

2020 Suicide Report

Suicide prevention is a health priority in Mesa County. Health priorities are areas in which public health partners and the community can make the greatest impact based on current resources, political will, and community readiness.

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. Risk factors include previous suicide attempts, history of mental disorders (e.g. clinical depression), isolation, easy access to lethal methods, and history of alcohol and/or substance abuse.

Key Takeaways

For every death by suicide in 2020, there were approximately twelve suicide-related visits to an emergency department (ED) in Mesa County.

Sex

- More males died by suicide in 2020.
- Females were more likely to attempt suicide, and ideation was evenly split.

Impact of COVID-19

- 2020 saw an increase over 2019 in youth attempts, but no other significant changes in suicide deaths, ideation, or adult attempts. This may reflect reluctance to visit health care facilities where this is recorded.

Treatment

- 50% of people who died by suicide and had complete mental health histories had seen a behavioral health care provider at some point.

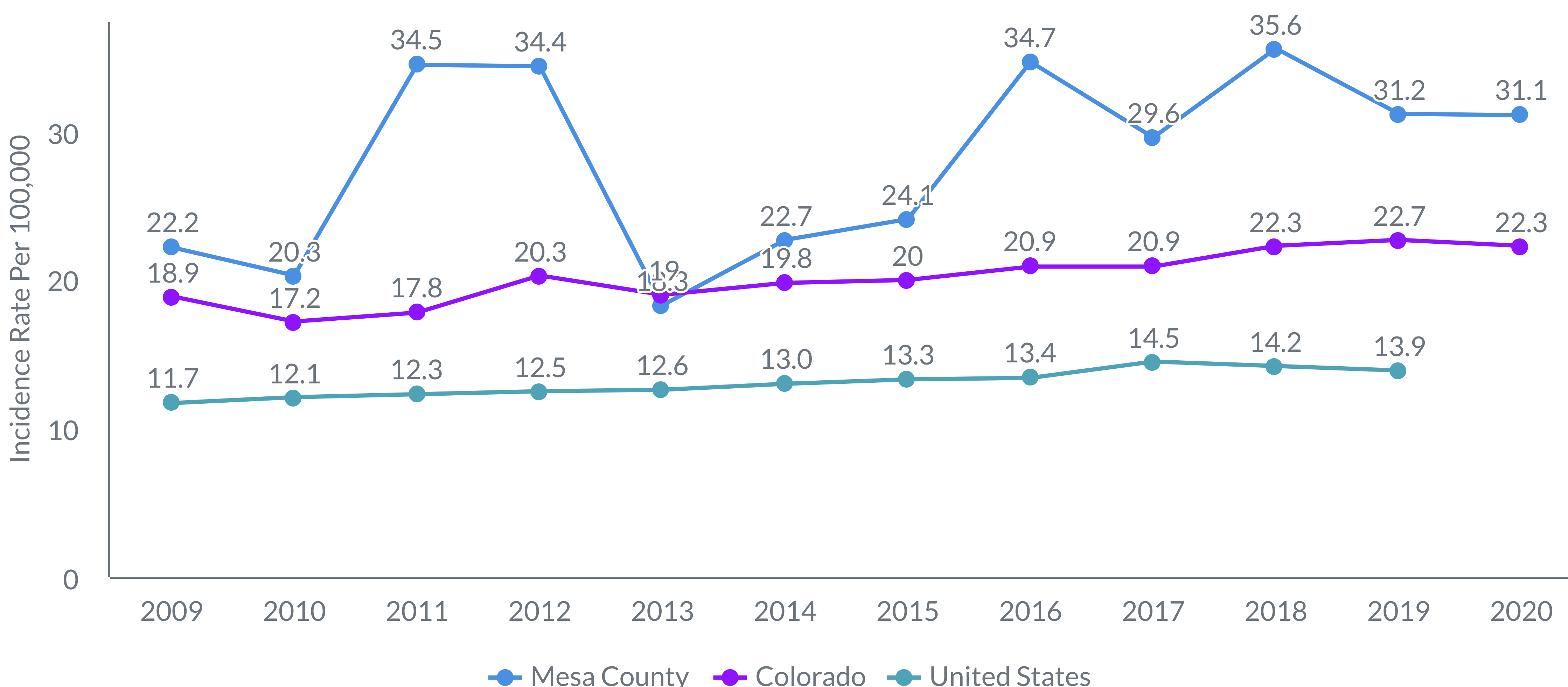
Age

- Two age groups had the most suicide deaths: 20-29 and 50+.
- 5 youth died by suicide in 2020.
- While suicidal ideation and attempts dropped between 2019 and 2020 in adults, it increased in youth less than 18 years.

Substance Use

- Half of suicide deaths in 2020 involved drugs or alcohol.
- Over the counter medications were the most common substance used in suicide attempts.

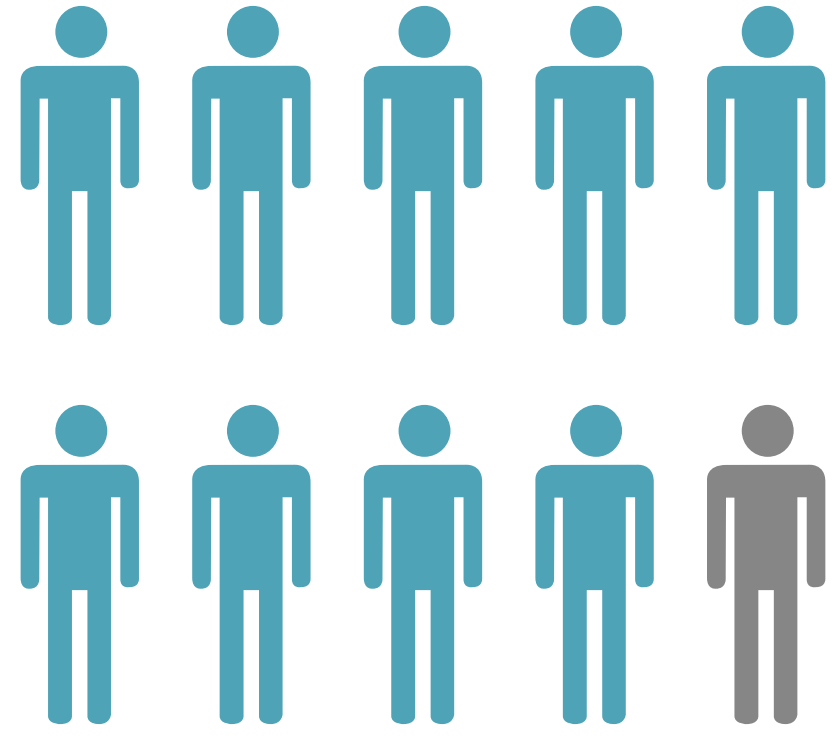
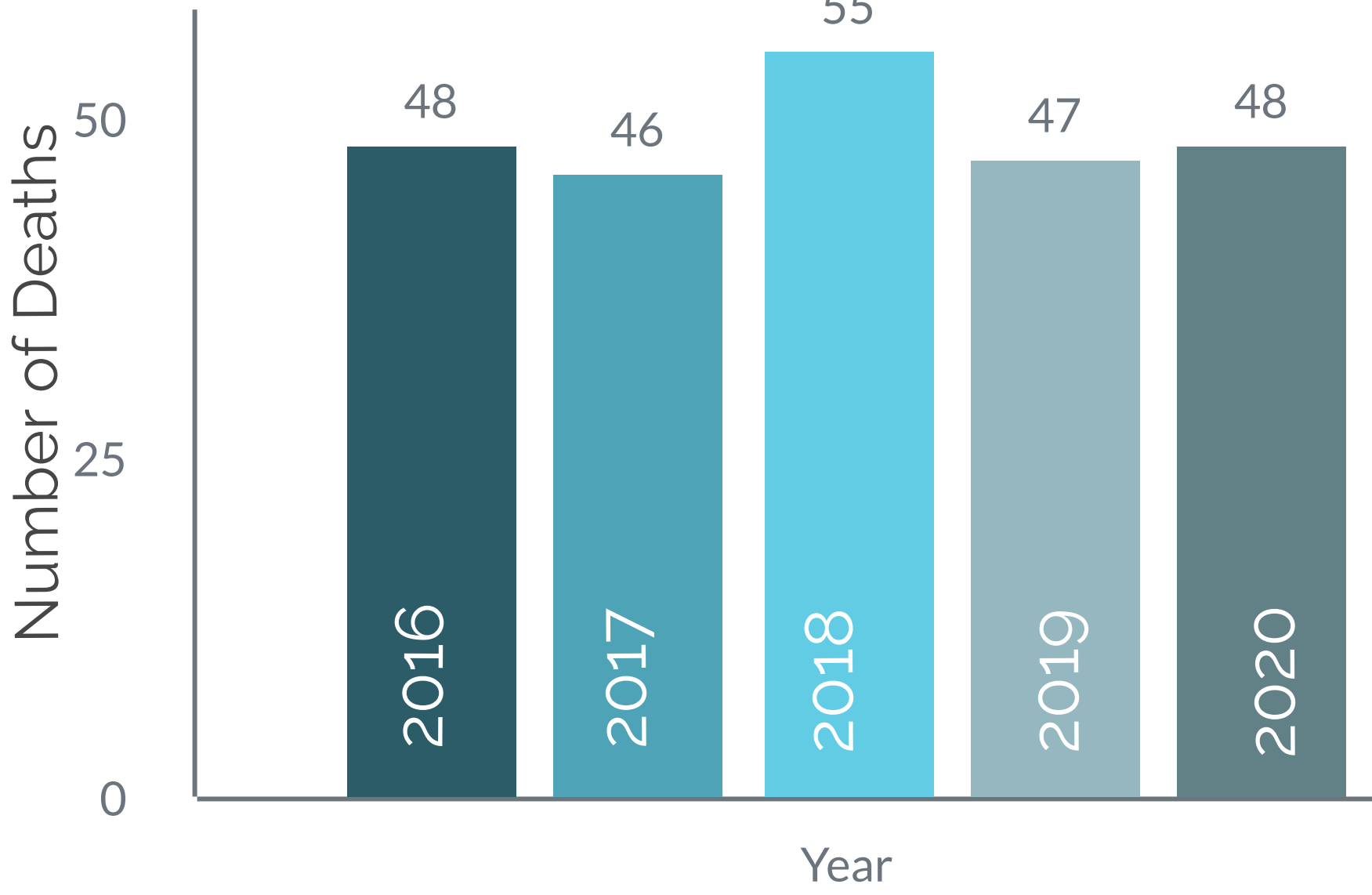
Rate of Suicide Deaths in Mesa County, Colorado and the United States, 2009-2020



*Rates may not match previous versions as this data is updated annually. This chart reflects the most recent data available.

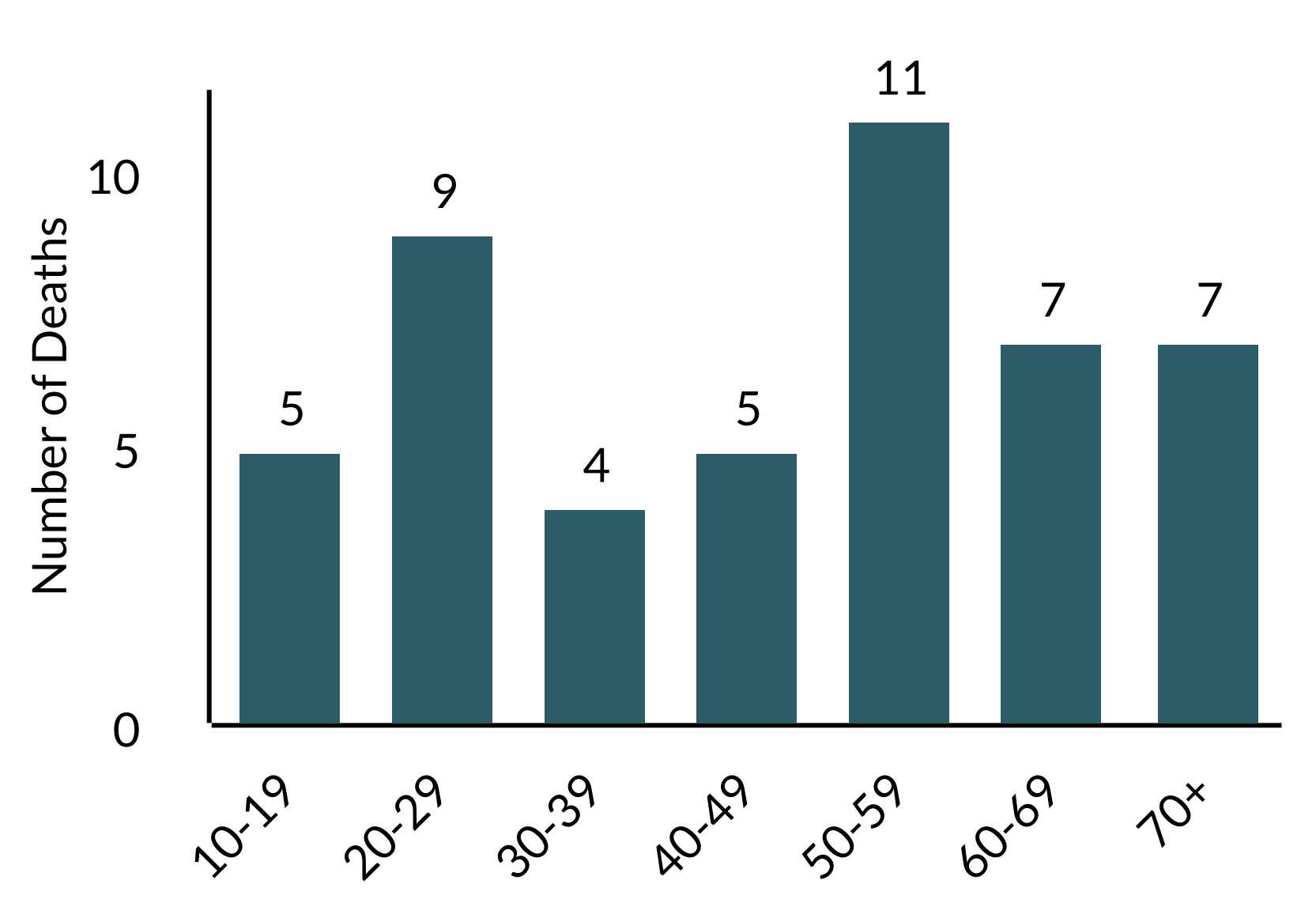
Deaths by Suicide

Suicide Deaths by Year, 2016-2020

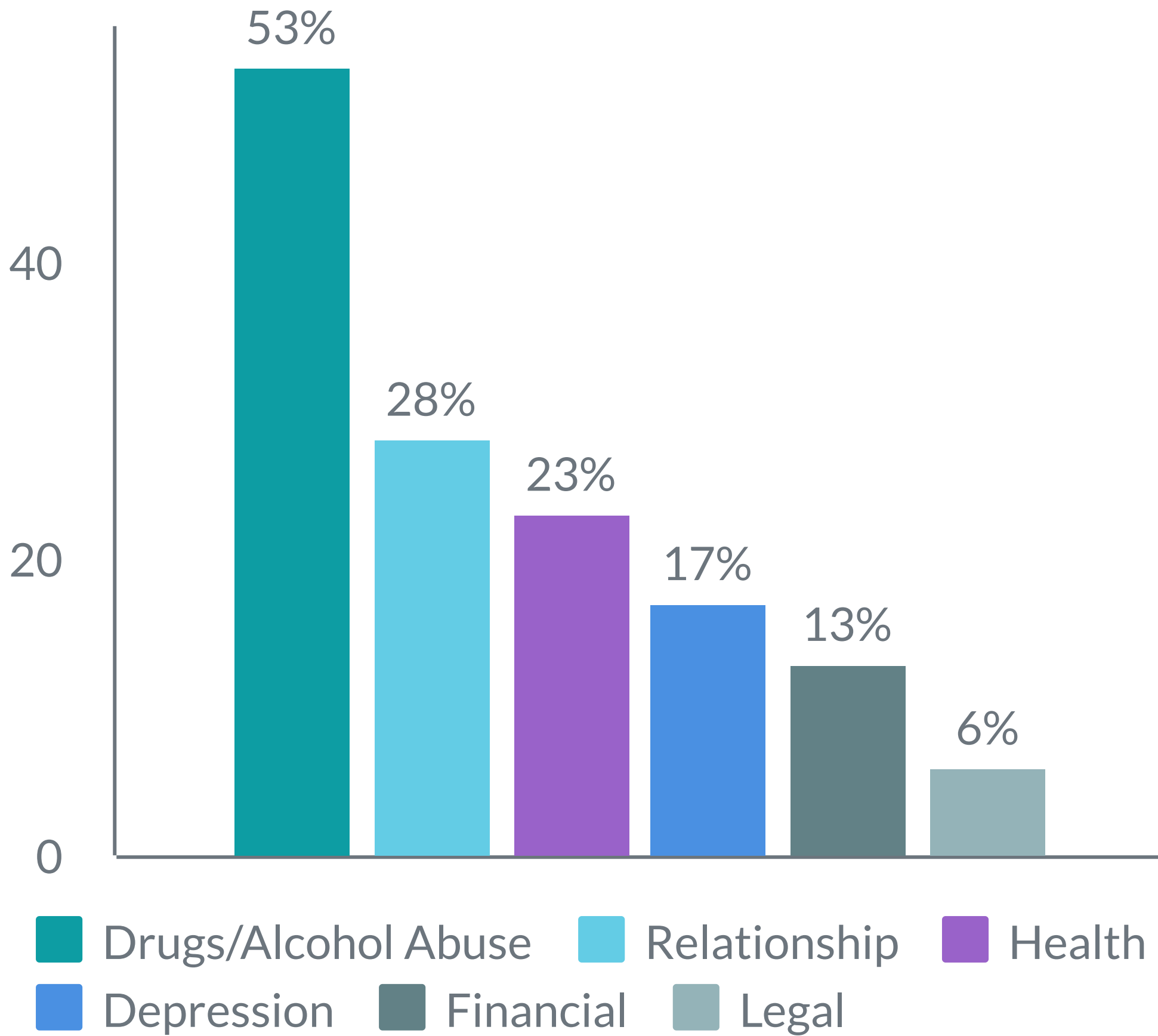


9 in 10 were male.

Suicide Deaths by Age Range, 2020

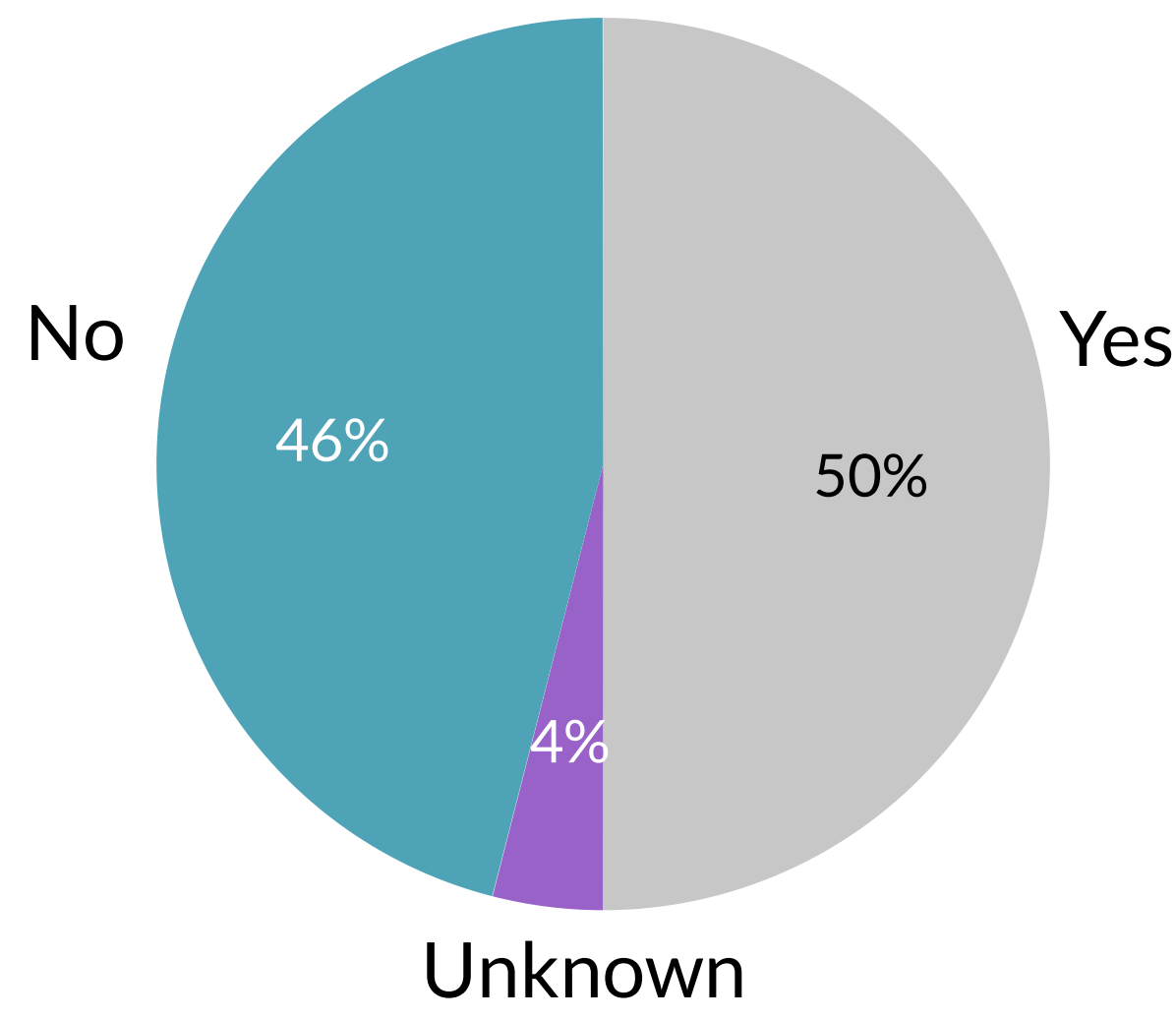


Stressors

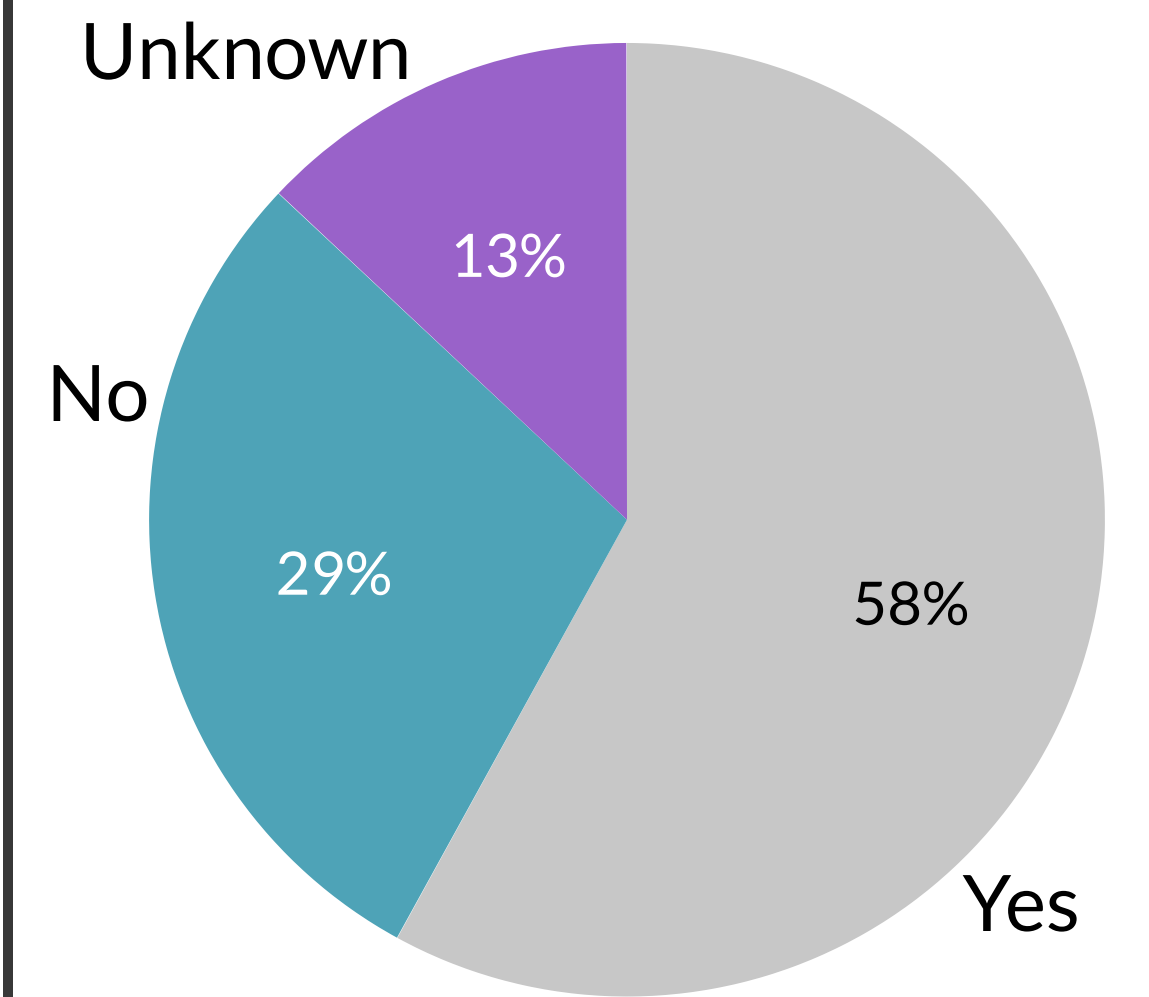


*Percents total more than 100 because more than one stressor might be present.

Drug and/or Alcohol Involvement



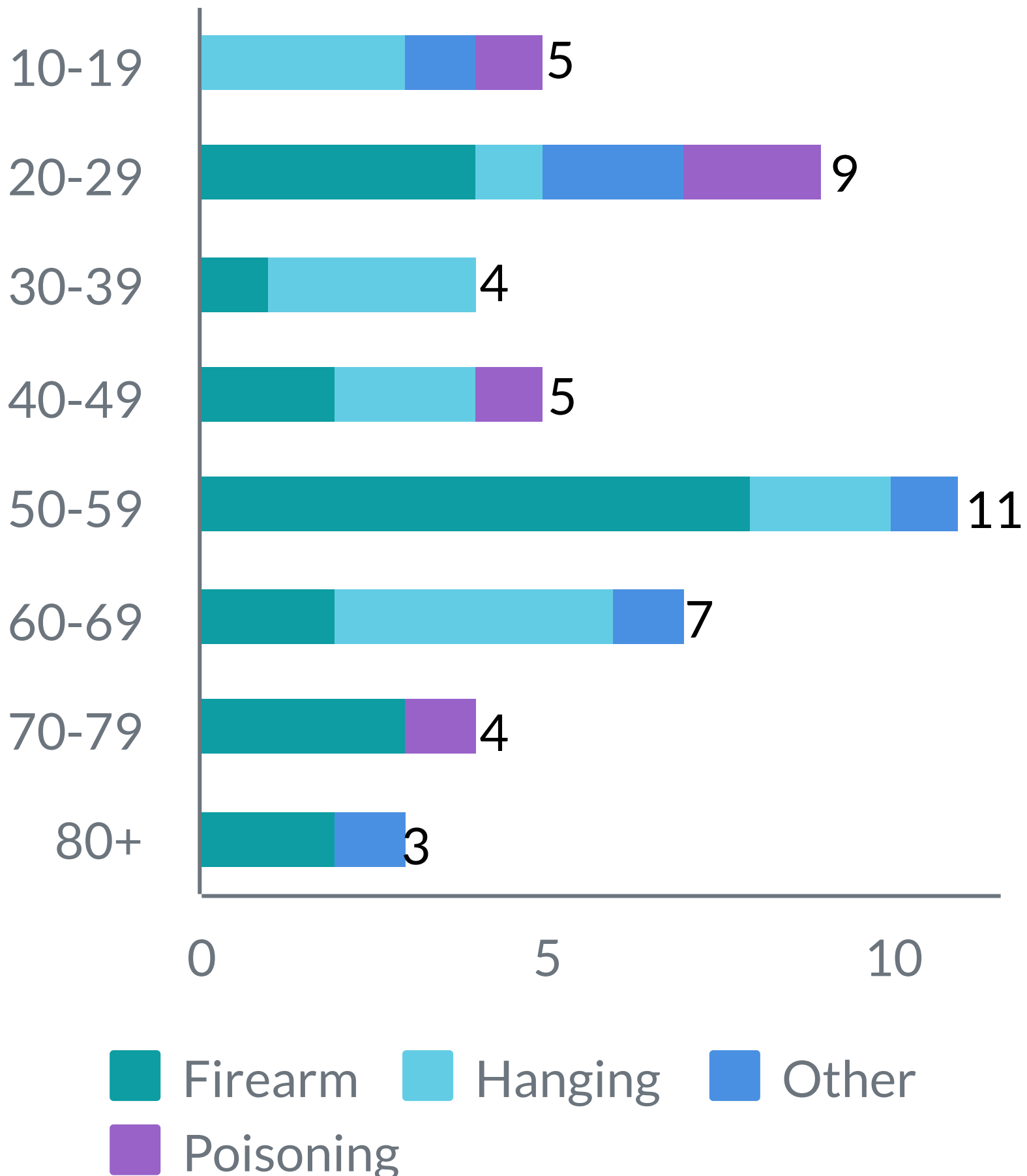
Previous Suicide Attempt*



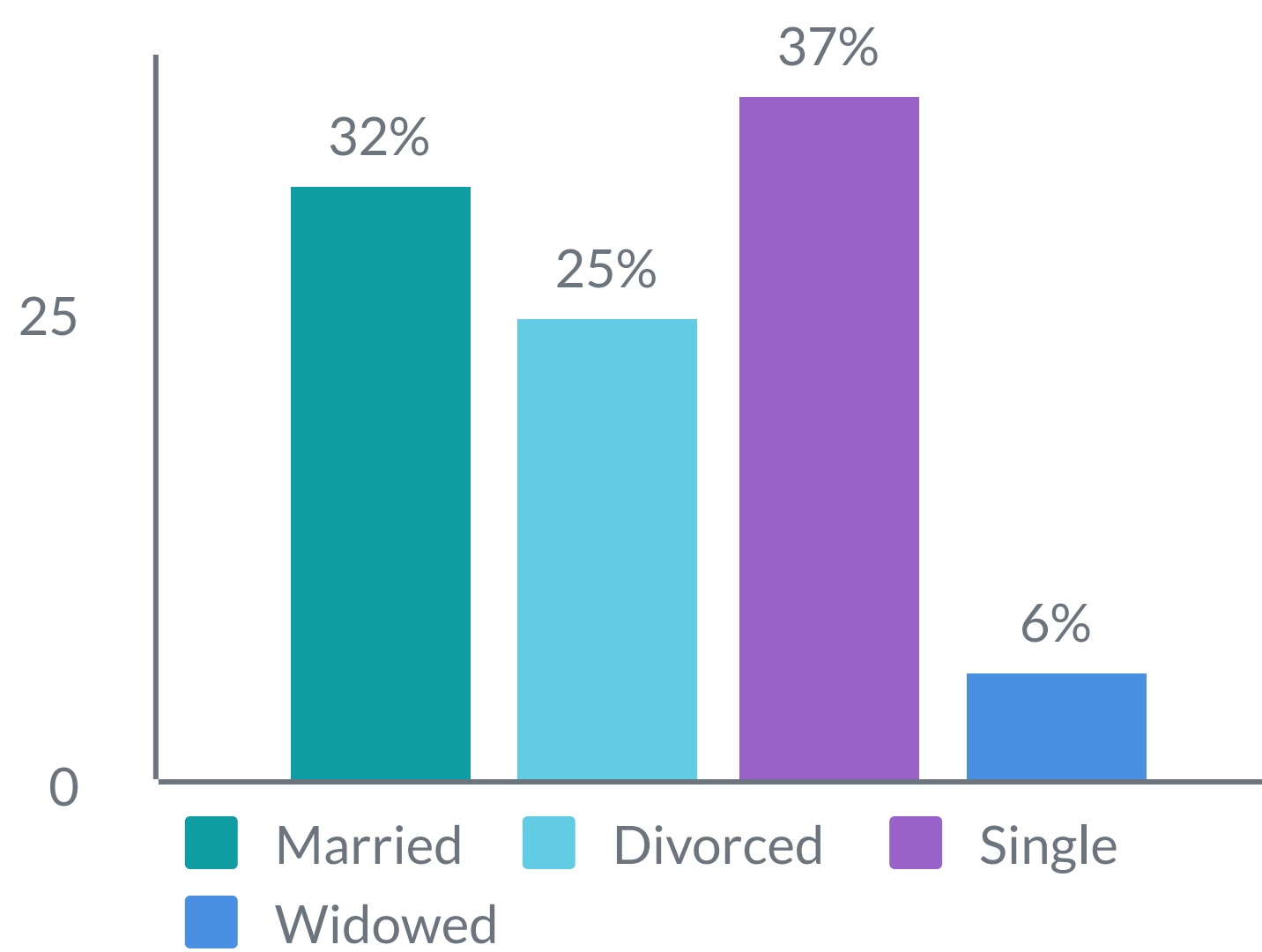
*Reported by family or friend, may be an underestimate.

Between 2016 and 2020, there were no statistically significant trends in monthly or seasonal timing of suicide deaths.

Counts of Method by Age

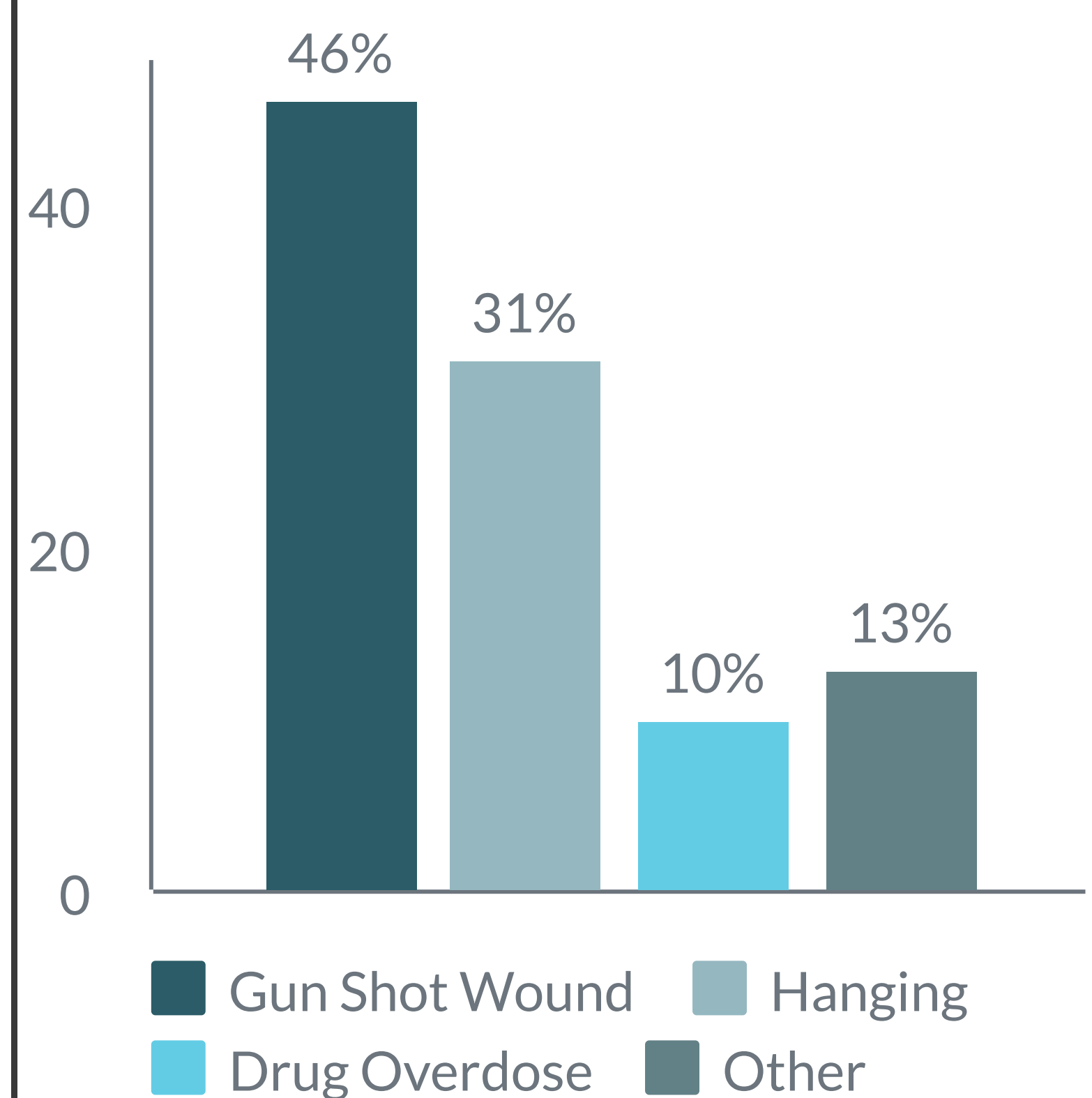


Suicide Deaths by Marital Status, 2016-2020

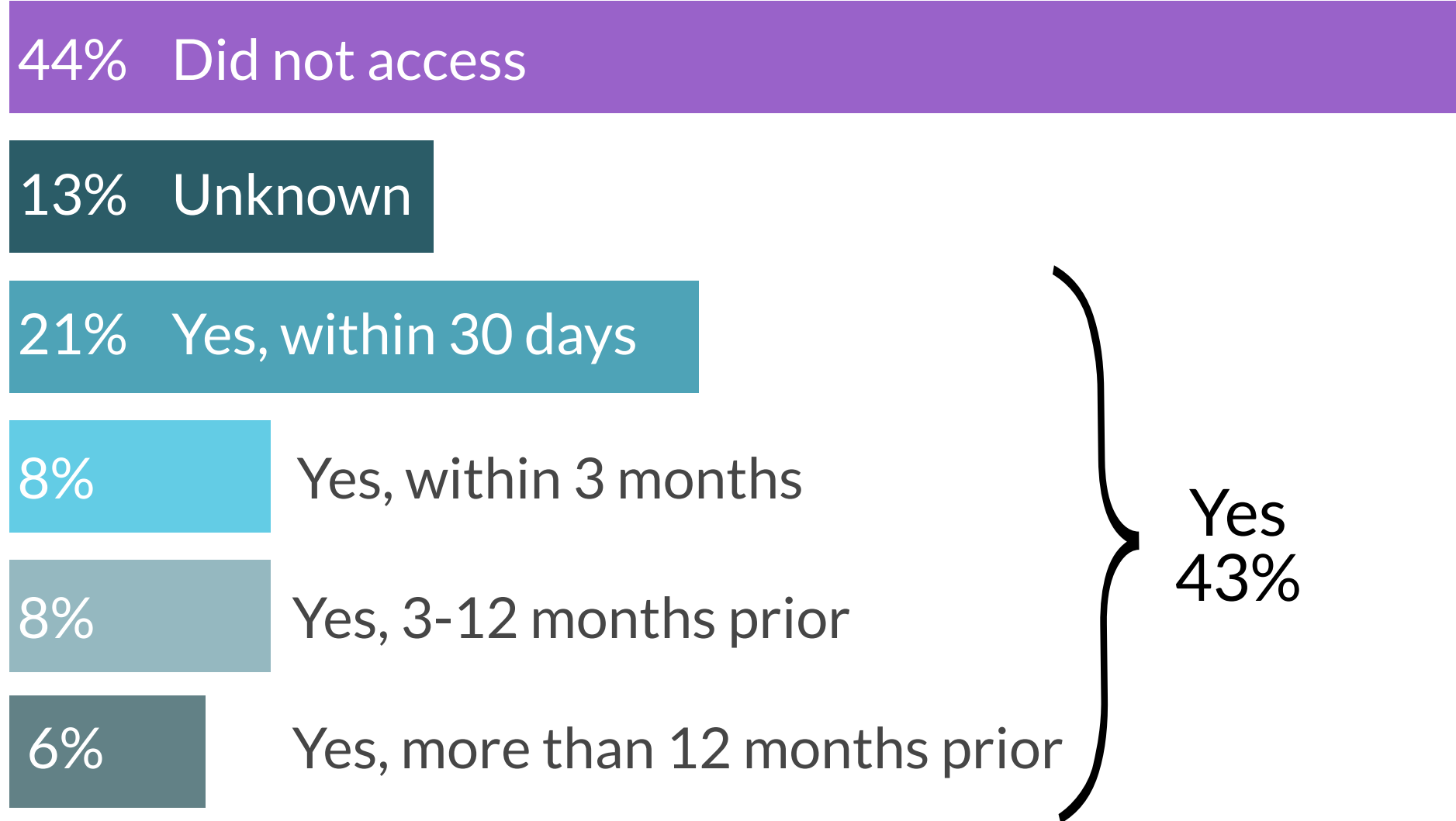


Deaths by marital status varies considerably year to year, so data is presented as a five-year aggregate to better illustrate the general trend.

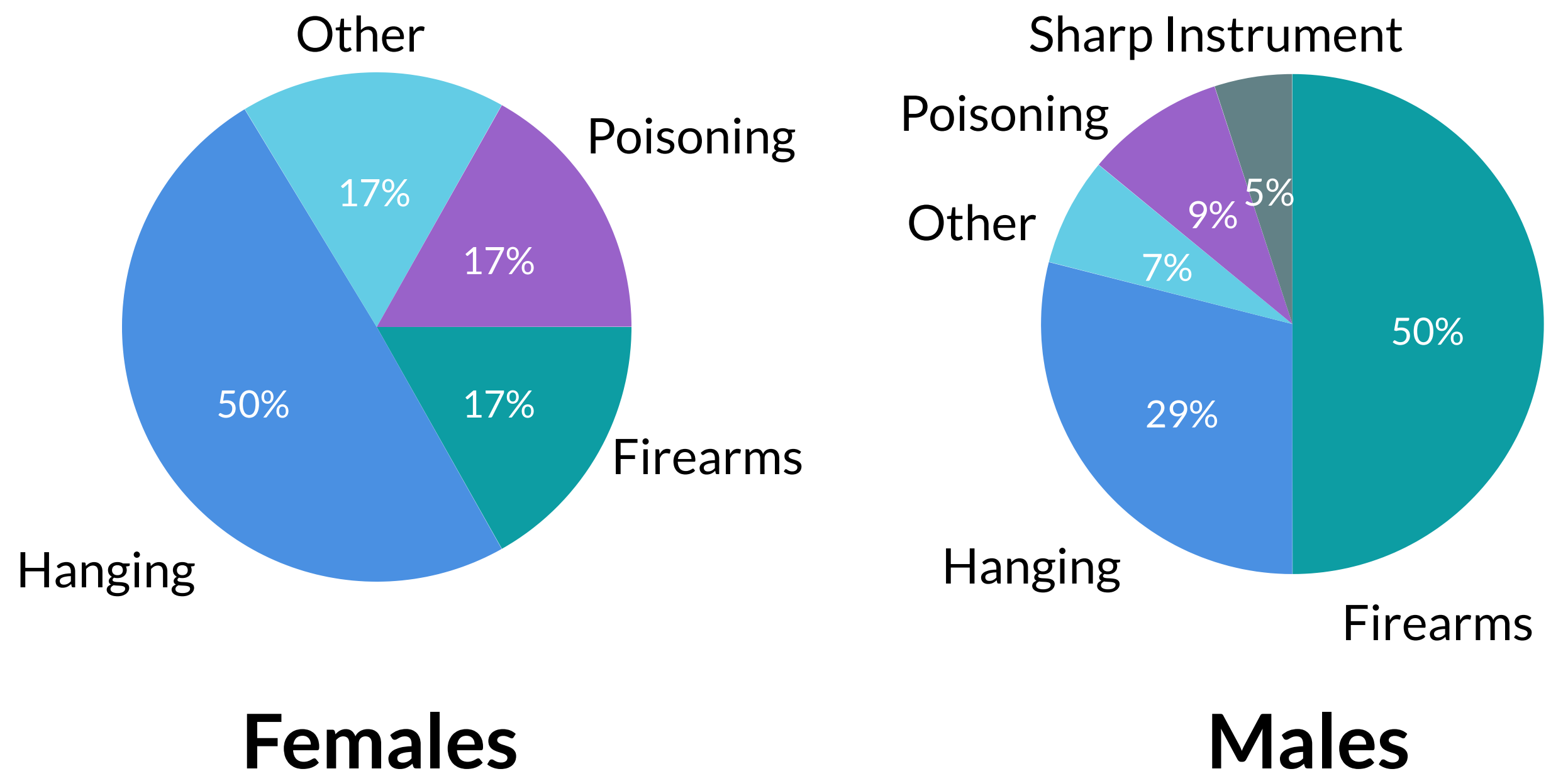
Method



Access to Mental Health Services



Method by Gender



Suicide Attempts and Ideation

Data was collected on suicide attempts and incidents of suicidal ideation resulting in an emergency department visit in Mesa County during 2020. A majority of the data are based on ICD-10 primary diagnosis code, which limits inclusion of attempts by methods other than drug overdose. Data were reported by St. Mary's Medical Center, Community Hospital, VA Western Colorado Health System, and Colorado Canyons Hospital and Medical Center. The data does not include any attempts that were directly admitted to West Springs Hospital.

Approximately **6 in 10** attempts were female.



*While attempts are more likely to be female, ideation was more evenly split in 2018 and 2020, and more male in 2019.

299

2019
315

ED Visits for Ideation*

*Suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thought, is thinking about, considering, or planning suicide. It can range from a passing thought to detailed planning. Estimate based on emergency room data.

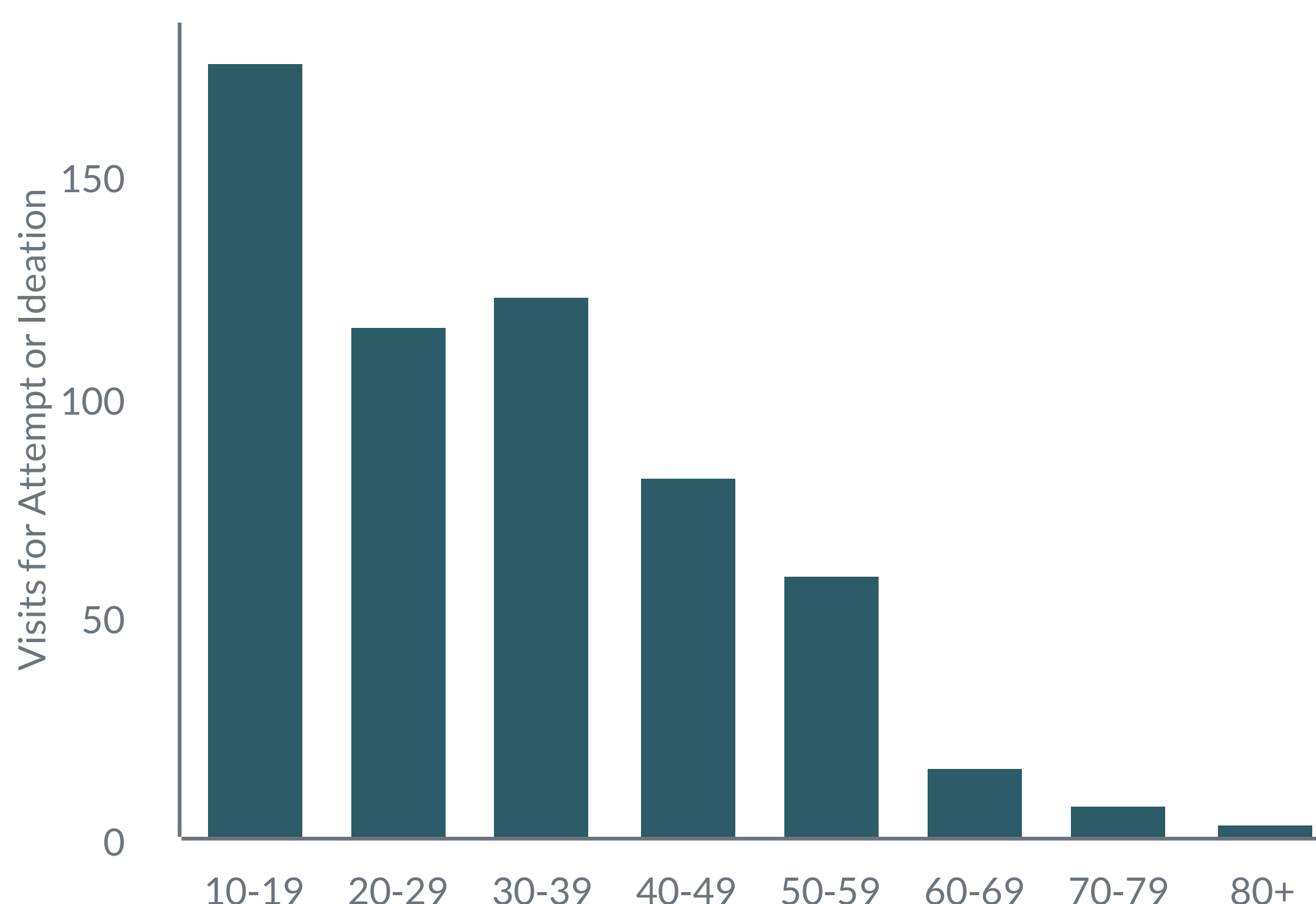
287

2019
309

ED Visits for Attempts*

*Estimate based on emergency department data, excluding suicidal ideation.

Age Distribution, Suicide Attempts and Ideation



Top 3 Causes of Overdose

1. Over the counter pain medications*
2. Antidepressants
3. Benzodiazepines

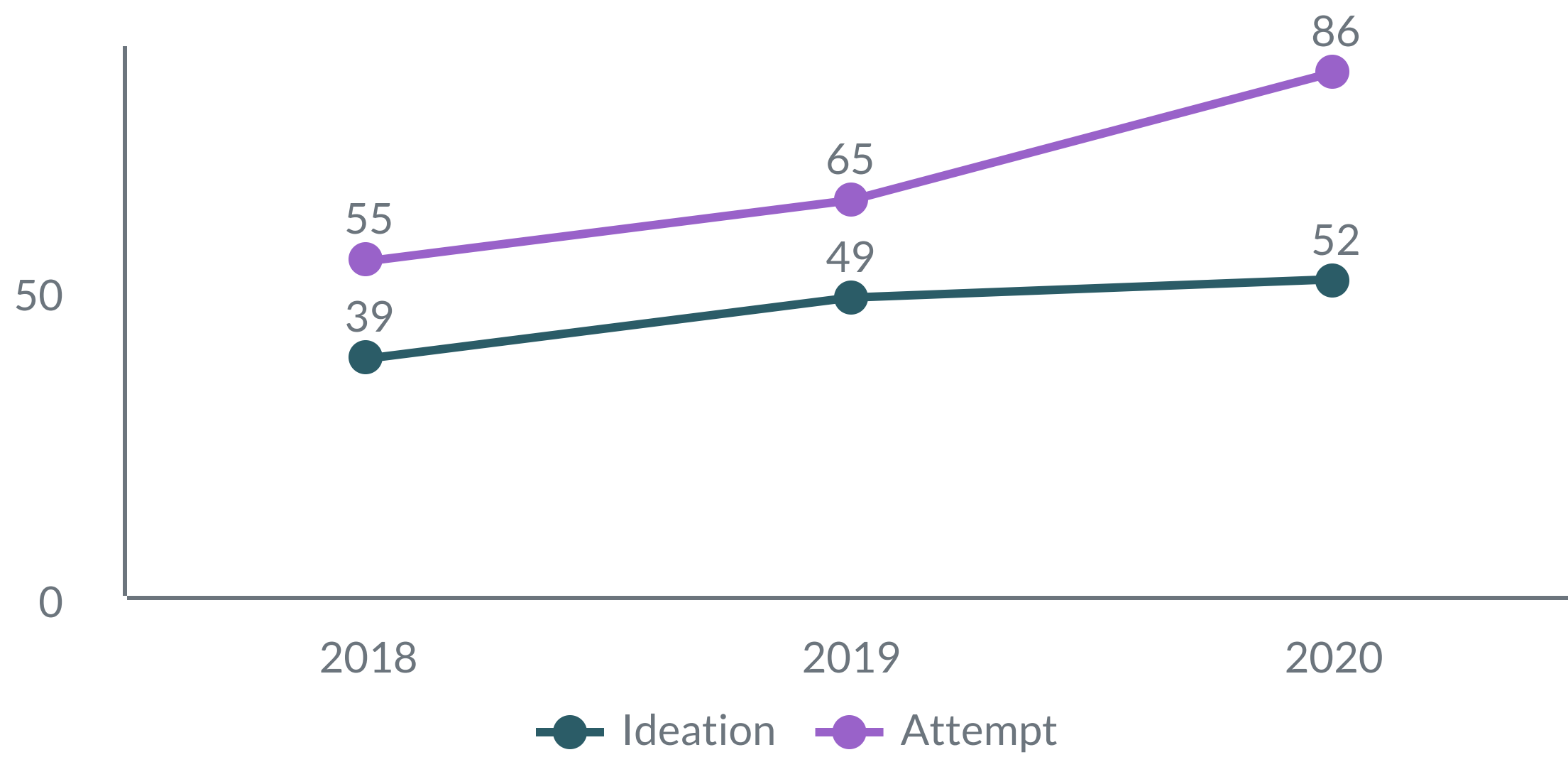
*OTC pain medications is a new, aggregate category. Without it, the top three causes are the same as 2019.

More than
234

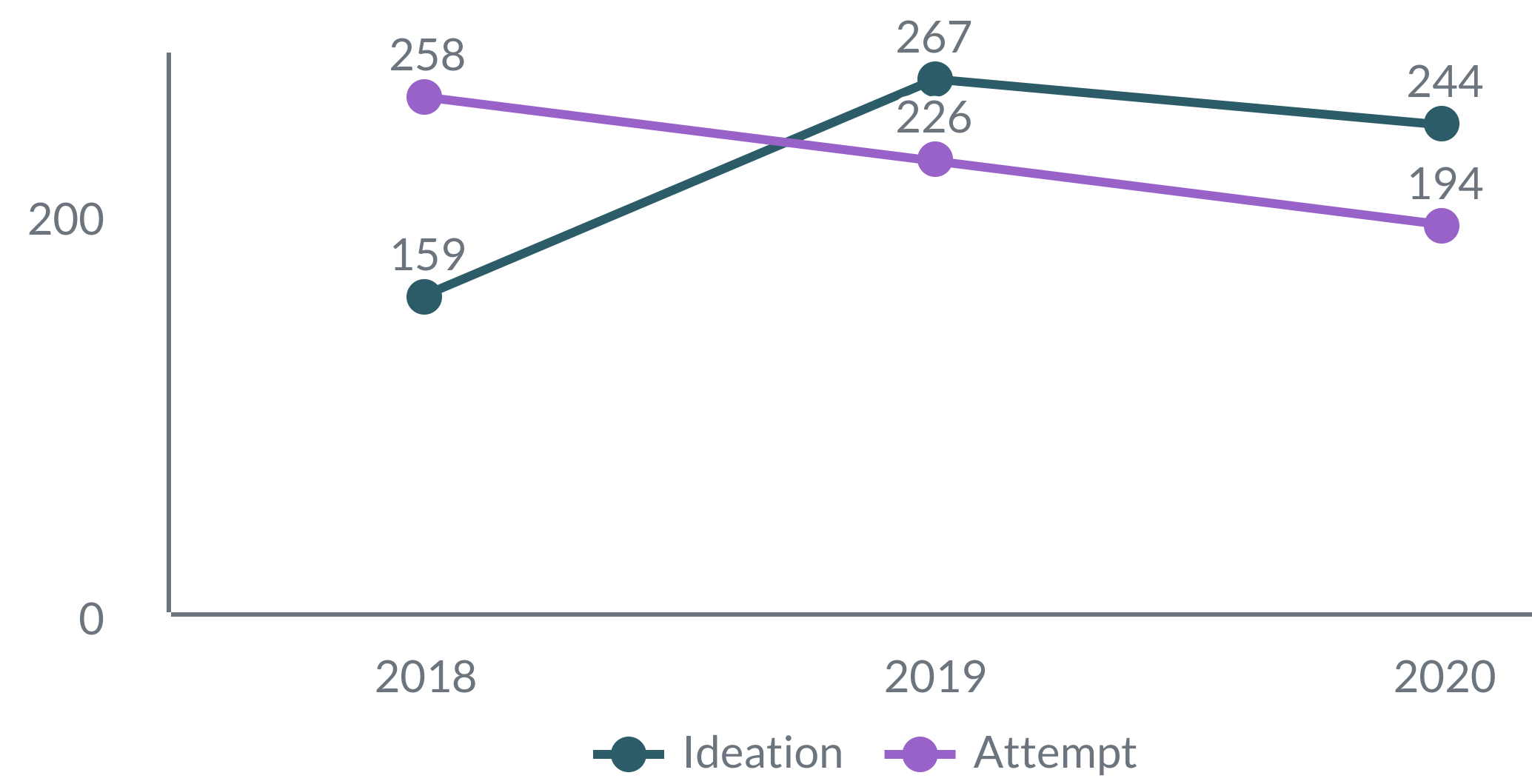
people affected by suicide participated in online or in-person **support or skill-building** events and groups through Postvention Alliance.

Ideation and Attempt Counts in Youth and Adults, 2018-2020

Youth



Adults



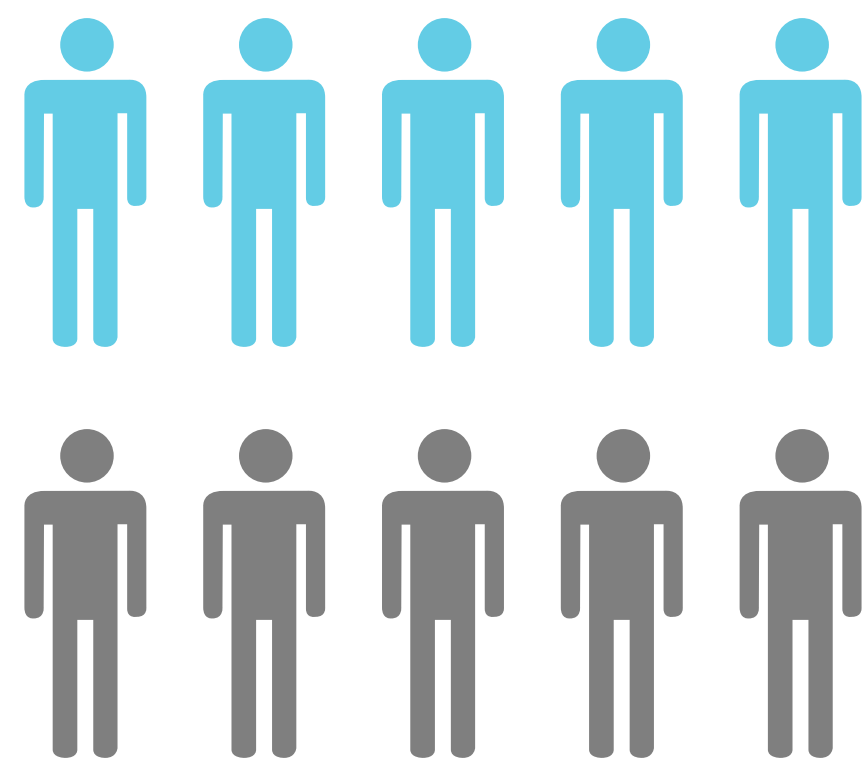
Suicide Risk Screeners

When school personnel are concerned about a student, they make a referral to trained staff to complete a Suicide Risk Screener (SRS). This assessment determines the level of intervention required and can initiate immediate safety planning. The number of referrals is related to staff awareness and concern about behaviors that may be warning signs of suicidal risk.



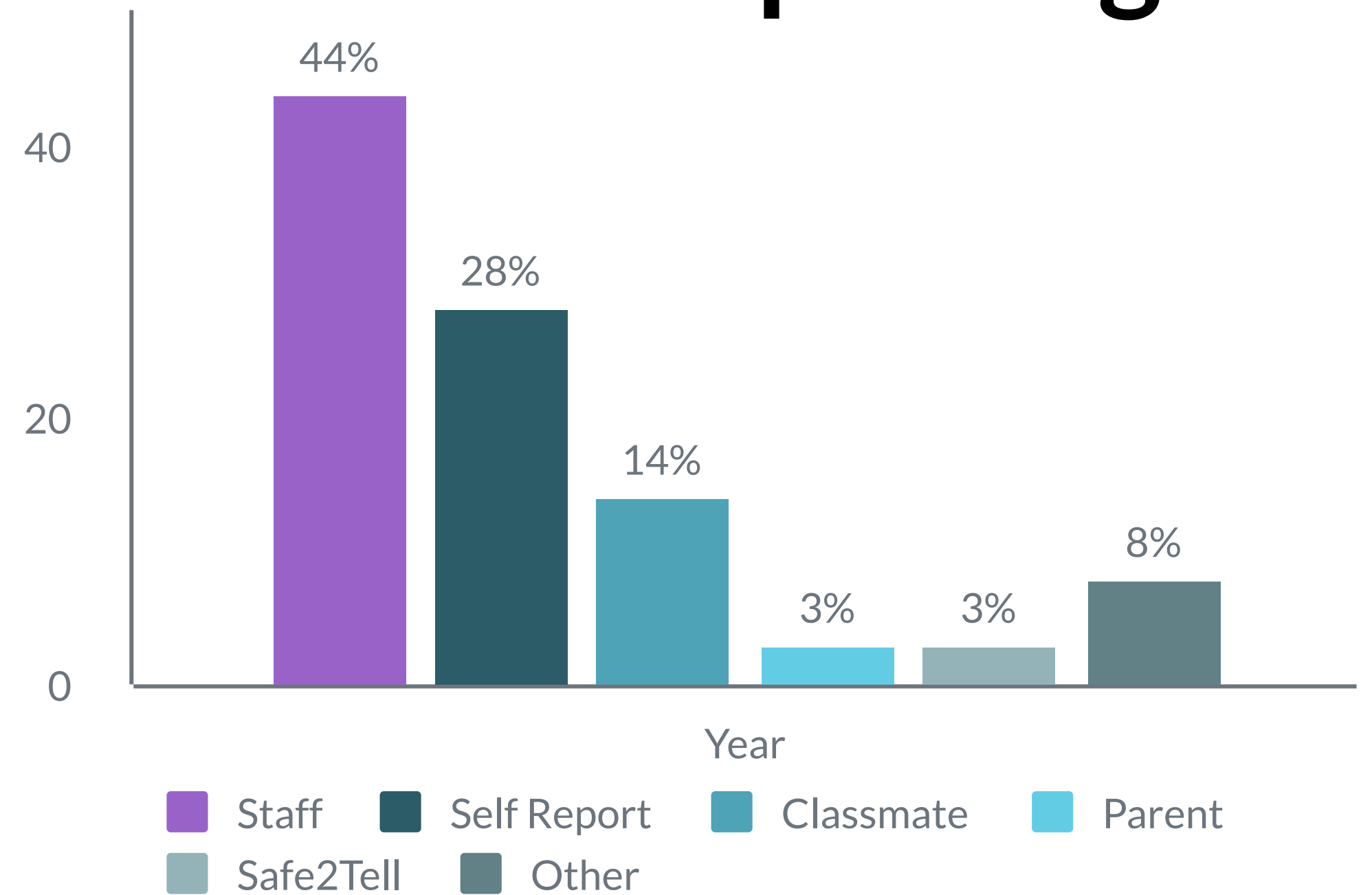
Screeners*

*Data from School District 51 for school year 2019-2020 (August-May).

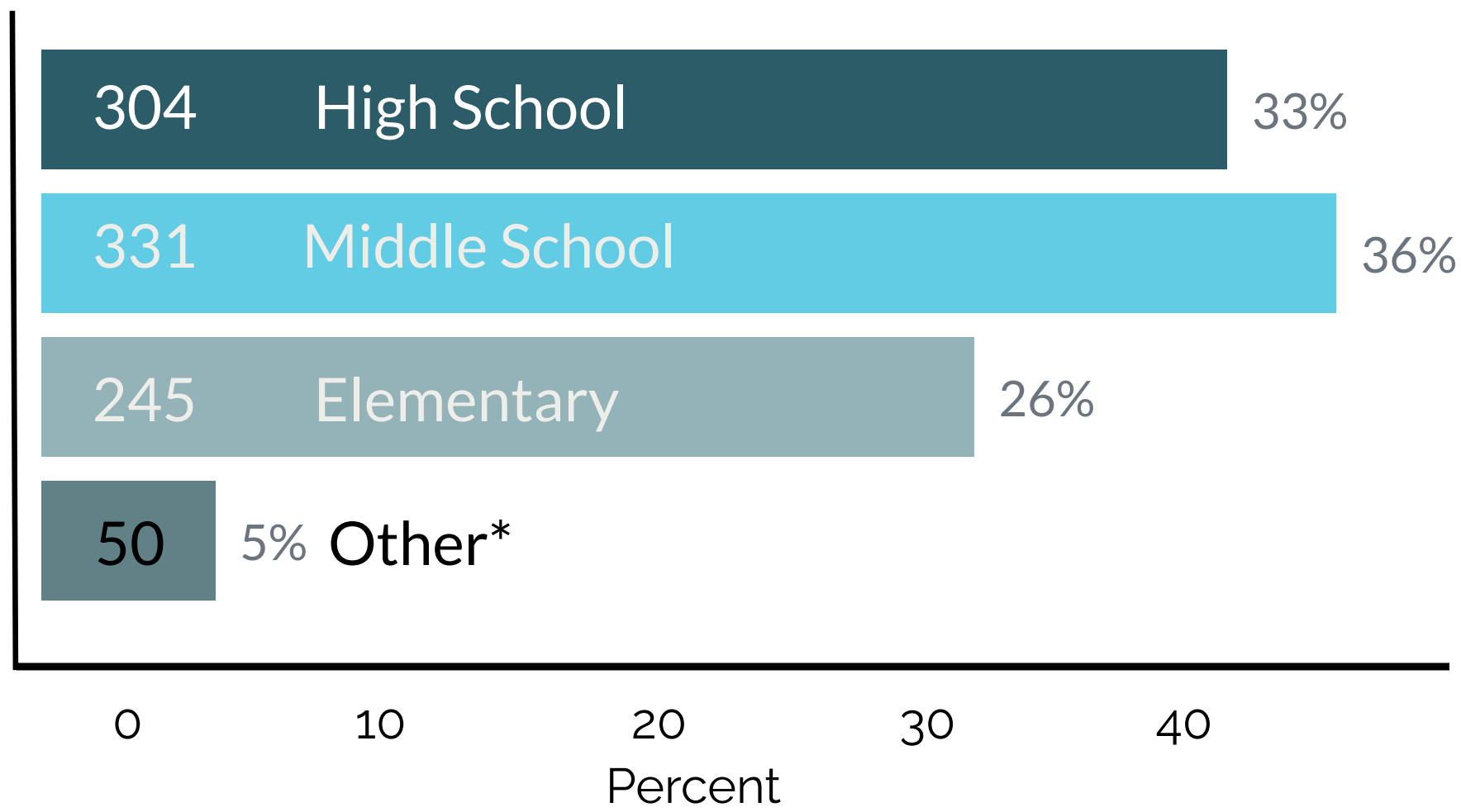


About **half** were male.

Who is reporting?



School Level



*Includes schools with combined school types, including K-12 schools.

8th grade

highest rate of screeners.

Top 4 Factors

Protective

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Mentors
4. Healthy Activities

Risk

1. Family Problems
2. School Work
3. Conflict
4. Isolation

8.0%

of middle school, 4.4% of high school, 2.8% of other school, and 2.6% of elementary school students received a risk screener.

Safe2Tell

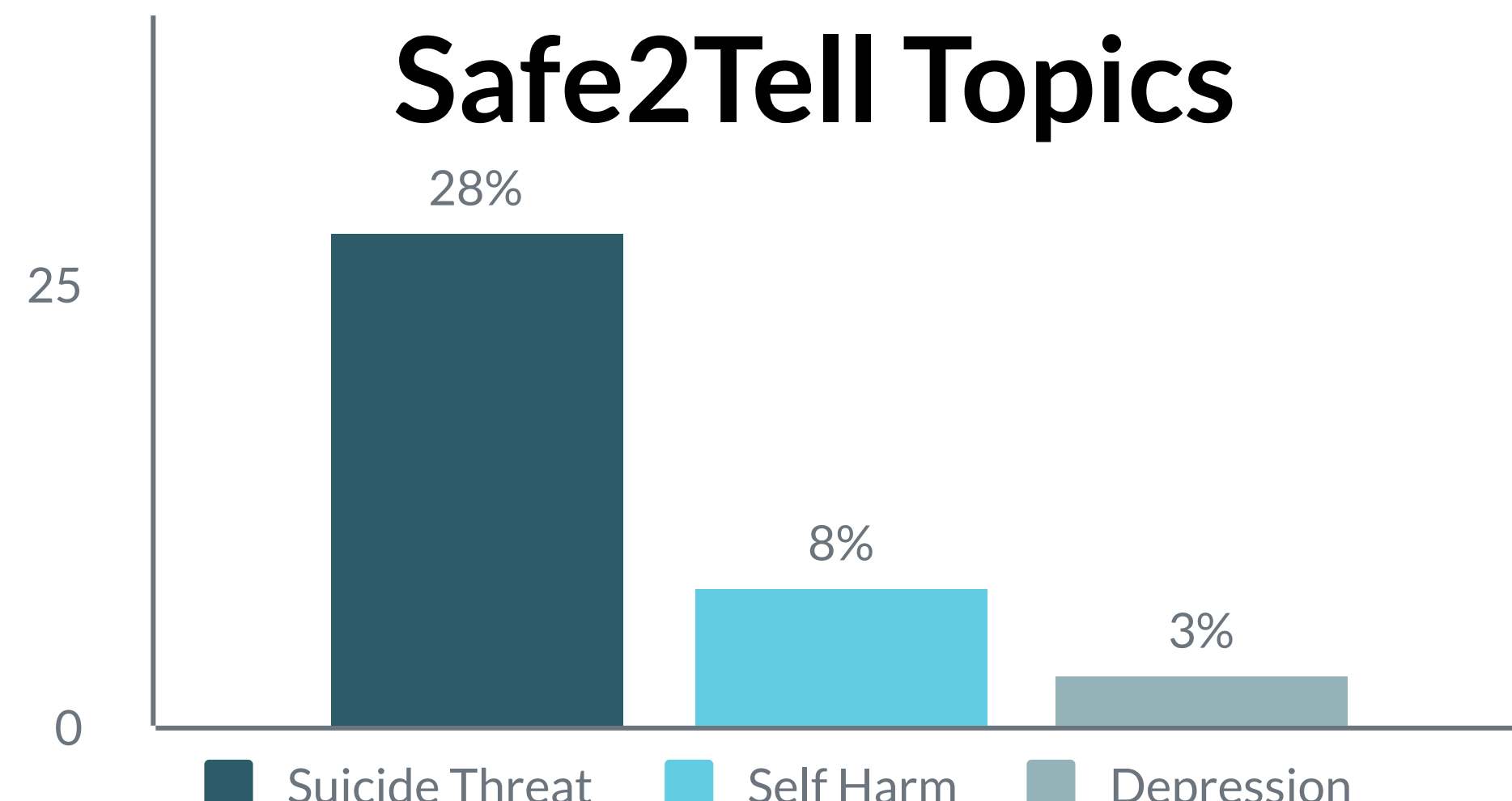
Safe2Tell is an anonymous way for students, parents, school staff and community members to report concerns regarding their safety or the safety of others.



Reports*

*Data from School District 51 for school year 2019-2020 (August-May).

Safe2Tell Topics



Community Efforts

Public Health Recommendations

- Increase connectedness to enhance social capital.
- Maintain educational programming to generate community awareness and reduction of mental health stigma.
- Expand access to suicide care.
- Work through the Mesa County Suicide Prevention Council to help our community move through and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Expand amount and variety of support services for attempt and loss survivors.
- Strengthen economic support to increase stability in food, housing, and employment.
- Improve experiences for patients seeking mental health care services.
- Determine best resources to support individuals experiencing multiple types of crises.

Prevention Strategies

Access to Care

- Implementation of Zero Suicide, a system-wide, organizational commitment to safer suicide care at St. Mary's Hospital and Mind Springs Health.
- D51 utilized an enhanced suicide screening tool and have increased training among staff.

Increase Connectedness

- Community Transformation Group (CTG) in Clifton.
- Fruita Youth Initiative (FYI) and Fruita Youth Action Council (FYAC) supporting youth in the Fruita Community.
- Promotion of Colorado 2-1-1 for local community resources and referrals.

Economic Stability

- Local support of Blueprint to End Hunger initiative (Statewide).
- Continued efforts to increase licensed child care spots through the Child Care 8,000 initiative.

Lethal Means Safety

- 8 prescription take back locations across Mesa County.
- Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM) training for Behavioral Health Providers.
- VA distributed approximately 400 cable gun locks through community partners.

Education and Awareness

- 588 community members trained in evidence-based suicide prevention (this number was reduced by COVID-19 impact).
- In 2020, Mesa County had 8 ASIST trainers and 6 QPR facilitators.
- MCPH awarded SAMHSA grant to support at-risk youth with life skills trainings.

Postvention Services

- Community events to raise awareness such as Virtual World Suicide Prevention Day Walk.
- Loss survivor and impacted family and friends support groups and trainings.
- Media training and implementation of safe reporting guidelines.

Data

Finding and using data is critical to effective prevention.

Data is essential for:

- Understanding the scope of the problem
- Identifying risk and protective factors
- Program implementation
- Evaluation of current efforts

Community Partners

- Mesa County Coroner's Office
- St. Mary's Medical Center
- Community Hospital
- Colorado Canyons Hospital & Medical Center
- School District 51
- Mind Springs Health
- 911 Dispatch
- VA Western Colorado Health Care System
- Colorado Mesa University
- Workforce Center
- Mesa County Suicide Prevention Council

Colorado National Collaborative

The Colorado National Collaborative (CNC) is a partnership of local, state and national scientists and public health professionals working with health and social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, businesses, academic organizations and Colorado residents to identify, promote, and implement comprehensive state and community-based strategies for suicide prevention in Colorado. Mesa County is a proud participant in the CNC and is working towards the goal of reducing suicide by 20% by the year 2024.

Sources

- Mesa County Public Health Suicide Attempt Surveillance, 2020
- Mesa County Coroner's Office, Suicide Death Data
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- School District 51, 2019-2020

