



SEXUAL HEALTH:
AN ESSENTIAL
PART OF
RECOVERY

MAY 2, 2024



OVERVIEW

- Collaboration between Northwest MHTTC and Mountain West AETC
- First session of 4-part series
- Recovery-focused
 - Improve quality of mental health care
 - Identify and address disparities
 - Provide holistic care and promote health



TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

- Understand the importance of integrating sexual health into behavioral health care
- Consider opportunities in your own setting for identifying and addressing sexual health needs of clients
- Provide input on development of sexual health training curriculum for behavioral health providers



IS TALKING ABOUT SEX TABOO FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS?

- 99.5% of mental health professionals valued sexuality as an important topic to discuss with their clients
- Only 17.1% reported that they discuss sexuality with more than 75% of clients
- Most frequent reasons:
 - Lack of awareness
 - Lack of knowledge/ information
 - Provider discomfort
 - Perception of client shame



WHY SHOULD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS ASK ABOUT SEX?



- Positive sexual health is a central component of overall well-being and a key component of a healthy lifestyle
- Meaningful dialogue during clinical encounters about sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual health promotes high-quality mental health care
- Sexual Health is Part of Health!



SEXUAL HEALTH

- Sexuality includes sexual orientation, sexual identity and attitudes and values related to sex.
- Sexual health is NOT just limited to the absence of disease or dysfunction during reproductive years.
- Sexual health is the integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of sexual being in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication and love

WHO 2006

Sexual Health Is More Than Just Sex — It's Also:

Building a positive relationship with your provider

Keeping up with preventive services

Knowing your contraceptive needs

Treating your partner(s) well, & expecting the same

Deciding what your boundaries are

Learning what feels good for you



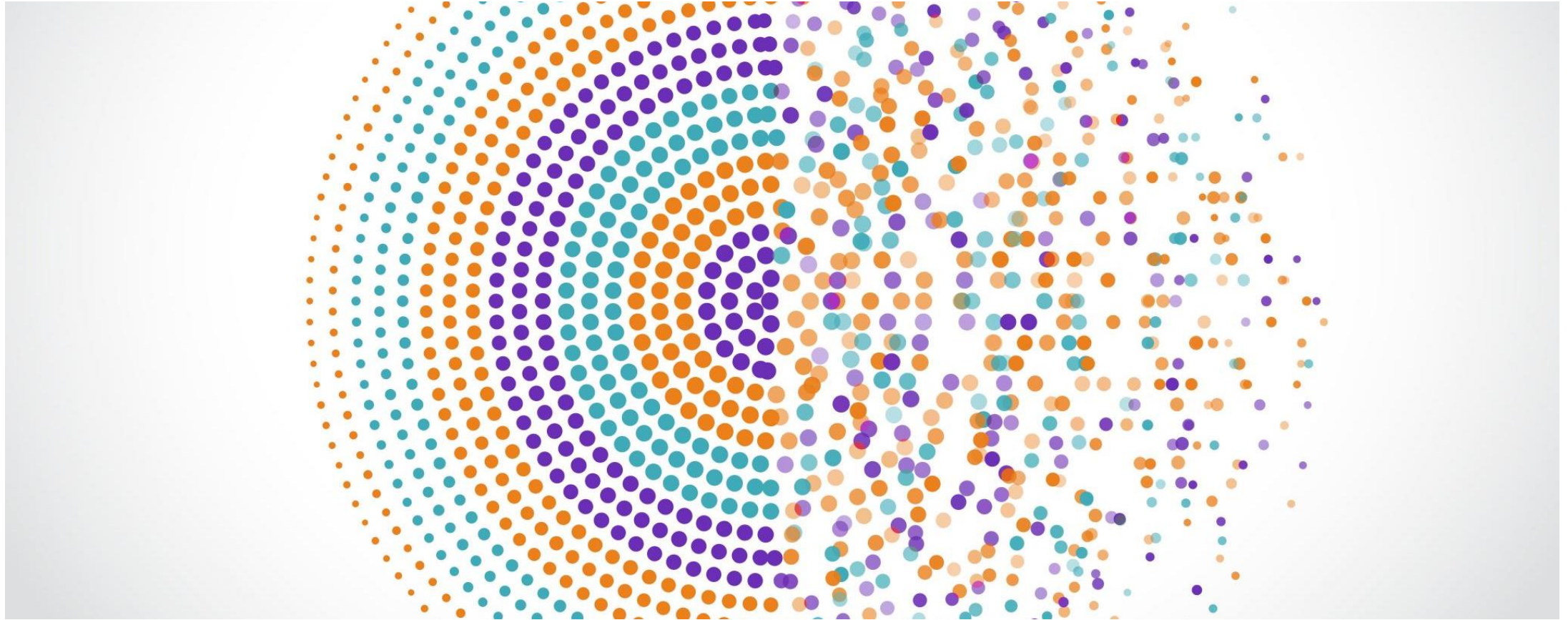
healthline

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SEXUALLY HEALTHY PERSON

- Knowledgeable about sexuality and sexual behavior—and good sources of information
- Positive attitudes about body image
- Ability to express one's full sexual potential
- Ability to make autonomous decisions about one's sexual life
- Capability to express oneself sexually



IMPACT ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE





"To treat me, you have
to know who I am"

NY city health and
hospitals mandatory
employee training

<https://www.Youtube.Com/watch?V=nuhvjgxgaac>



WE ARE EVERYWHERE

There are more than **9 MILLION**
LGBTQ people in the United States.
It's fair to assume you see LGBTQ
people regularly.

<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/how-many-people-are-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender>

IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS DISPARITIES

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other self-identified queer (LGBTQ) youth have **higher rates of mental health issues** than people in the general population.
- A 2016 study suggests that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth **consider suicide at nearly three times the rate** of heterosexual youth.
- The Trevor Project's 2019 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that **39% of LGBTQ youth seriously contemplated suicide** in the prior year.



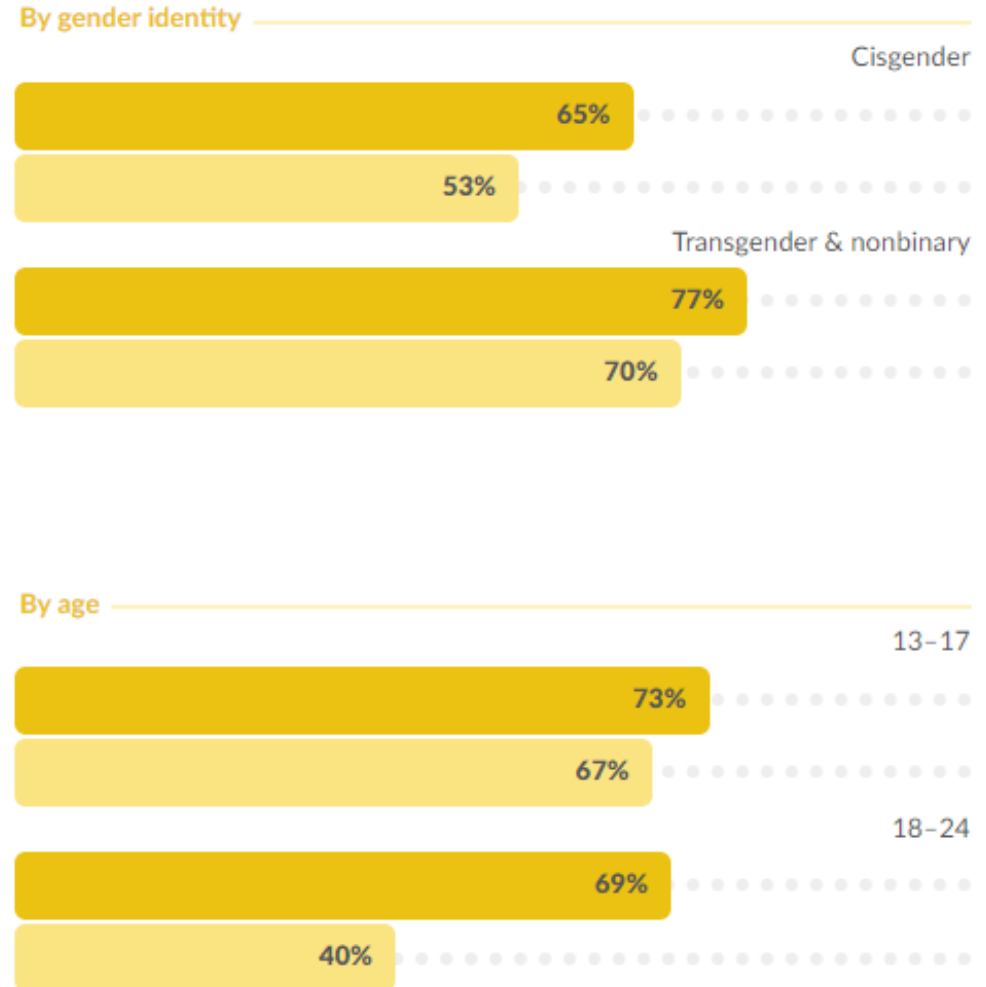
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2021/?section=SuicideMentalHealth>

In the past year, nearly half of LGBTQ youth have wanted counseling from a mental health professional but did not receive it.

LGBTQ YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

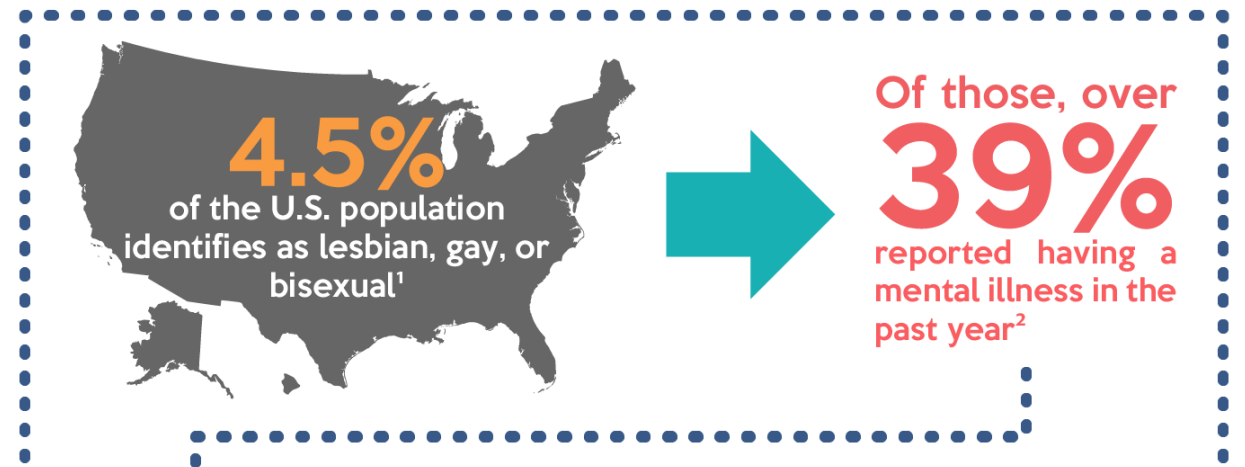
- 72% of LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder in the past two weeks, including more than 3 in 4 transgender and nonbinary youth.
- 62% of LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of major depressive disorder in the past two weeks, including more than 2 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth.

LGBTQ youth who experienced symptoms of:
● Generalized anxiety disorder ● Major depressive disorder



INCREASED RATES OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

- LGBTQIA+ individuals
 - Are more than twice as likely as heterosexual individuals to have a mental health disorder in their lifetime.
 - Are 2.5 times more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and substance misuse.
 - 39% report serious thoughts of suicide.

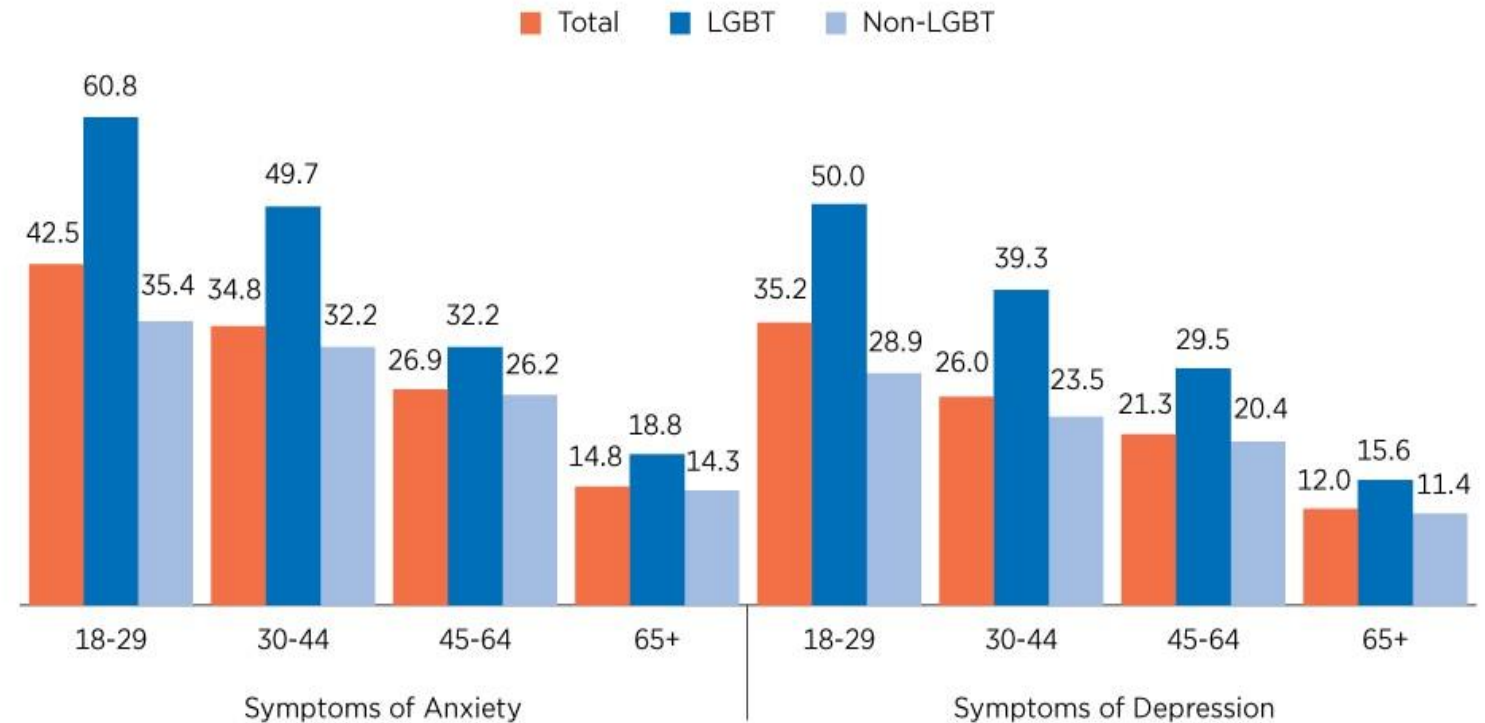


Increased rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups (n= 65,488)

Figure 2.

Percentage of U.S. Adults With Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression by Age and LGBT Status: June 1 - August 8, 2022

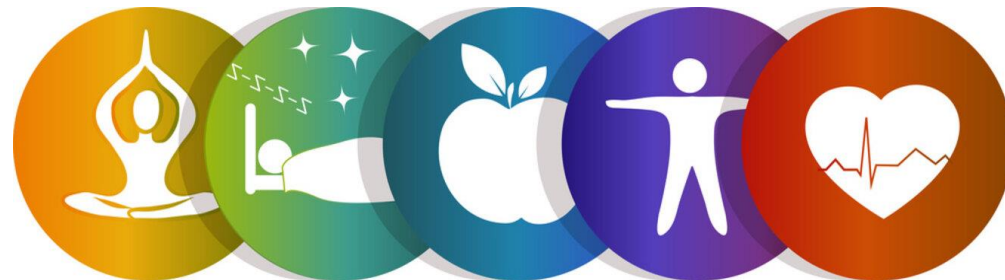
(In percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey public-use files, 2022.

SEXUAL HEALTH IS PART OF HEALTH

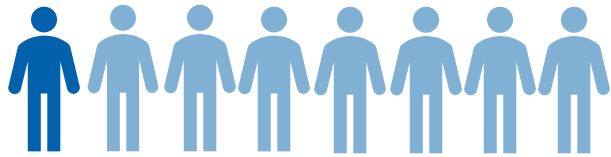
- A sexual history should be taken as part of routine health care
- By asking all clients a few essential questions, you help remove the stigma around discussing sex and normalize these conversations.
- Discussing a patient's sexual health offers opportunities to:
 - Gain an overall picture of your patient's health.
 - Counsel and share information about behaviors that may increase STI risk.
 - Screen for and treat STIs and address other sexual health concerns.



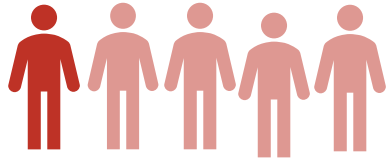
SUMMARY: HIV IN THE UNITED STATES



Around **1.2 million people** in the United States are living with HIV



Approximately **1 in 8** do not know they have HIV



Roughly **1 in 5** already have AIDS at the time of HIV diagnosis

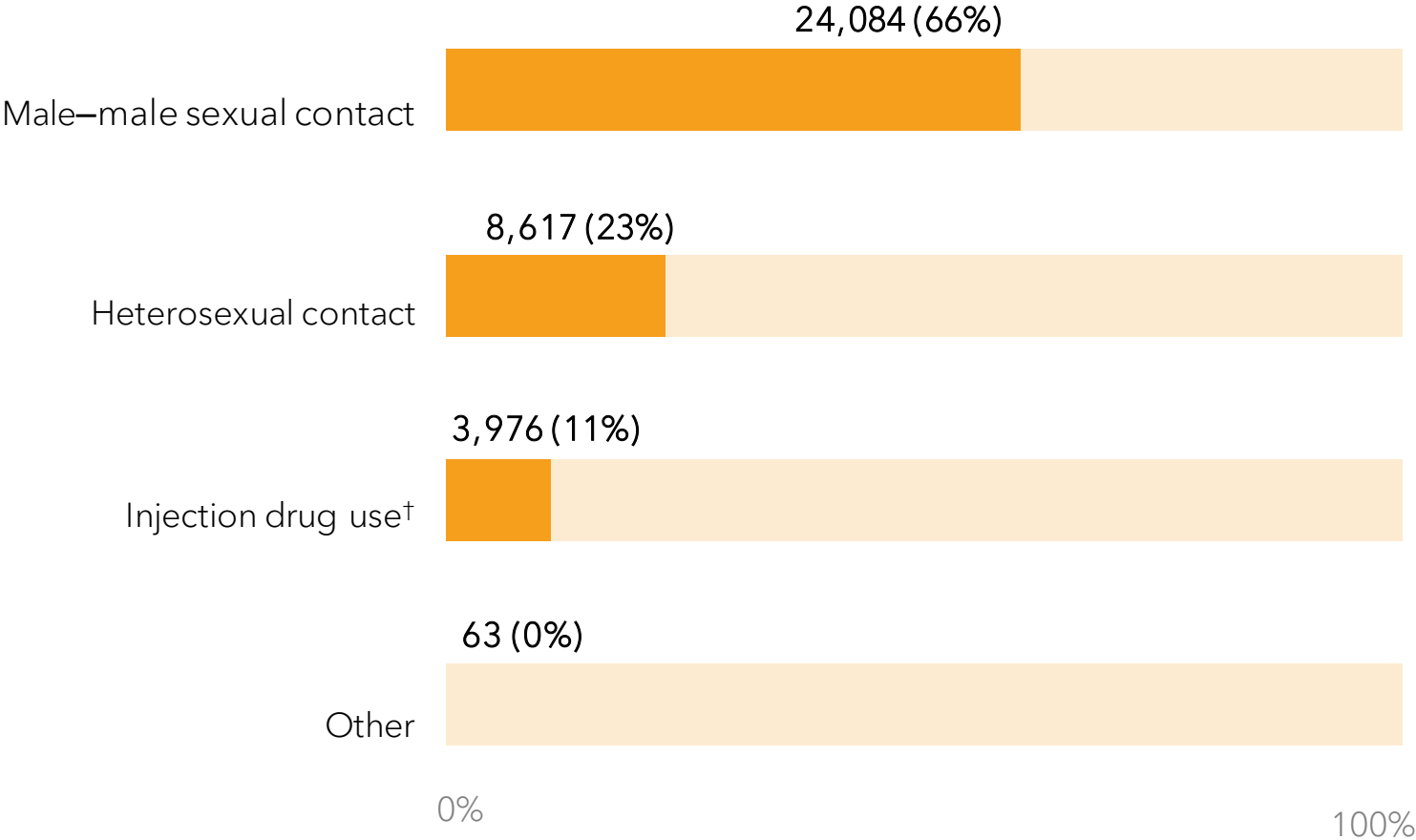
HIV disproportionately affects some populations:

- Men who have sex with men
- People of color
- Transgender people
- People who inject drugs

About 40% of new HIV transmissions are from people undiagnosed and unaware they have HIV

People with serious mental illnesses in US are 6 times as likely to acquire HIV

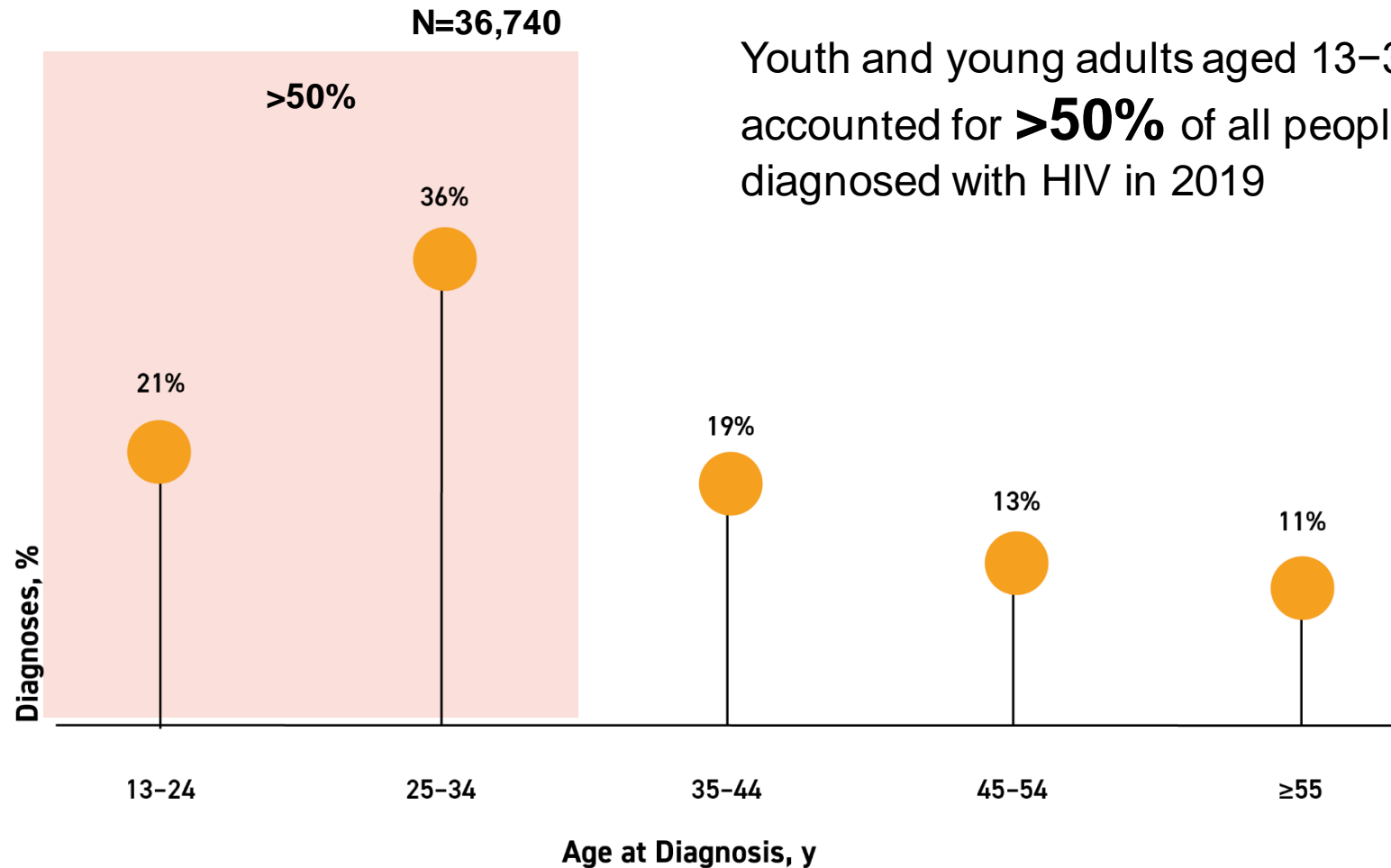
HIV DIAGNOSES BY TRANSMISSION CATEGORY



Two-thirds of new HIV diagnoses in 2019 were among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Diagnoses of HIV infection in the United States and dependent areas, 2019. *HIV Surveillance Report*. 2021;32:51. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/reports/surveillance/cdc-hiv-surveillance-report-2018-updated-vol-32.pdf>

HIV DIAGNOSES BY AGE AT THE TIME OF DIAGNOSIS



Youth and young adults aged 13–34 years accounted for **>50%** of all people newly diagnosed with HIV in 2019

HIV AND PEOPLE WHO ARE TRANSGENDER

Nearly
1 million
adults in the United
States identify as
transgender

HIV diagnoses among
transgender adults and
adolescents
increased
7%
between 2015 and
2019

Approximately
1 in 7
transgender people
with HIV already had
AIDS when they were
diagnosed

Transwomen are
49X more
likely than others to
acquire HIV.
>50% of
transwomen of color
will acquire HIV in their
lifetime.

HIV SURVEILLANCE SPECIAL REPORT



HIV Infection, Risk, Prevention, and Testing Behaviors Among Transgender Women

National HIV Behavioral Surveillance • 2019–2020

1,608 transgender women were interviewed in **7 cities** with high levels of HIV.

42% had **HIV**

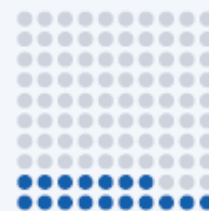
HIV was more common among Black/African American and Hispanic/Latina transgender women.



62%
Black/African American participants tested positive



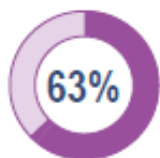
35%
Hispanic/Latina participants tested positive



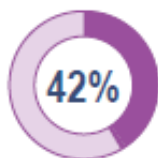
17%
White participants tested positive

63% visited a health care provider within 1 month after diagnosis and **90%** were currently taking antiretrovirals*

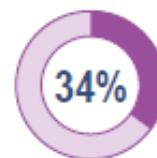
Many transgender women **experience poverty and homelessness**, factors that can affect overall health. Some transgender women may turn to **exchanging sex for money** because of discrimination and lack of economic opportunities.



63% lived at or below the federal poverty level



42% experienced homelessness in the past 12 months



34% received money or drugs in exchange for sex

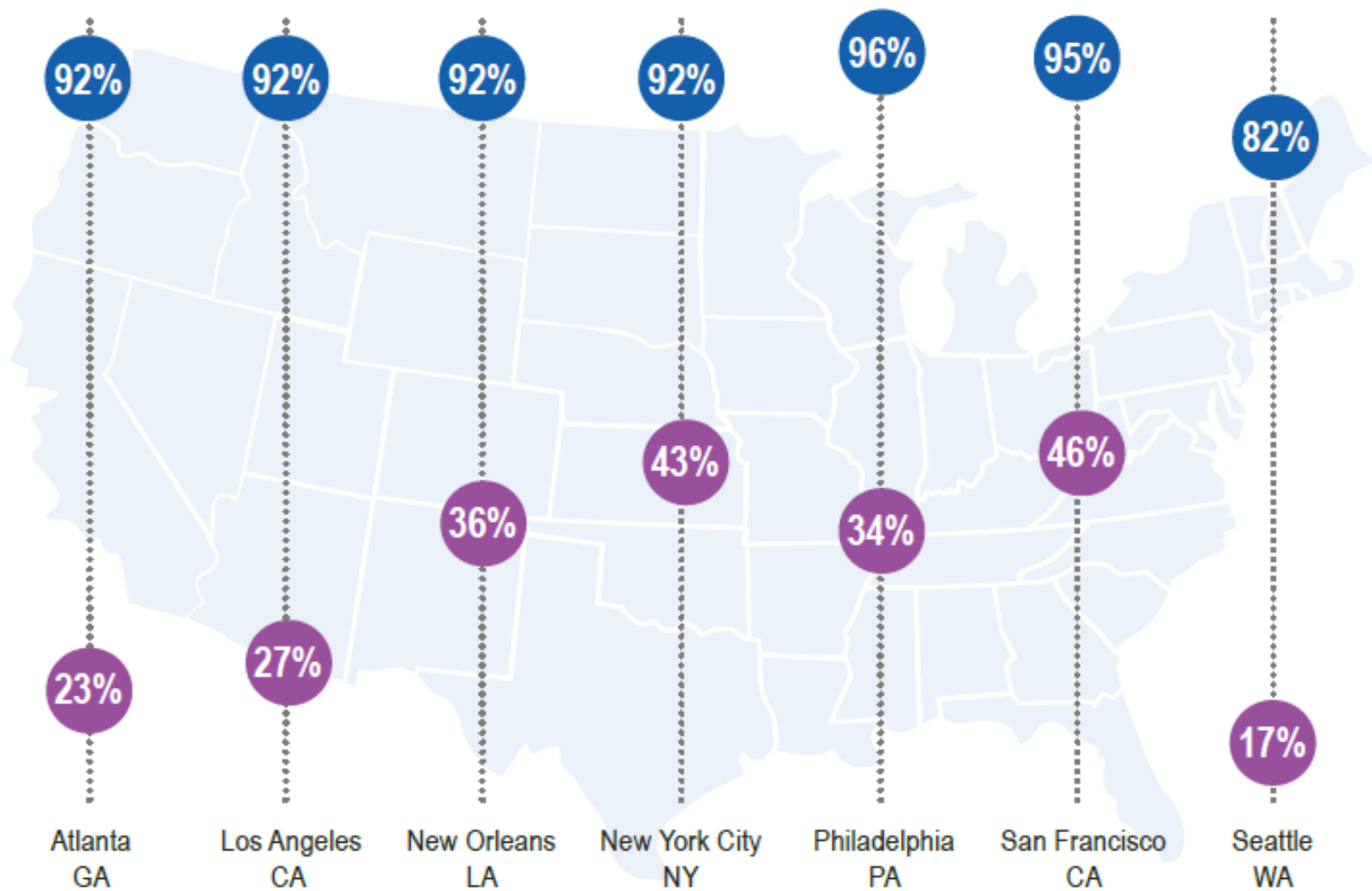


Among transgender women who were HIV-negative, PrEP awareness was high, but use was low.

92% had heard of PrEP but only **32%** had used PrEP in the past 12 months.



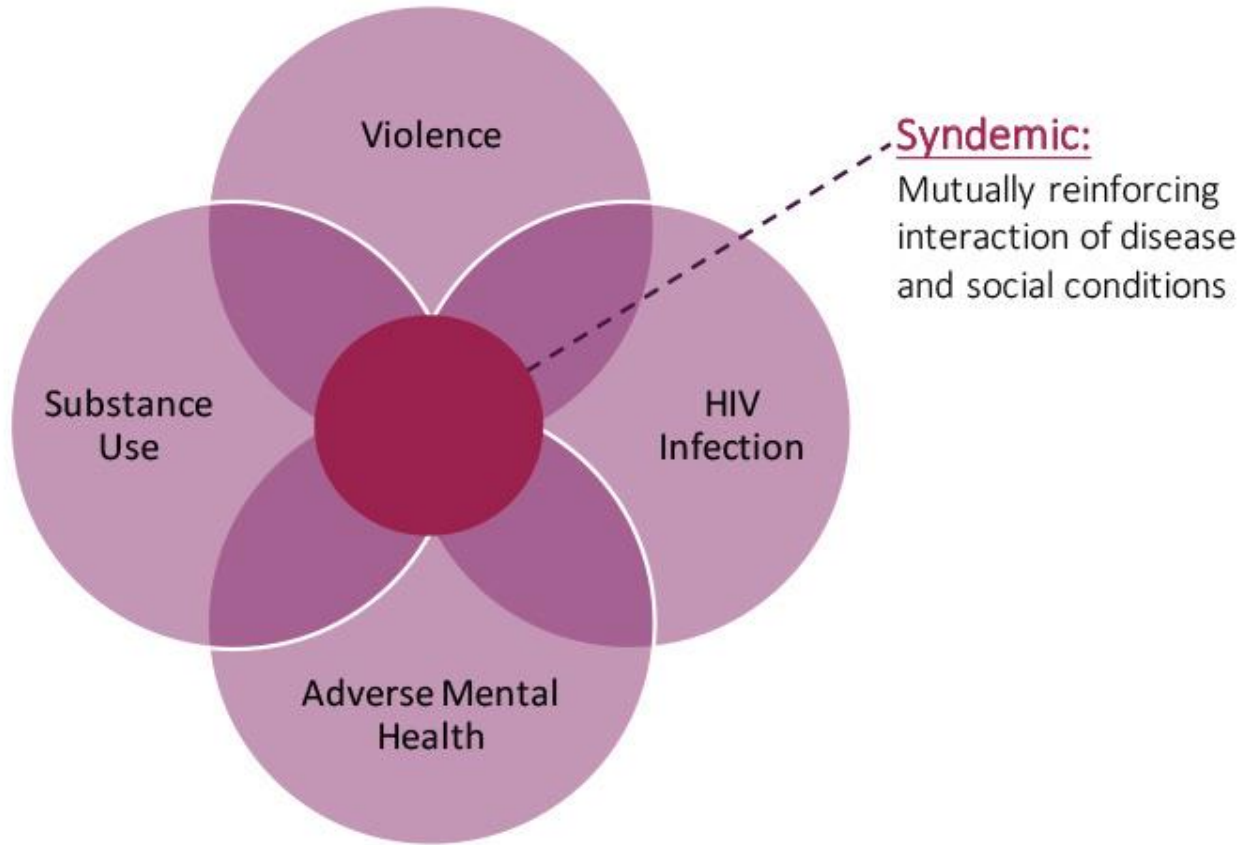
PrEP use varied by city ● % heard of PrEP ● % used PrEP



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HIV Infection, Risk, Prevention, and Testing Behaviors Among Transgender Women—National HIV Behavioral Surveillance, 7 U.S. Cities, 2019–2020. HIV Surveillance Special Report 27.

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/library/reports/hiv-surveillance.html>. Published April 2021

THE SYNDEMIC OF MENTAL ILLNESS, SUD AND STI



- The U.S. has the highest rate of STDs in the industrialized world
- In 2022, CDC reported 2.5 million cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea or syphilis in the US, half of those young people aged 15-24
- Since 2018, rates of
 - chlamydia increased by 21%
 - gonorrhea by 67%
 - syphilis by 76%
- People who have serious mental illness at increased risk of STI
- Greatest increase of syphilis among people who use methamphetamines

Screening, testing, and treating Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) is part of SAMHSA's whole person approach to behavioral health treatment and substance use prevention.

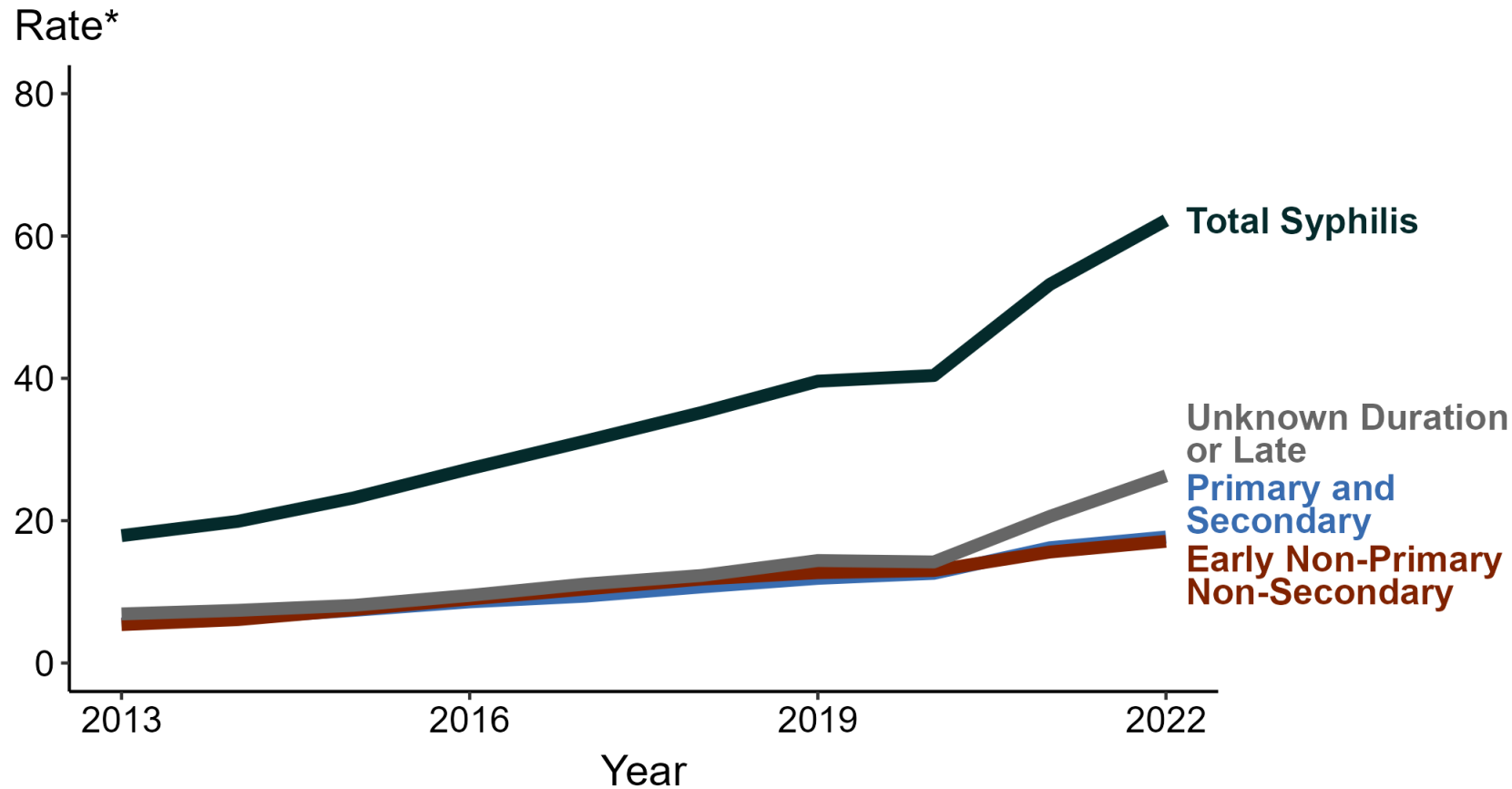
*-- letter to colleagues from Dr. Miriam Delphin-Rittmon,
US Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance
Use and Director of SAMHSA, January 30, 2024*



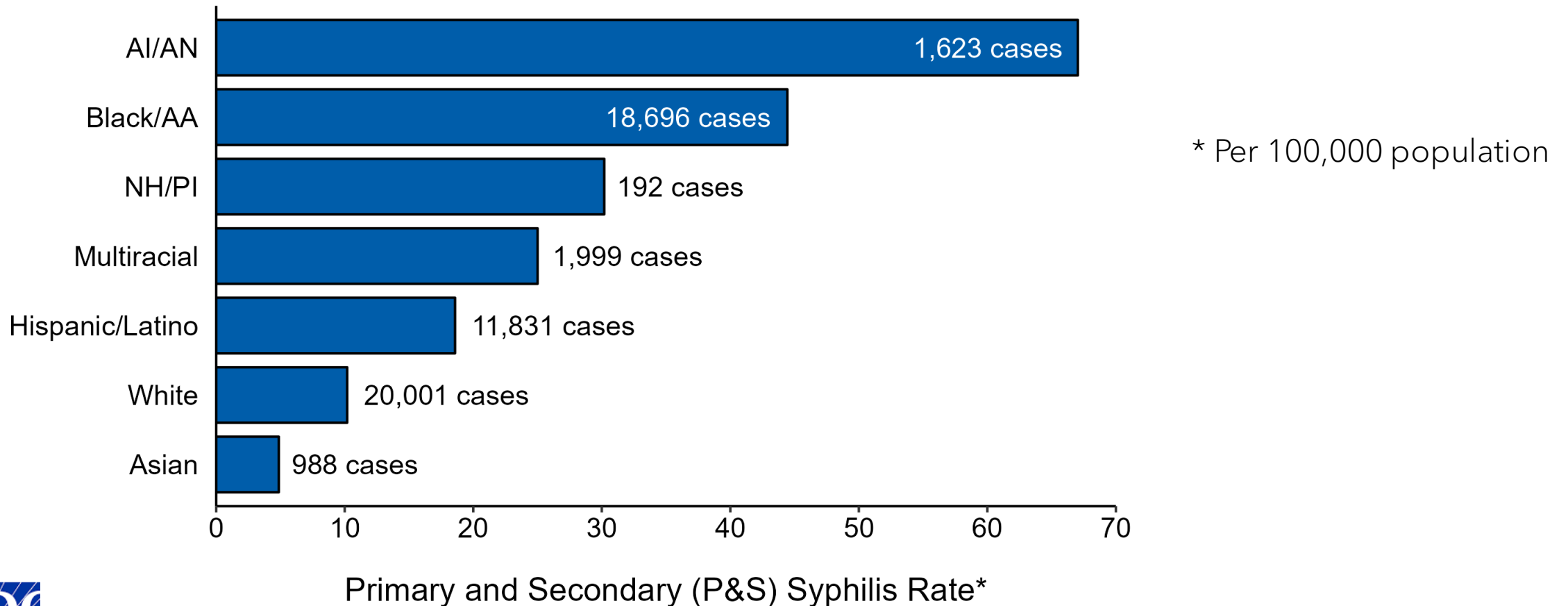
SYPHILIS – RATES OF REPORTED CASES BY STAGE OF INFECTION, UNITED STATES, 2013-2022

* Per 100,000

NOTE: Includes all stages of syphilis and congenital syphilis



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SYPHILIS – CASE COUNTS AND RATES OF REPORTED CASES BY RACE/HISPANIC ETHNICITY, UNITED STATES, 2022



THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A SEXUAL HISTORY

Recommended for **all adult and adolescent patients**

Helps identify patients' **sexual health needs**, including need for PrEP



Introduce the discussion by emphasizing that it is **routine and confidential**

“

Taking a brief sexual history is routine.

“

Everything you say is confidential.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Assess your own comfort

Avoid making assumptions

Gather your patient's basic information during the initial assessment

For gender identity, incorporate a two-step method into the assessment

Ask for correct pronouns and terminology

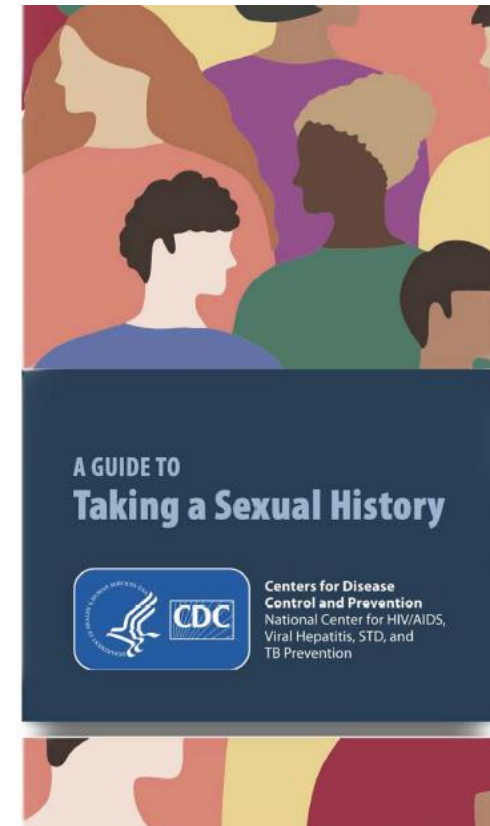
Use neutral and inclusive terms such as "partner"

Make your client feel comfortable by establishing a rapport before asking sensitive questions

Ask other people to step into the waiting room while you talk to your client

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING..

- **Let your patient know that you ask everyone** these questions.
- **Transition** into asking sensitive questions.
- **Pose your questions in a non-judgmental manner.**
- **Try not to react overtly**, even if you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. Pay attention to your body language and posture.
- **Rephrase your questions** or briefly explain why you are asking a question if a patient seems offended or reluctant to answer.
- **Ensure that you and your patient share an understanding** of the terms being used, to avoid confusion. If you are not familiar with a term your patient used, ask for an explanation.





THE 8 PS

- Expanded to include:
 - Preferences
 - Problems
 - Partner abuse



DISCUSSION



- What are the main challenges to incorporating sexual health in your work with clients?
- For which topics related to sexual health would you like more information or training?



SEXUAL HEALTH WEBINAR SERIES

Sexual Health: An Essential Part of Recovery

- Thursday, May 2nd, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm Pacific
- Presenters: Lydia Chwastiak MD, MPH and Laurie Sylla MHSA

Discussing & Documenting Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

- Wednesday, May 29th, 12:30 - 2:00 pm Pacific
- Presenter: Dayna Morrison BA, MHP

PrEP Talk: Enabling Mental Health Professionals to Lead in HIV Prevention

- Monday, June 17th, 1:30 - 3:00 pm Pacific
- Presenter: Joanne Stekler MD, MPH

The Syndemic of HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and Behavioral Health Disorders

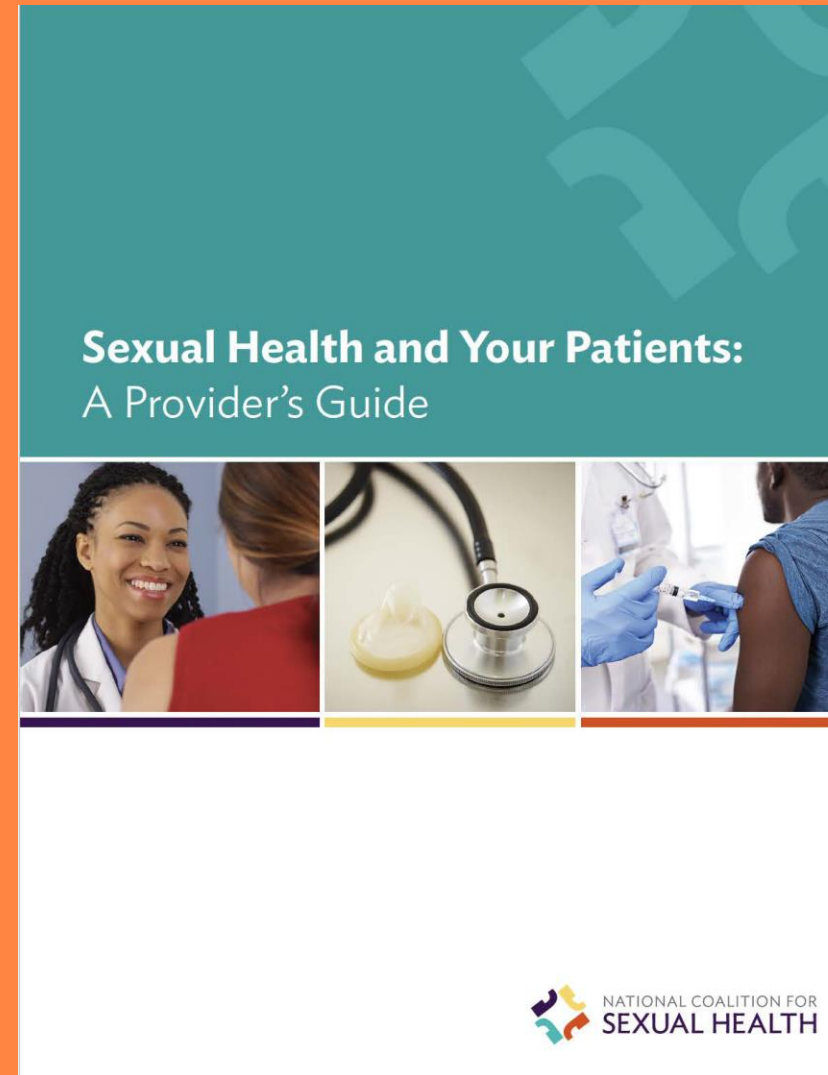
- Tuesday, July 16th, 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm Pacific
- Presenter: Tim Menza MD, PhD



Additional Resources



<https://mwaetc.org>



[https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://nationalcoalitionforsexualhealth.org/tools/for-healthcare-providers/document/Provider-Guide_2021.pdf__;!!K-Hz7m0Vt54!mKc3kUNIngn19nl9AlpAdFkZSX3RJzflLoBbNXSbx3VULL0j2HQB2Cd7o0shqAG72D3Aaizq1zG7Cw\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://nationalcoalitionforsexualhealth.org/tools/for-healthcare-providers/document/Provider-Guide_2021.pdf__;!!K-Hz7m0Vt54!mKc3kUNIngn19nl9AlpAdFkZSX3RJzflLoBbNXSbx3VULL0j2HQB2Cd7o0shqAG72D3Aaizq1zG7Cw$)