

# Life Interrupted: Pandemic related life disruptions among young adults with mental illness in the U.S.

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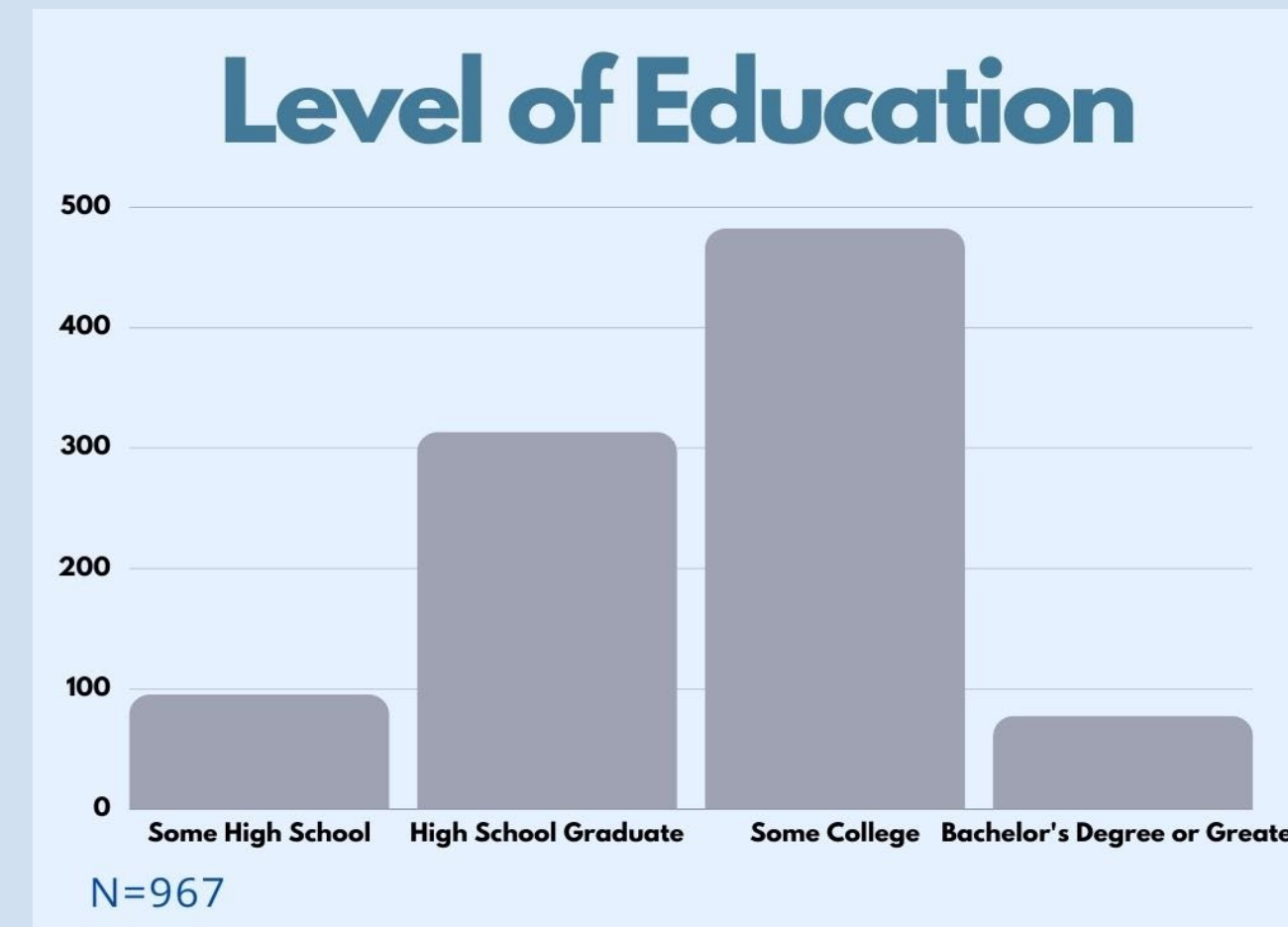
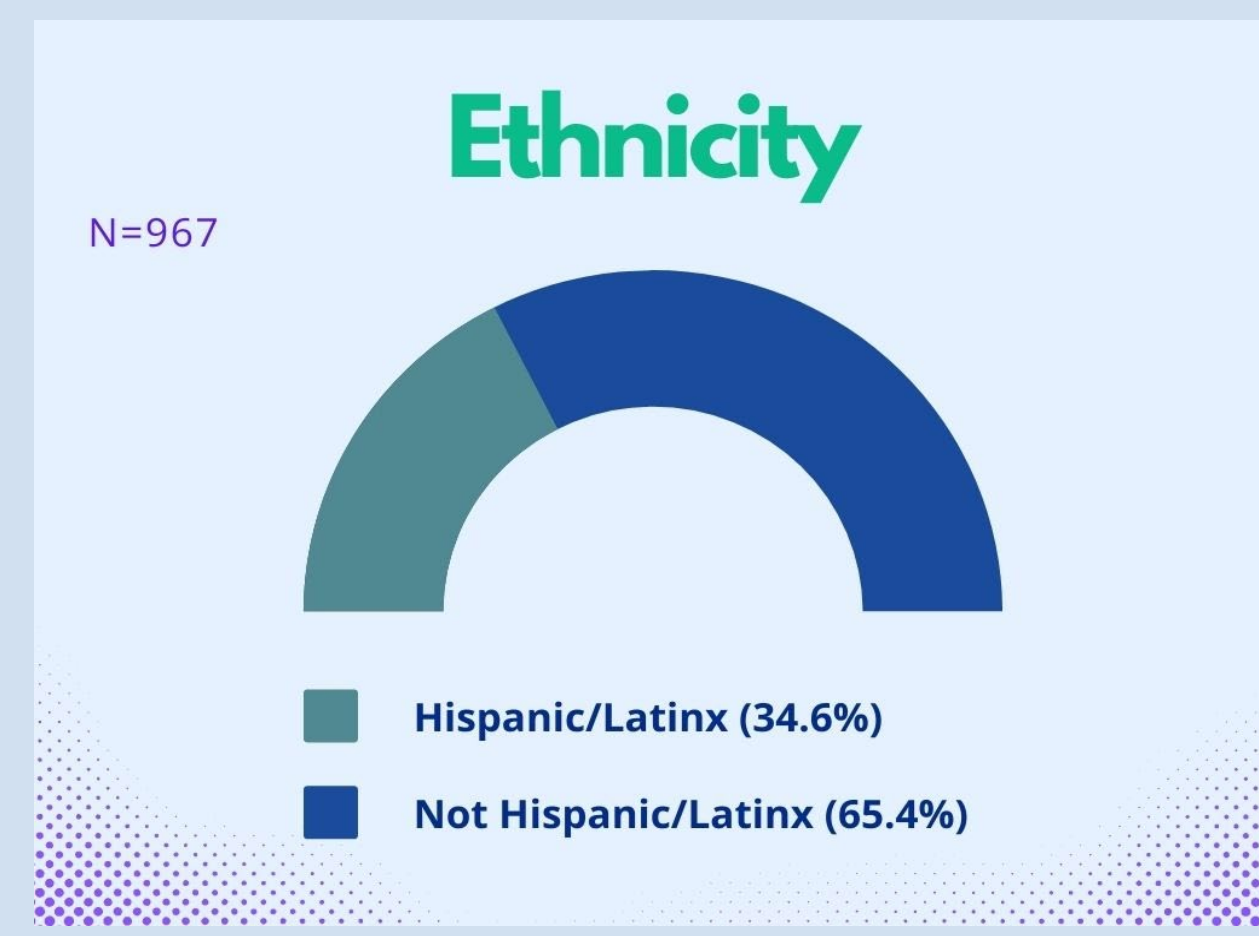
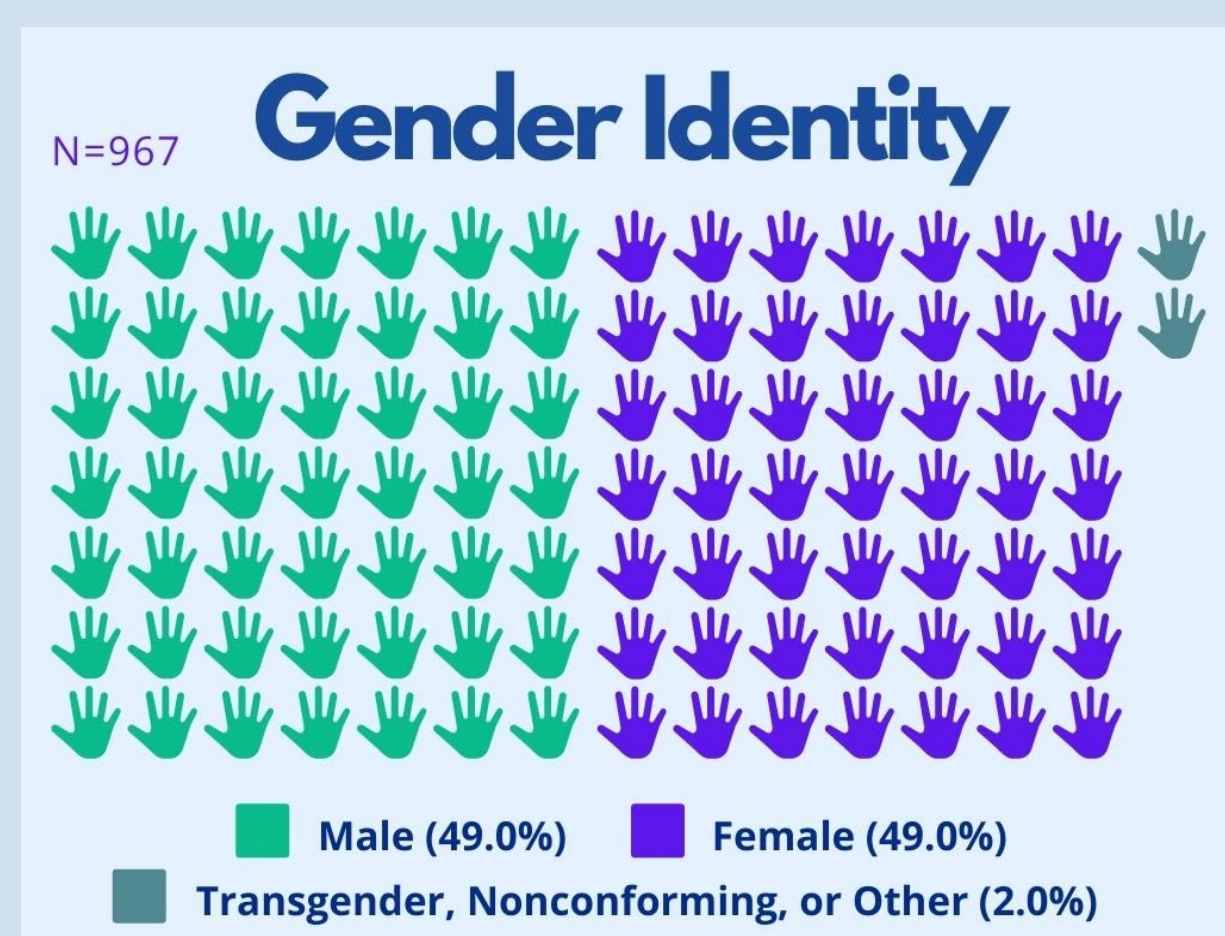
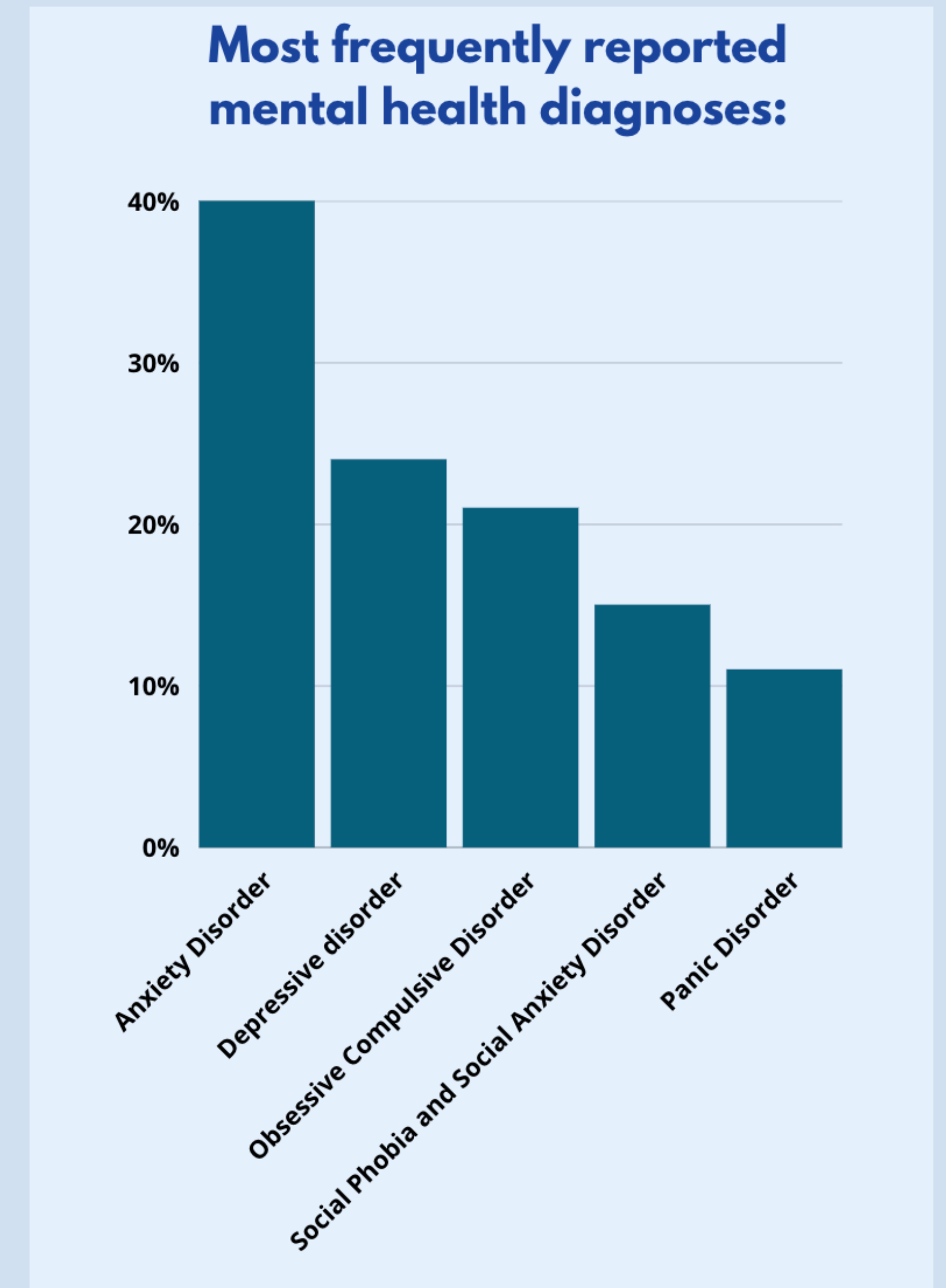
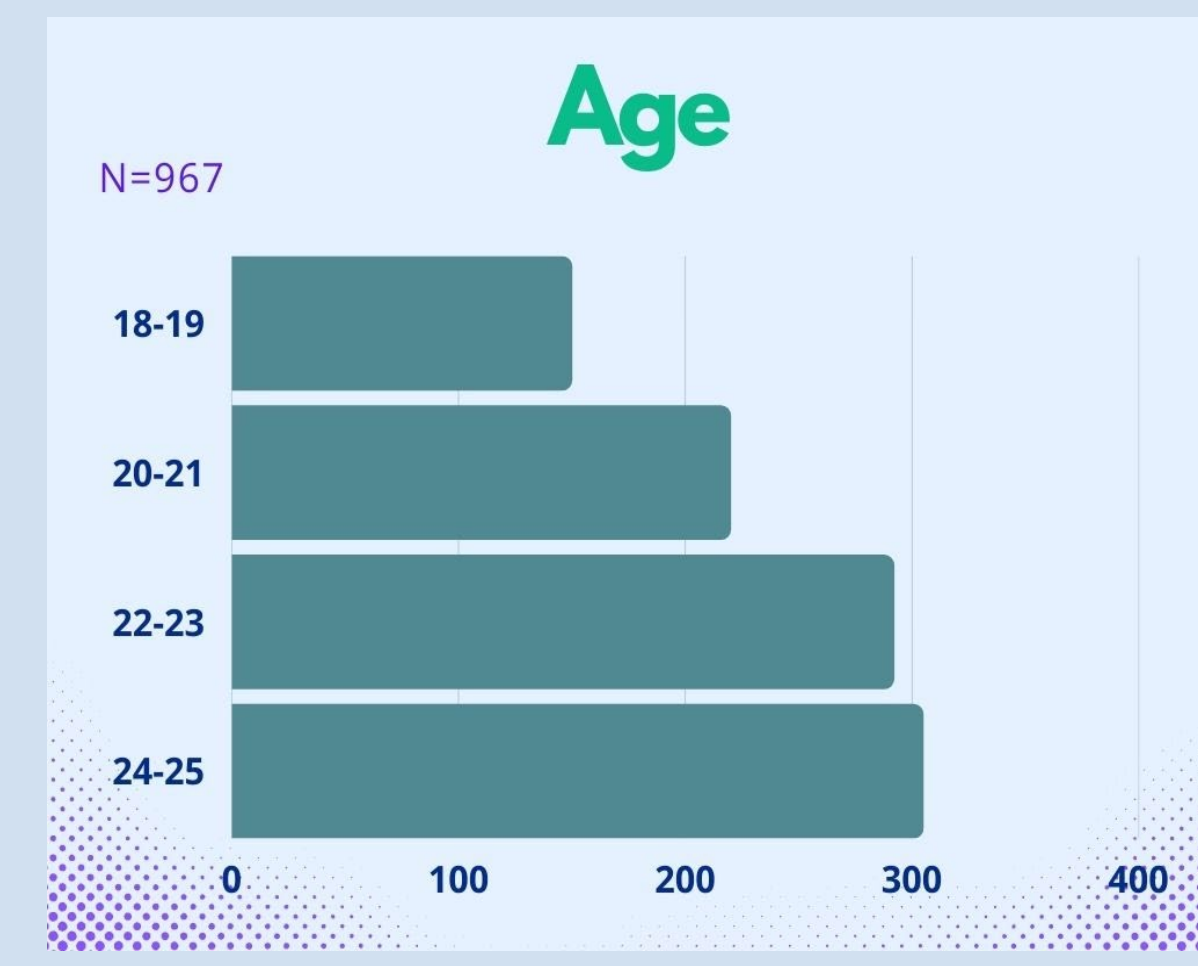
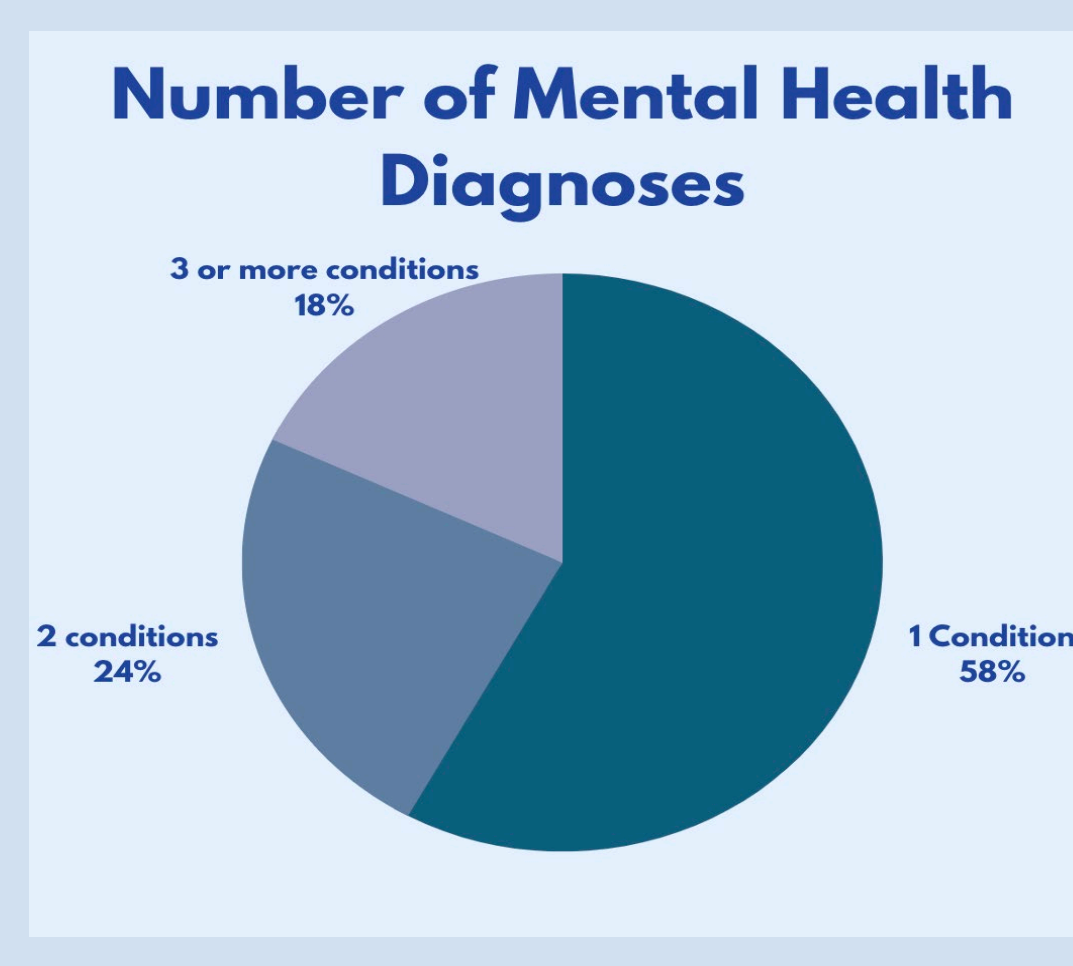
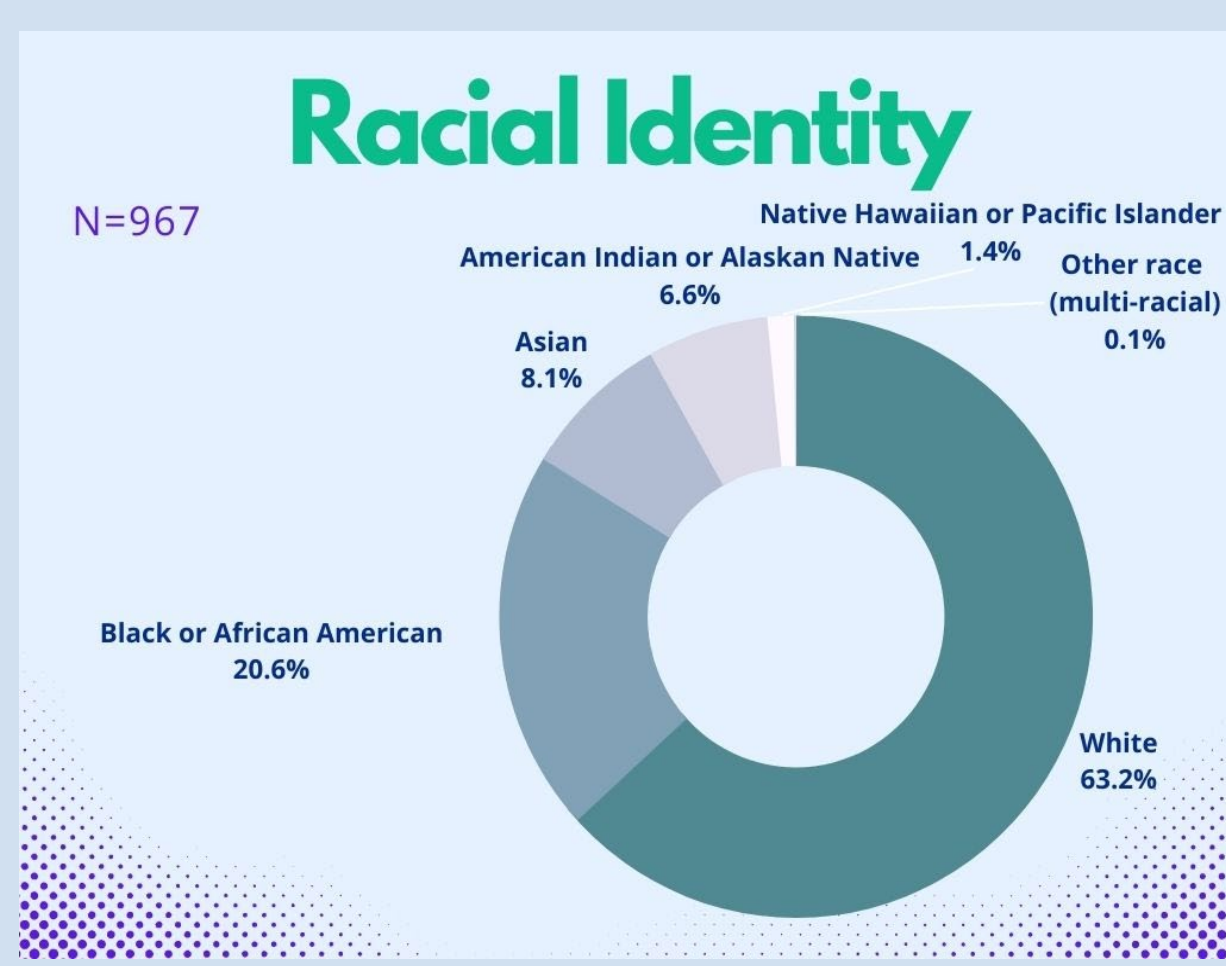
## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the lives young adults, affecting their relationships, health behaviors, academics, and professional lives.<sup>1</sup> Young adults with serious mental illnesses are no exception, with research suggesting a relapse in symptoms among these youth during periods of lockdown.<sup>2</sup> A large body of research prior to the pandemic demonstrated that many youth with long-term conditions, including mental illnesses, experience delays in reaching expected milestones and barriers in the transition to adulthood.<sup>3,4</sup> This project is investigating the impact of the pandemic on young adults with serious mental illnesses during normative life transitions.

## Methods

- Young adults, aged 18-25 years, living with serious mental illnesses (N=967) voluntarily participated in an online Qualtrics survey with a \$10 incentive, from March 26 to June 4, 2021.
- Recruited from across the U.S. via social media, email, and web announcements.
- Measures included the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), the Generalized Anxiety Disorder questionnaire-7 (GAD-7), aspects of well-being, and demographic information.
- Also assessed was the impact of COVID-19 on mental health, physical health, and daily lives, along with disruptions to normative life transitions.

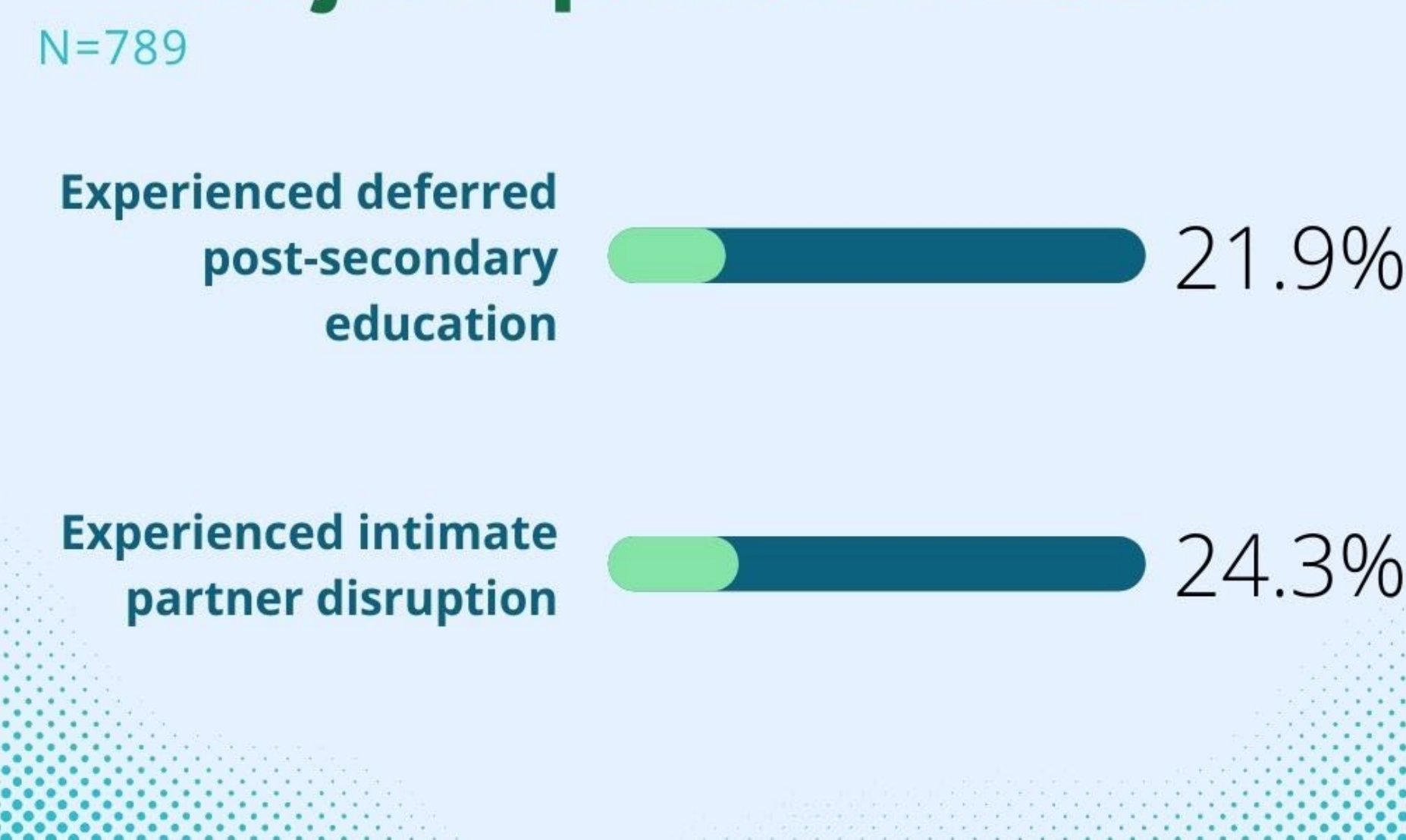
## Results N=967



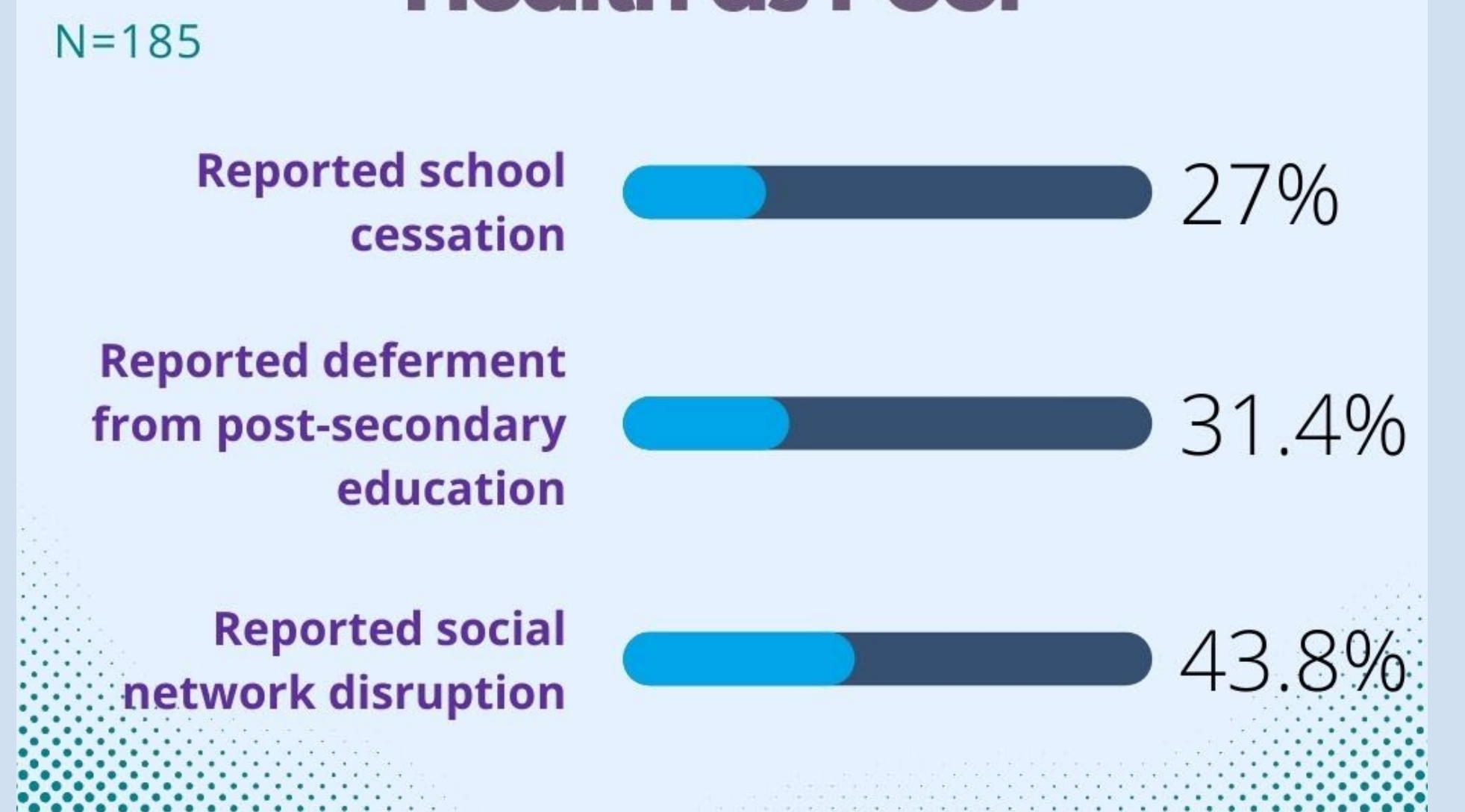
## Disruptions Reported



## Those Who Screened Positive for Major Depressive Disorder



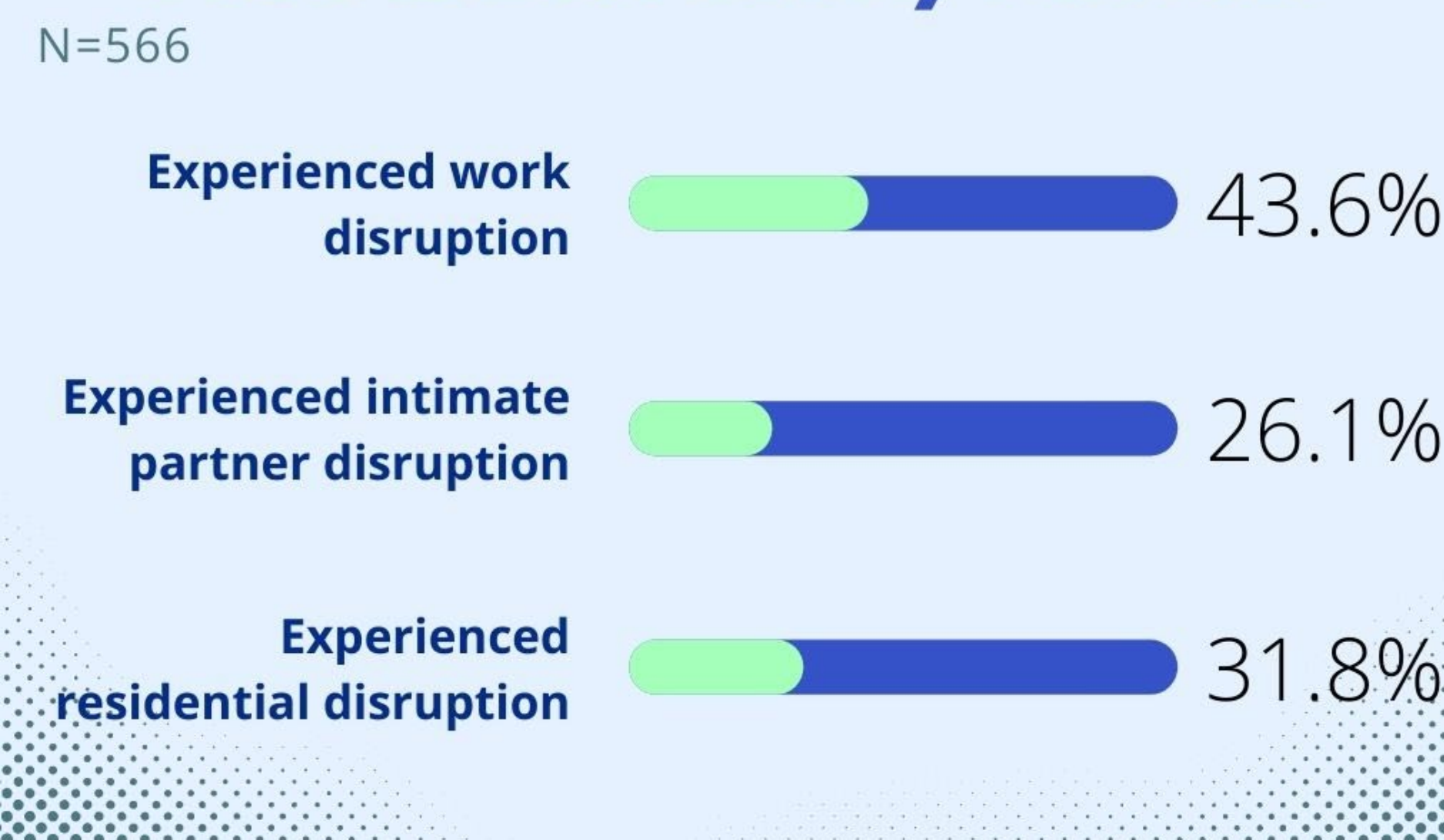
## Those Who Rated Their Health as Poor



## Those who reported a greater number of physical health conditions were more likely to experience:

- School cessation
- Deferred post-secondary education
- Work disruption
- Intimate partner disruption
- Residential disruption
- Social network disruption

## Those Who Screened Positive for Generalized Anxiety Disorder



## Those who reported a greater number of mental health conditions were more likely to experience:

- School cessation
- Work disruption
- Intimate partner disruption
- Residential disruption
- Social network disruption

## Conclusions & Implications

- More than a third of respondents reported work or social network disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Most frequently reported disruptions were in the areas of work, residential situation, intimate and social relationships, and school.
- Respondents in poorer physical health and poorer mental health were significantly more likely to experience multiple role disruptions, indicating they may be more at risk for long-term negative outcomes.
- Although causal effects can not be ascertained, young adults with serious mental health conditions in the U.S. experienced several disruption across several domains. The long-term impact of these disruptions is yet to be determined.

1 Mazumder, A., Bandhu Kalanidhi, K., Sarkar, S., et al. (2021). Psycho-social and behavioural impact of COVID 19 on young adults: Qualitative research comprising focused group discussion and in-depth interviews. *Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome Clinical Research & Reviews*, 15(1), 309–312. 2 Muruganandam, P., Neelamegam, S., Menon, V., et al. (2020). COVID-19 and Severe Mental Illness: Impact on patients and its relation with their awareness about COVID-19. *Psychiatry Research*, 291, 113265–113265. 3. Wilson, C., & Stock, J. (2019). The impact of living with long-term conditions in young adulthood on mental health and identity: What can help? *Health Expectations: an International Journal of Public Participation in Health Care and Health Policy*, 22(5), 1111–1121. 4. Gmitroski, T., Bradley, C., Heinemann, L., et al. (2018). Barriers and facilitators to employment for young adults with mental illness: a scoping review. *BMJ Open*, 8(12), e024487–e024487.

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