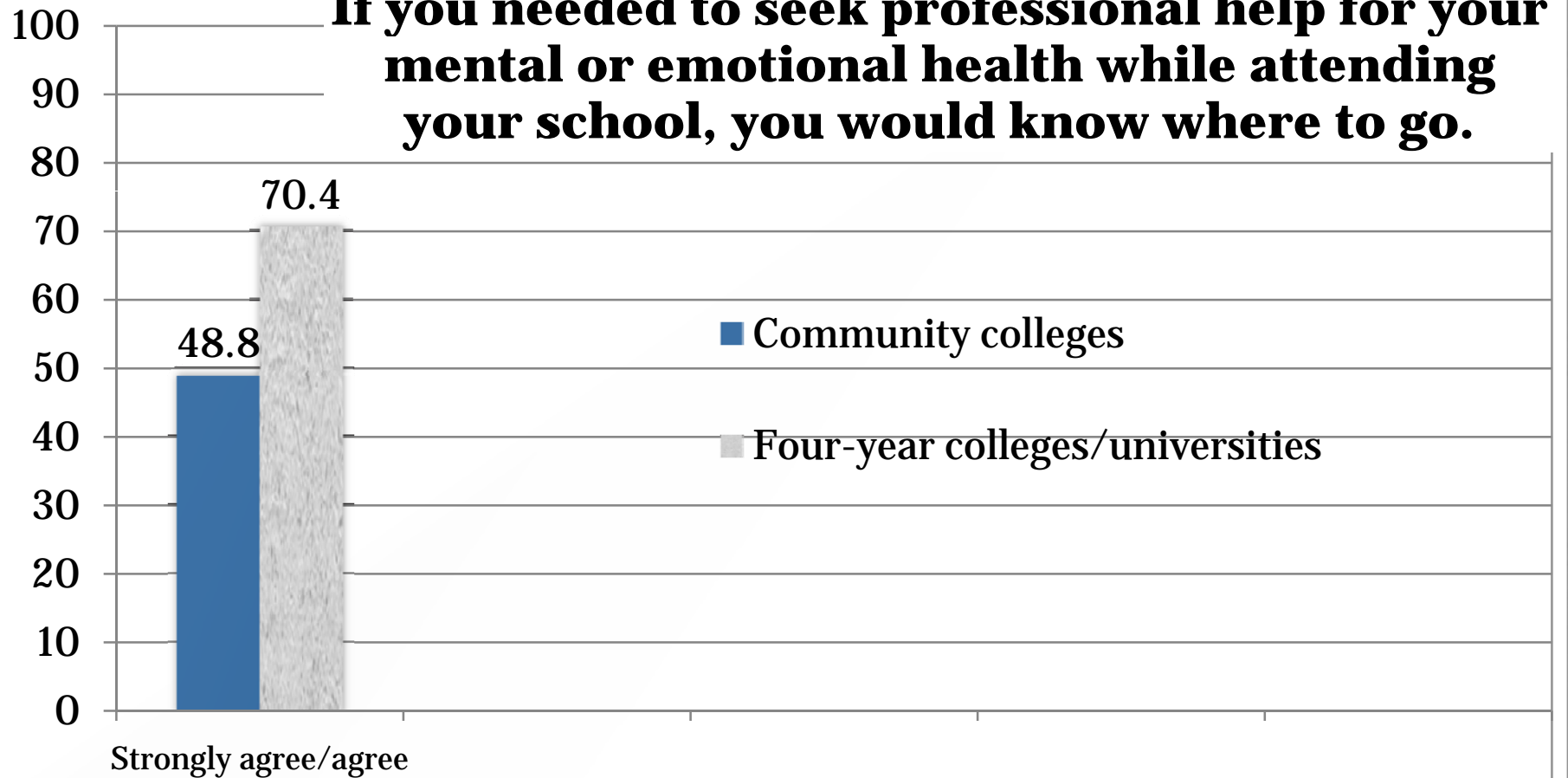
CC Student Perspectives [4]

- “This inspired me to seek information at my campus regarding mental health.”
- “Mental health is a troubling subject for many more students than it appears. Addressing the problem correctly would require more than access to counseling, but the introduction of acceptance and understanding from the staff.”

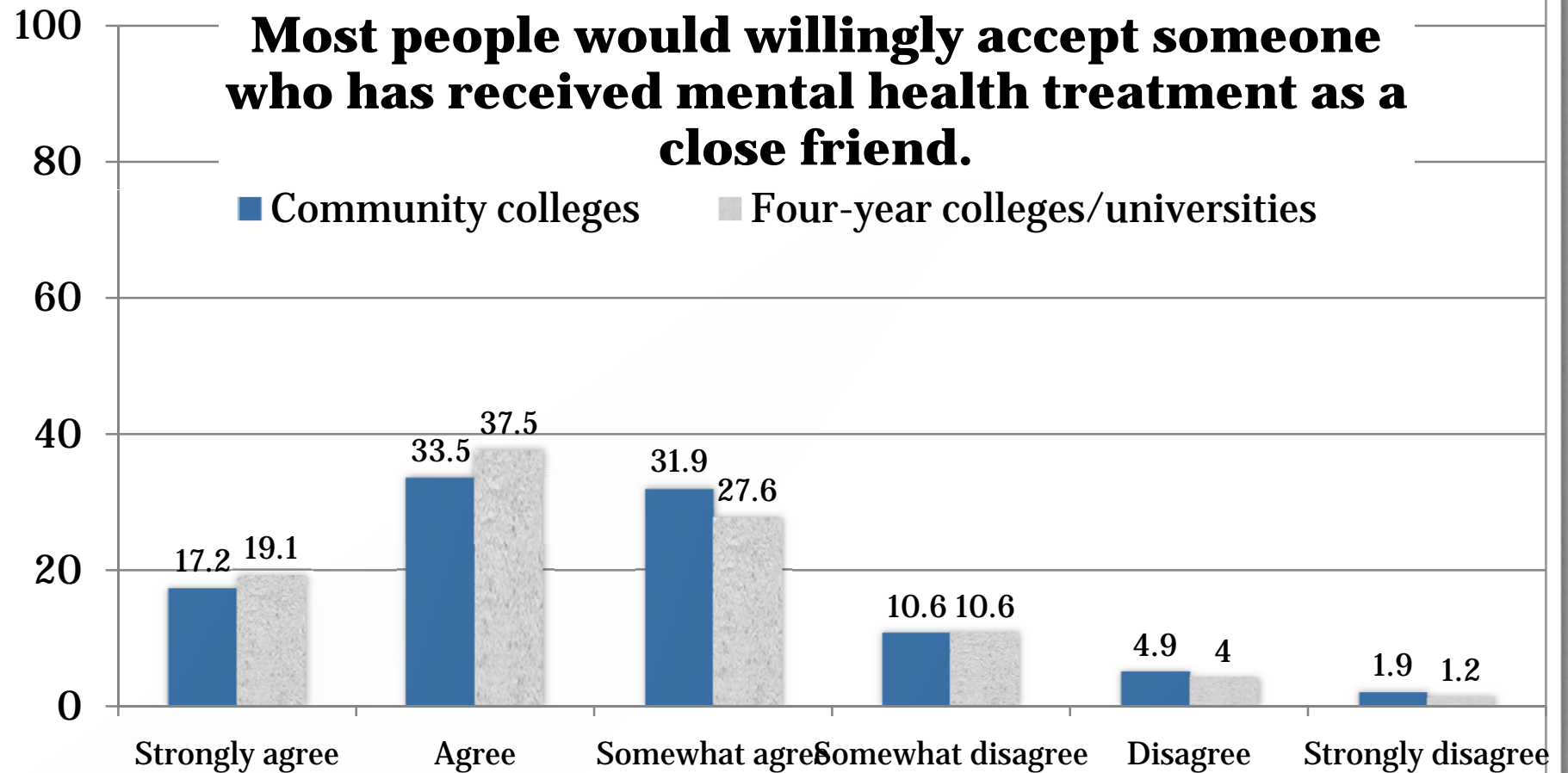


Knowledge of Campus Mental Health Services

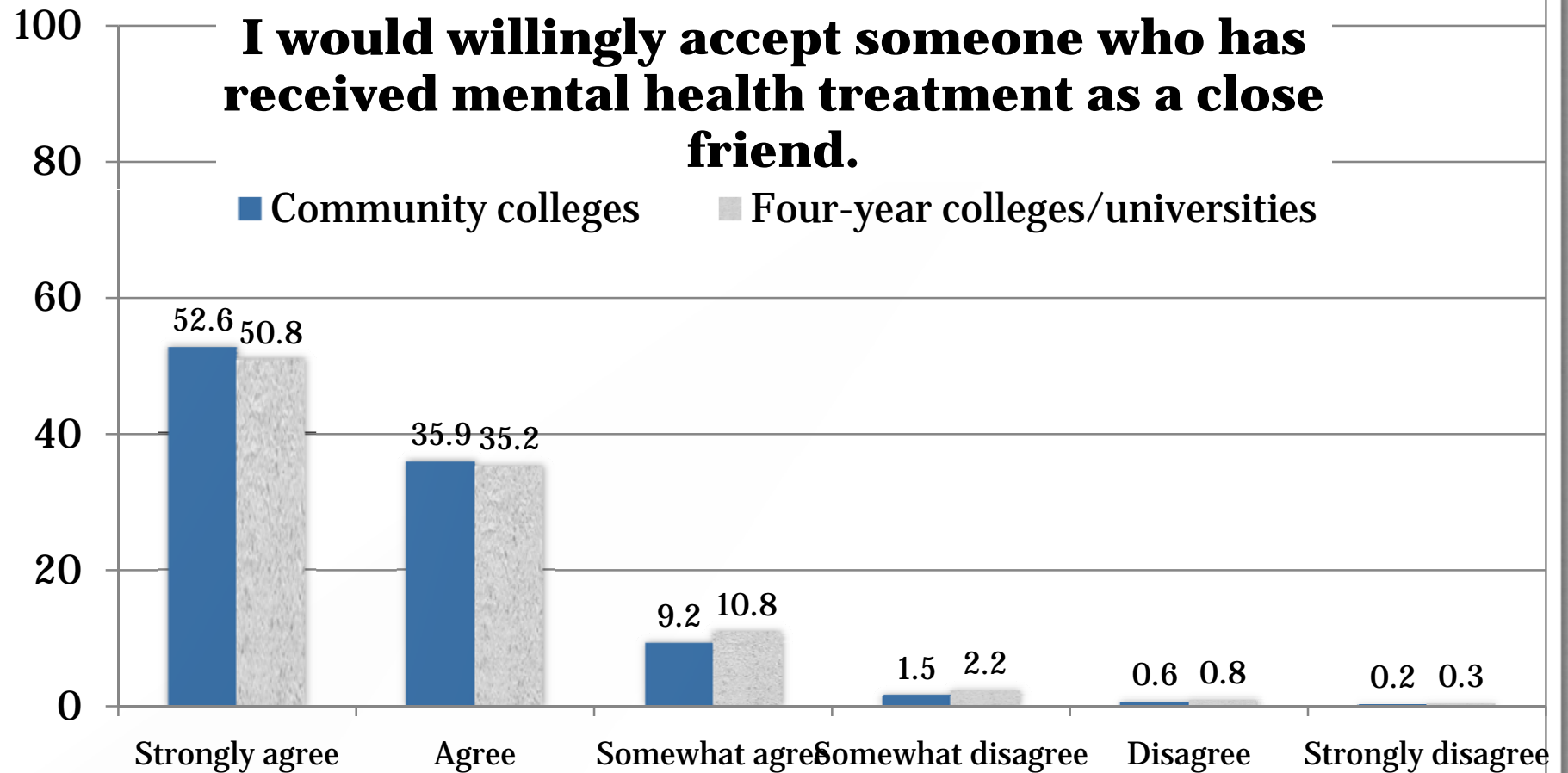
If you needed to seek professional help for your mental or emotional health while attending your school, you would know where to go.



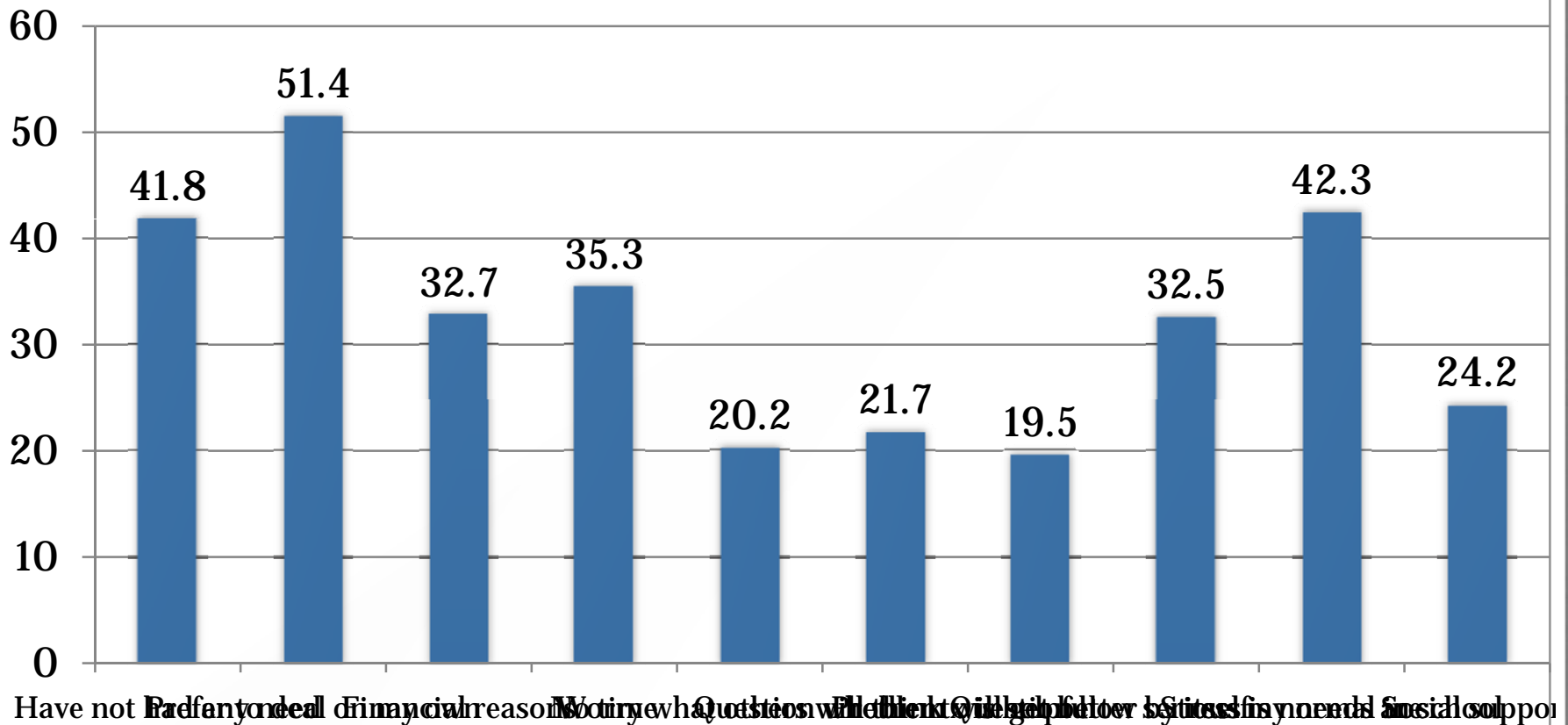
Public Perceived Stigma



Personal Stigma



Treatment Barriers among CC Students with Apparent Need



Only 15.3% of CC students report having no health insurance. 59.7% of students report that their health insurance would cover mental health treatment.

Applying these Findings in Practice

- Quantify problems, identify opportunities
- Evaluate programs
- Advocate for resources (and establish economic case)

Next Steps for HMN'S CC Research

- Modified HMS survey at ~20 schools in fall 2014
- Examine links between mental health and:
 - Food insecurity
 - Housing insecurity
 - Financial stress in general
 - Use of supportive services and benefits
 - Academic outcomes
- Intervention research

Participation Process

Research Study Coordinators

Odessa Despot (PsyD) and Mira Dalal: healthyminds@umich.edu

Surveys

Programmed online by HMN researchers (no work for campus contacts)

Enrollment steps

- Sign participation contract
- Complete data agreement
- Send a file of students for survey recruitment
- Customize the survey with local resources and additional questions
- Submit payment (\$500)

IRB requirements

Attain IRB approval or exemption (main IRB at University of Michigan does not consider other campuses “engaged” in the research; letter available upon request)

Uses of HMN Research/Data

- To assess need in the student population
- To raise awareness
- To strengthen grant applications
- To advocate for mental health services and programs on campus
- To evaluate existing programs (e.g., reductions in stigma following a major campaign)
- To examine prevalence and correlates among sub-groups of students
- To make comparisons with peer institutions
- Economic case for mental health services (option to link to academic records)

Benefits of Participation

Our goal is to conduct research that can directly inform practice.

Mechanisms for achieving this aim:

- Rapid access to data reports
- Data sets and statistical support
- HMN researchers available to discuss results
- Interactive data interface

Participation Experience [1]

Example school: “DC Community College”

Size: 7,000

Random survey sample: 4,000

Dates for data collection: February 1-22, 2015

Dates selected by school contact



Participation Experience [2]

After data collection:

- Customized data report delivered in late Spring 2015
 - Electronic and paper copies
- Full de-identified data set
- Access to secure portal of interactive data interface



Interactive Data Interface

The interactive data interface securely contains de-identified survey data and is available to all participating schools.

Using a simple drop-down menu, the data interface allows users to:

- Auto-generate graphs/tables for reports, presentations, meetings
- Compare sub-groups of interest
 - e.g., depression among female vs. male students
- Compare with peer institutions
 - e.g., *How does DC Community College's rate of anxiety compare with other community colleges?*

Contact Information



HMN Team: healthyminds@umich.edu

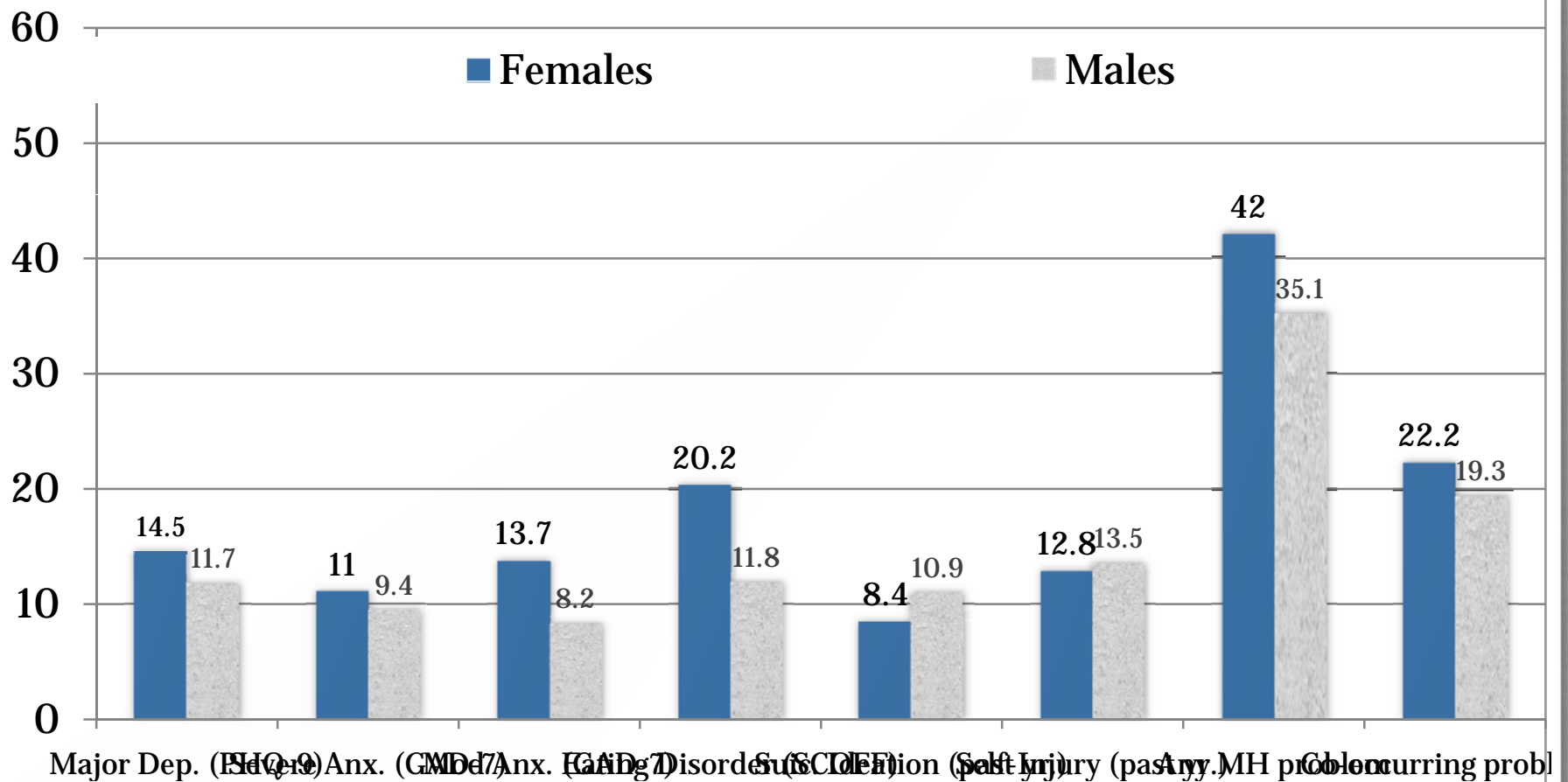
Web: healthymindsnetwork.org

Additional Findings



- **Symptom prevalence by gender**
- **Perceptions of campus climate**
 - **Academic support**

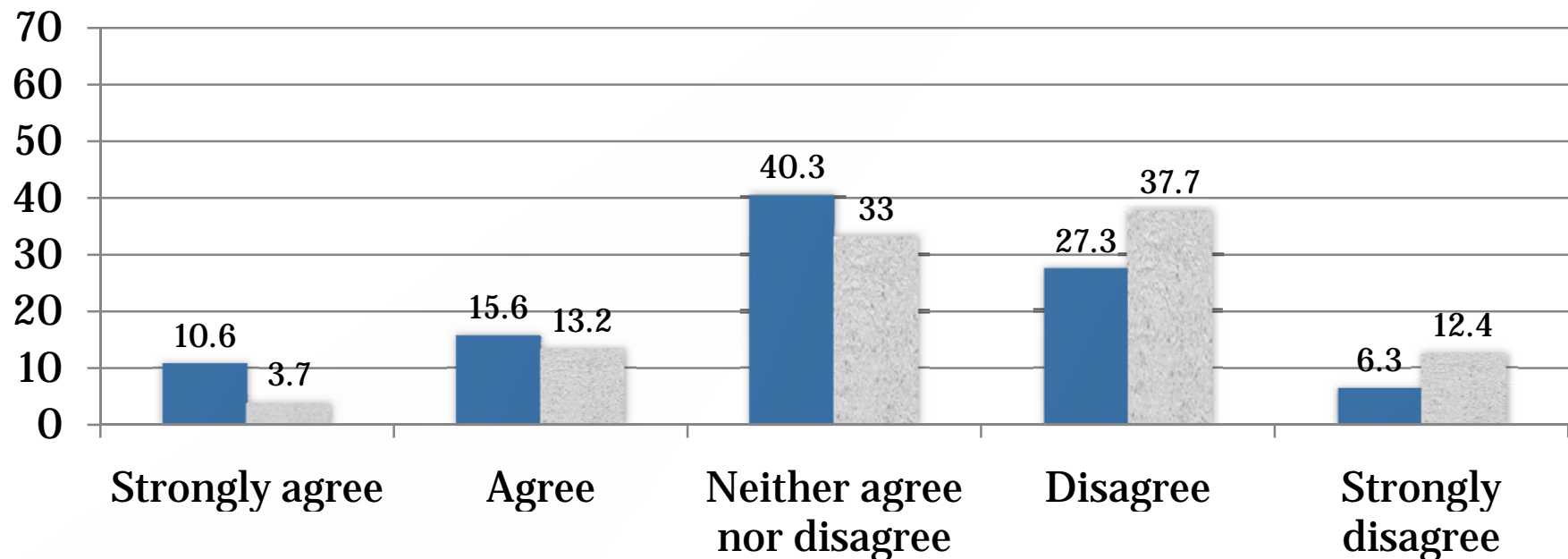
Prevalence of Mental Health Problems across Gender



CC Campus Climate [1]

At my school, I feel that the academic environment has a negative impact on students' mental and emotional well-being.

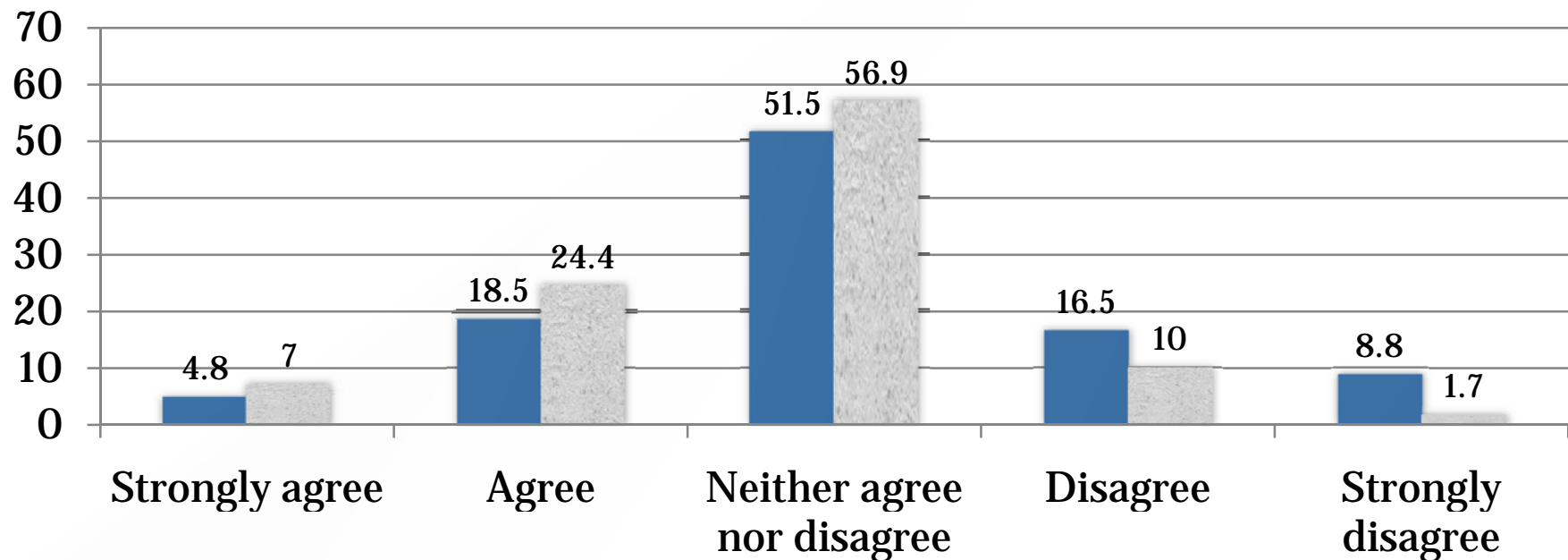
■ Any mental health problem ■ No mental health problem



CC Campus Climate [2]

At my school, I feel that the campus climate encourages free and open discussion about mental and emotional health.

■ Any mental health problem ■ No mental health problem



Academic Support

During this school year have you talked with any academic personnel about any mental health problems that were affecting your academic performance? 9.8% yes

**Overall, how supportive was the response of the academic personnel with whom you talked?
(N=103)**

