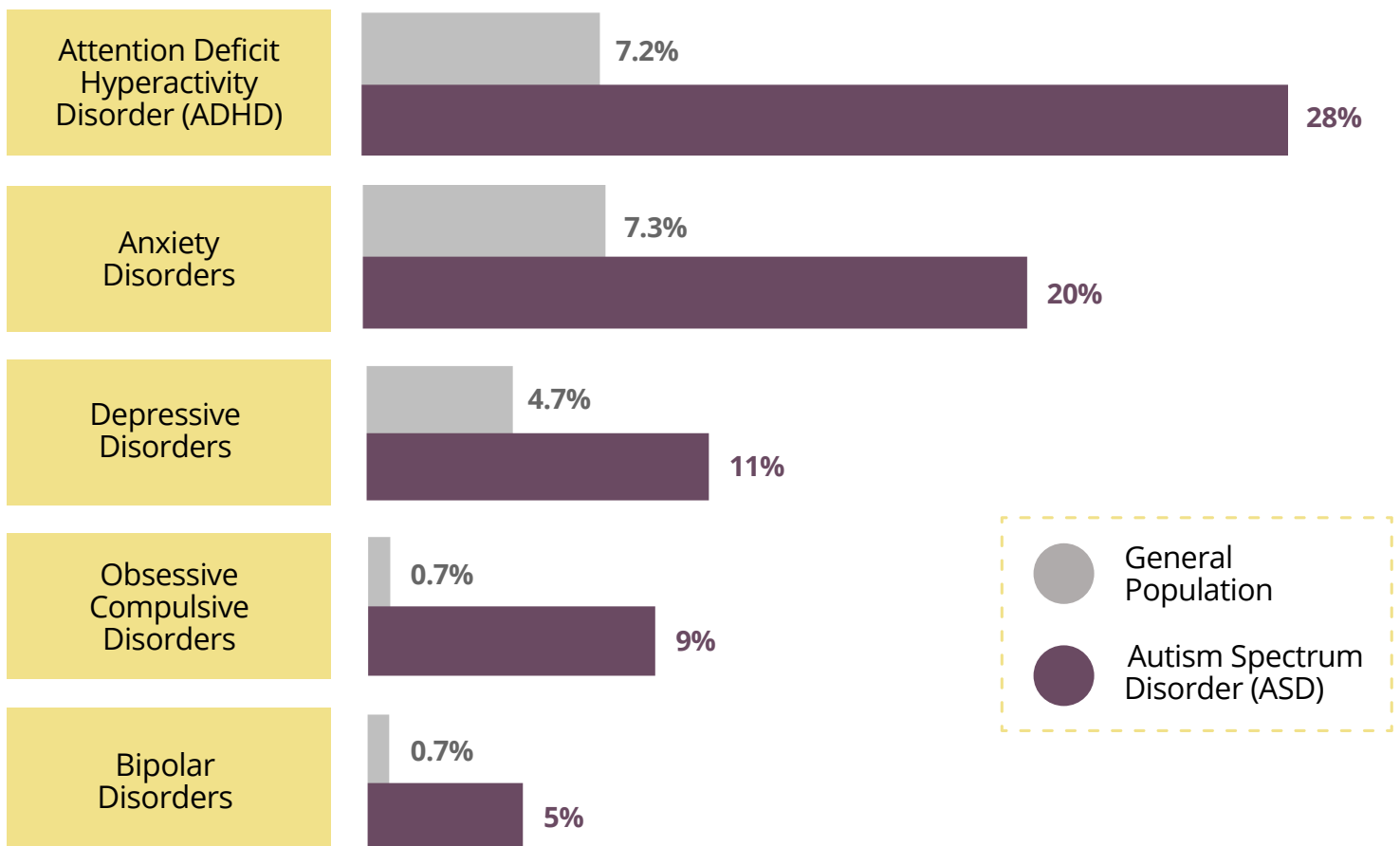


Prevalence of and Risk Factors for Mental Health Challenges in Autistic Students



In the U.S., approximately 2% of youth have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Mental health challenges are much more common among autistic youth. This infographic explores the relationship between autism and mental health risk in school-age youth.

Autistic youth are more vulnerable to experiencing mental health disorders.^{1,2}



Note: Findings are pooled estimates across 96 studies that included both children and adults with ASD. The reviewed studies identified psychiatric diagnoses using both DSM/ICD criteria and clinical assessment.³

Prevalence of and Risk Factors for Mental Health Challenges in Autistic Students

Several factors may make autistic youth more vulnerable to experiencing mental health challenges.⁴⁻⁷



Social Challenges

Many autistic students have challenges navigating social interactions that make these situations more difficult and anxiety provoking.



Difficulties with Emotion Regulation

Autistic students have greater difficulty understanding and processing emotions, which may make them more susceptible to mental health challenges.



Discrimination, Victimization, and Segregation

Autistic youth are more likely to be bullied and victimized. These experiences increase anxiety, negative emotion, and mental health challenges.



Co-occurring Medical Conditions

Autistic youth are more likely to experience co-occurring sleep difficulties, seizure disorders, and gastrointestinal issues that can be difficult to manage.



Sensory Processing Differences

Many autistic youth are highly sensitive to noise, textures, smells, and tastes. These sensory differences may make certain environments aversive, overwhelming, and anxiety provoking.

For more information about mental health risk in autistic youth, view "Supporting the Mental Health of Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities"

Watch the Southeast MHTTC webinar here: bit.ly/3jFaNyQ.

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