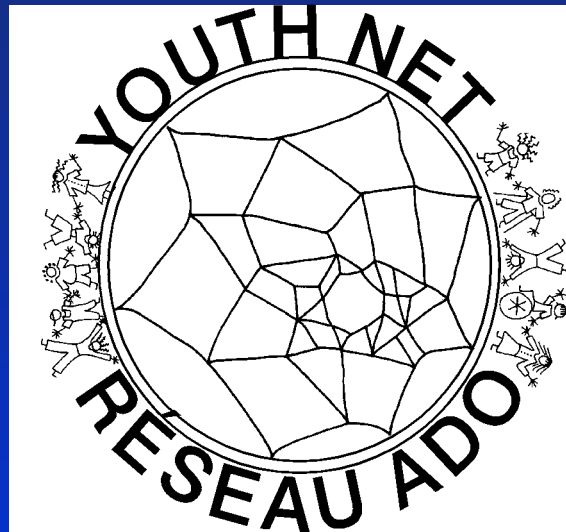


The Youth Net / Réseau Ado Experience

**Where Have We Been?
Where Are We Going?**



However you cut it, the prevalence rates are significant:

(15-25%)

Service Utilization

The minority of children and youth at risk (diagnosed with at least one disorder) receive mental health services.

(Offord 87, 89; Beals et al. 97, Verhulst 97)

(11-35% of those in need)

Canadian Youth Mental Health and Illness Survey (CYMHIS)

Cross-Canada telephone survey

June 1993

\underline{n} = 800 (stratified and representative)

age = 15.49 (13-18 years)

CYMHIS Summary

- significant levels of distress
- more females than males report difficulties
- more difficulties for older youth
- many barriers to seeking help
- dissatisfaction with existing mental health system

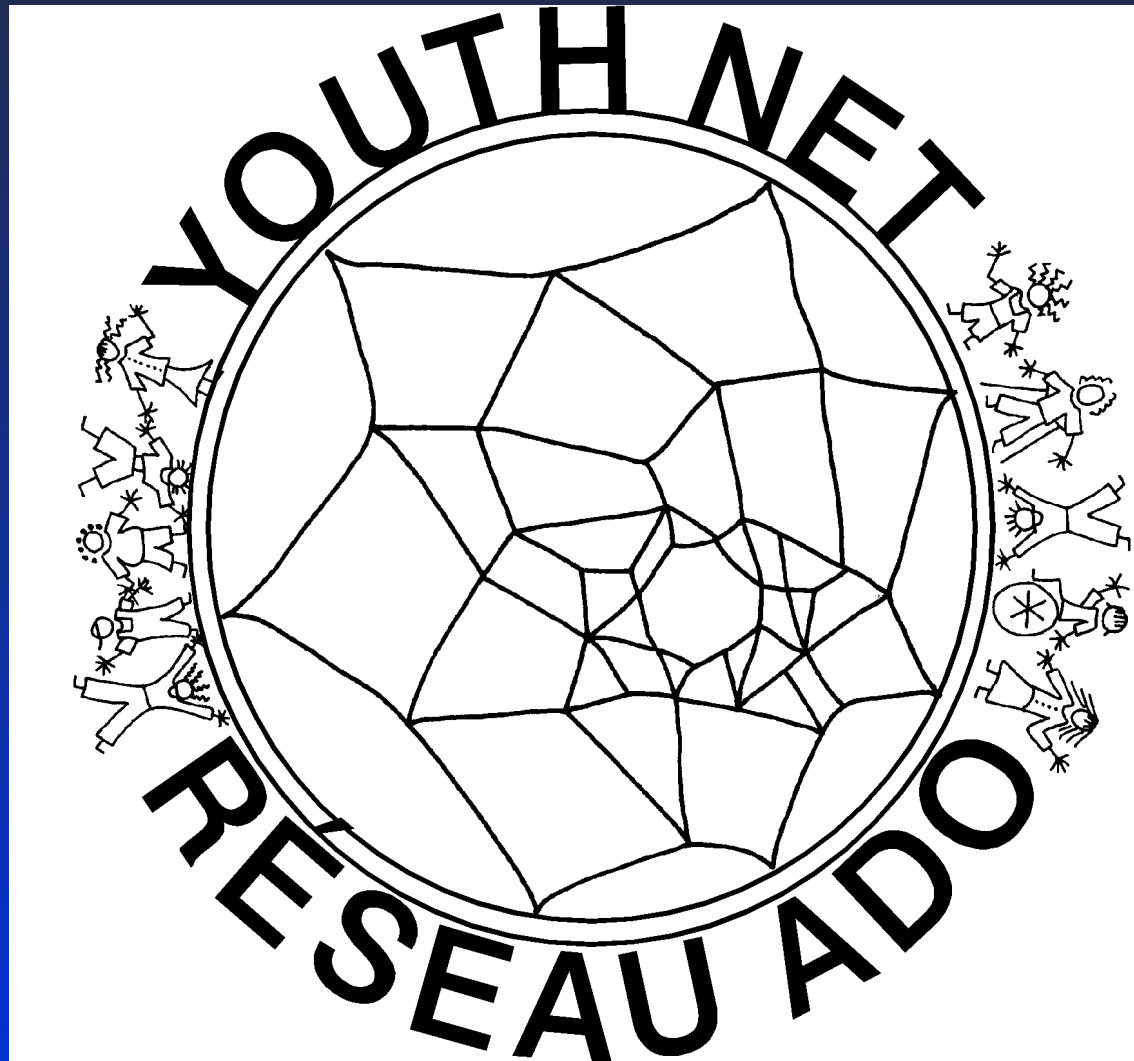
“It is our responsibility to work with youth to find ways to maintain, enhance and improve their health. Not only do our approaches have to move with the times and the changing society, but also with the attitudes and perceived needs of and by our youth.”

The Health of Canada's Children: A CIH Profile (1994)

**THERE COMES A TIME WHEN IT IS RIGHT
TO DEPART - EVEN THOUGH THE
DESTINATION IS UNCERTAIN**

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

Youth Net / Réseau Ado



Combined Macro & Micro-interventions

Better Balance

Universal: Targeted: Clinical

Theoretical underpinning

Anomie (Emile Durkheim, 1897)

YOUTH NET RESEAUADO



Youth Net / Réseau Ado

Objectives

- increase awareness / promote communication
- decrease stigma
- early identification of youth
- link with safety net of professionals
- adapt services
- empower youth

Youth Net / Réseau Ado

- focus group methodology
- safety net / clinical handoffs

Facilitators

- 20-30 years of age ($\bar{X} = 25$)
- all walks of life
- personal characteristics and life experience rather than education
- fit with program
- Anglophone and Francophone teams
- always work in pairs
- * multicultural facilitators

Choosing Facilitators

collect CV's (word of mouth / advertising)



screening / introductory meeting



2-day training workshop



suicide prevention /
intervention



mentorship

Other Program Initiatives

- **Community liaison**
- **Community education and awareness**
- **Support Groups, multicultural**
- **Research: database, HUB, KidNet**
- **National: Satellites, NYN**

Youth Initiatives

- Resource List of Youth Services
- Youth Fax / Fax Ado
- Snowboard Project
- Pens and Paints Project
- Street Youth Camp
- Youth Advisory Council Video Project

Therapeutic Groups

- **Evolved from focus groups, but**
 - longer term (12 sessions)
 - greater depth (2-hour length)
 - more severe problems
 - 8-12 youth
- **Community collaboration**
 - agency referrals
 - space provision
 - financial support

Therapeutic Models

Depression Model

- focused symptoms
- pre-determined session themes
- e.g., rural, chronic illness, alternative school groups

Support Model

- similar life situations
- multiple problem types
- e.g., street youth, detention center, New Canadian, and post-school suicide groups

Therapeutic Groups

Process

- community referrals
- pre-assessments
- weekly sessions
- therapist supervision
- post-assessments and referrals

Co-facilitators

- clinical psychology interns, psychiatry residents, experienced YN facilitators

Youth Net Practicum

- Training
 - facilitator training
 - Living Works suicide intervention
 - support group weekly supervision
- Components
 - focus groups
 - therapeutic group
 - evaluation design research

Educational Benefits

- Clinical skill development
 - focus groups
 - therapeutic groups
- Community-based perspective
- Fostering new bonds with youth
 - non-judgmental, open attitudes
 - empowering youth
- Research skill development
 - evaluation design

Youth Net / Réseau Ado

September 1995 - June 2000

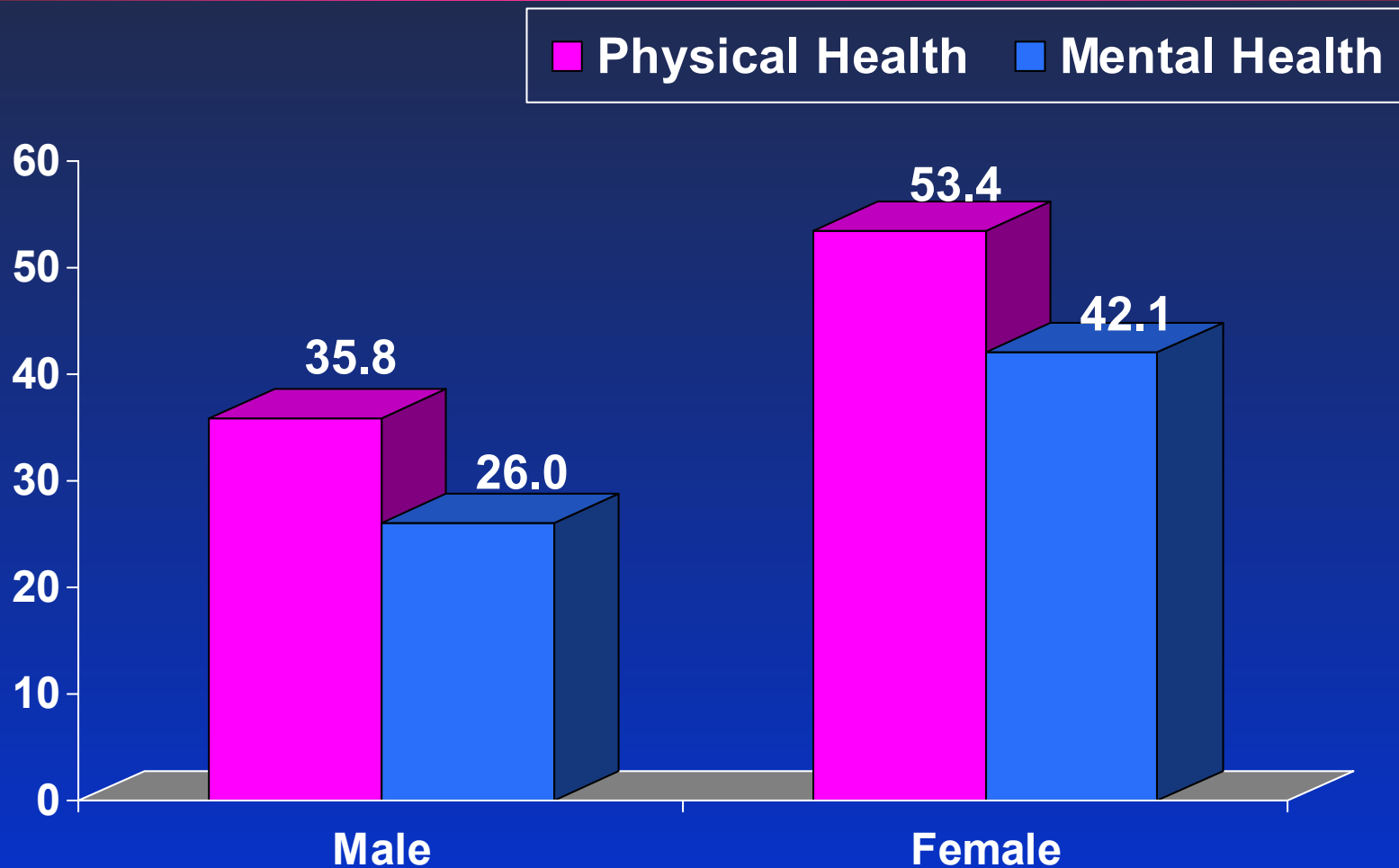
N = 7821 (794 groups)

- age (12-20 years) Mean = 15.6 years
- female (55%) male (45%)
- anglophone (57%) francophone (43%)
- mainstream (79%) non-mainstream (21%)

Non-Mainstream Youth

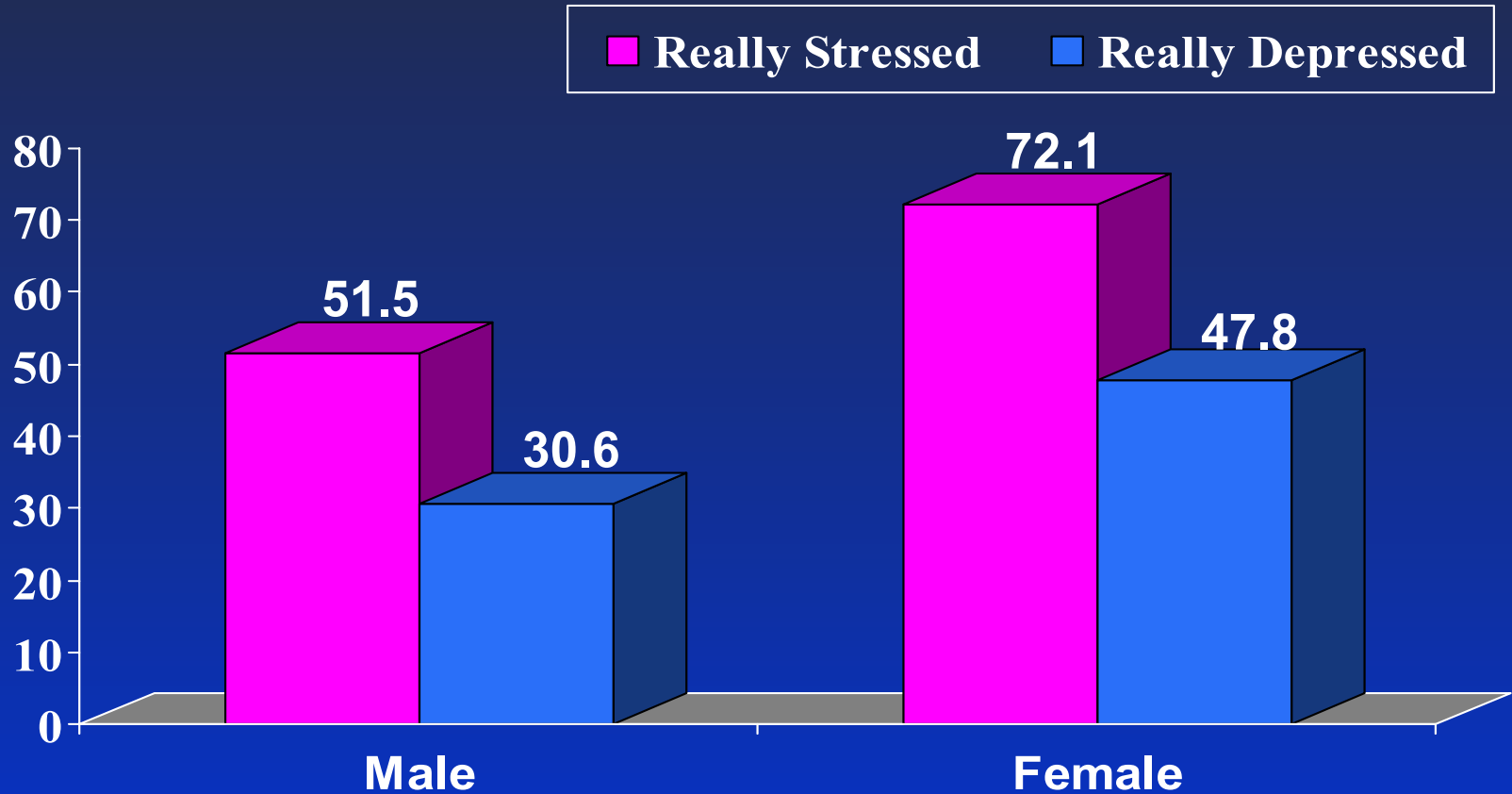
- low SES
- treatment centres
- street youth
- detention centres
- gay / lesbian and bisexual youth
- young single mothers
- alternative education
- youth in care
- aboriginal youth

Self-Reported Recurring Health Concerns by Gender



(YN/RA 2000, N=7821)

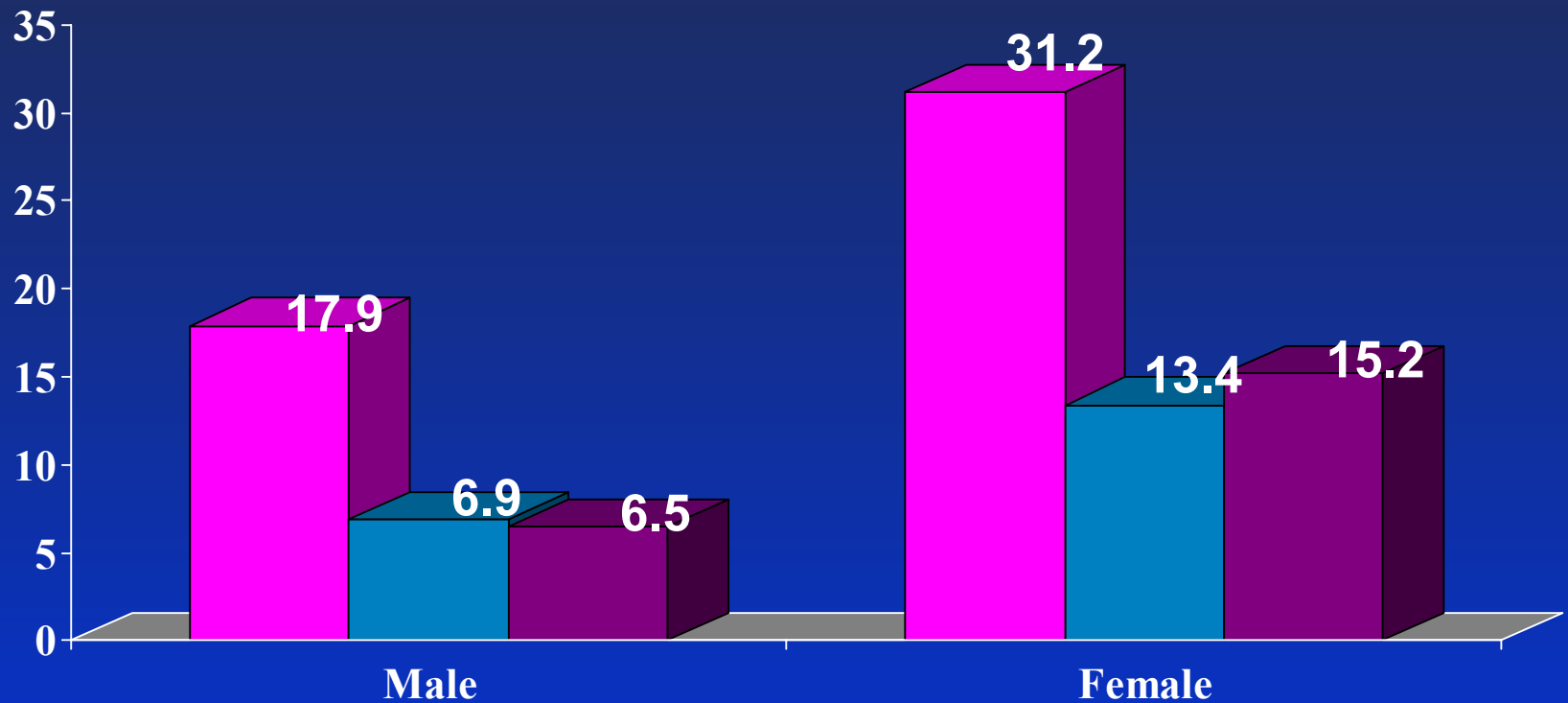
Significant Levels of Stress and Depressed Feelings by Gender



(YN/RA 2000, N=7821)

Suicidal Ideation and Behaviour by Gender

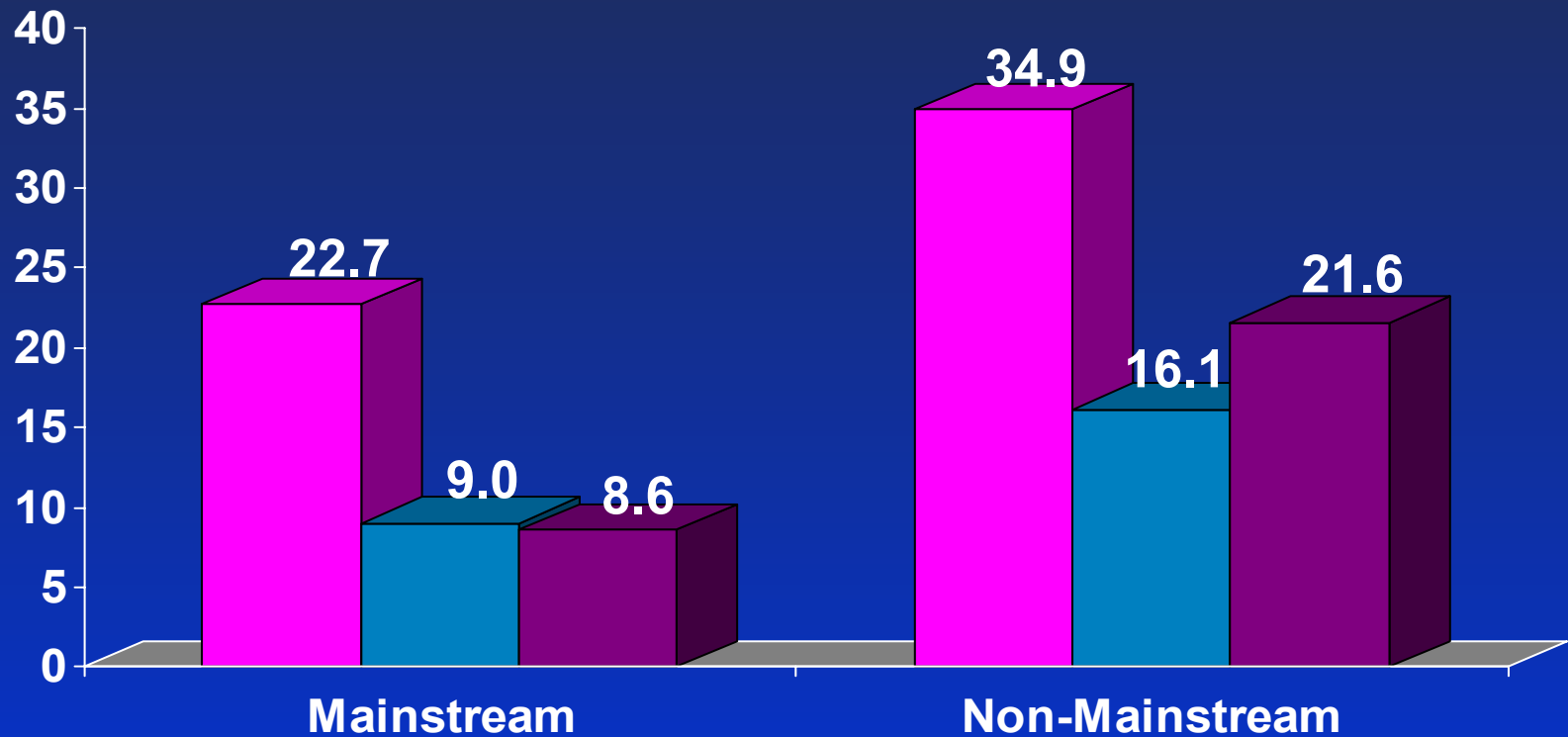
■ Past Suicidal Thoughts ■ Current Suicidal Thoughts ■ Past Suicide Attempts



(YN/RA 2000, N=782)

Suicidal Ideation and Behaviour by Stream

■ Past Suicidal Thoughts ■ Current Suicidal Thoughts ■ Past Suicide Attempts

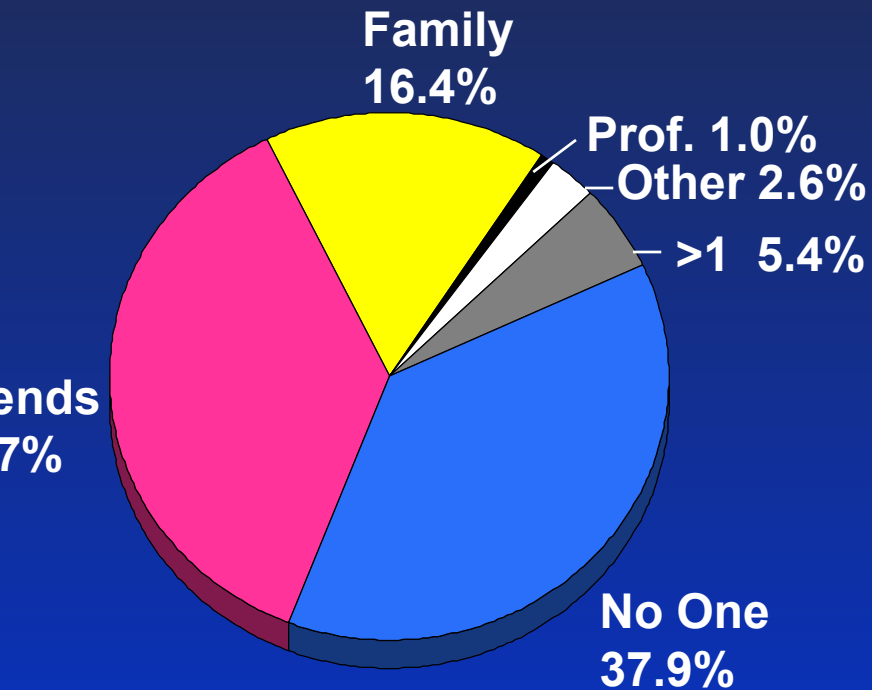


(YN/RA 2000, N=7821)

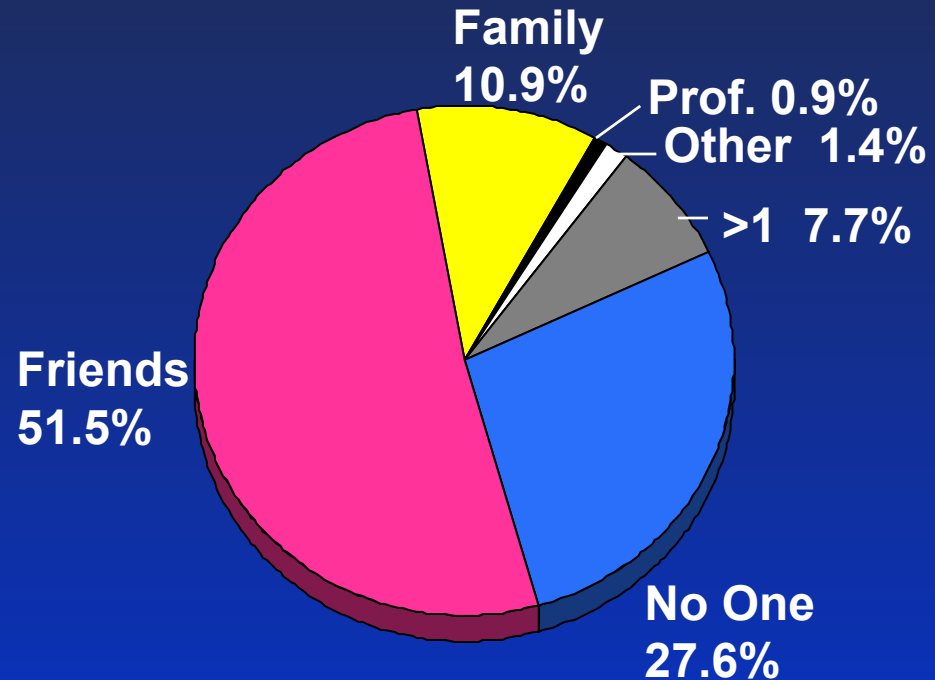
In spite of the elevated rates of suicidal ideation and attempts, many never disclosed these thoughts or feelings:

mainstream	38.5%	non-mainstream	35.5%
younger	40.6%	older	35.4%
males	47.8%	females	32.8%

Who do Youth Talk to about Mental Health Concerns (by Gender)



Males



Females

Qualitative Findings

- a minority (20%) of youth described mental health in positive terms (effective coping strategies, positive mental states, high self-esteem)

Source of Support

If youth seek support, they would go to:

friends	86%
family	50%

Youth said they would avoid:

psychologists and/or psychiatrists	43%
guidance counsellors	26%

Issues Raised by Youth (Focus Groups 1997-1999)

Parents	80.2%
Stress	74.5%
Coping	72.8%
Drugs & Alcohol	69.1%
Peers	65.4%
Money	55.6%
Suicide	49.4%
Depression	40.3%
Prejudice	40.3%
Violence	39.5%
Self-Esteem	37.0%
Eating Disorders	29.6%

What do you do when you are stressed out?

(1997-1999) N=3185

Distraction (play games, TV, read, other)	29.8%
Physical symptoms (sleep disturbance, appetite, other)	28.0%
Exercise	23.1%
Music (play / listen)	19.5%
Talk to friends / others	17.1%
Relaxation	16.3%
Verbal / physical aggression	14.9%
Escape	12.0%
Emotional reaction (non-aggressive)	10.1%
Smoke cigarettes	10.7%
Problem solving / time management	7.8%
Drugs / alcohol	3.8%
Rumination	3.2%

What Makes Someone Youth Friendly?

(1997-99) N=3185

Active listener	35.4%
Understanding	32.6%
Positive personality traits	28.4%
Not judgmental	17.4%
Helpful	14.5%
Cool / like youth	12.2%
Keeps it confidential	11.4%
Youth aware	8.9%
Competent	5.7%
Like a friend	4.8%
Not condescending	4.5%
Honest / direct	3.5%

Youth Net Satellite Program

- **New program...national in scope**
- **Satellite is not a franchise**
- **Community-based program development**
- **Exchange of knowledge, skills & experience**

Concepts

- Youth are Creative and Resourceful
 - by youth for youth, capacity-building
- Support Network = Safety Net
 - among youth
 - between youth, community and professional resources
- Equal Partnership

Local Sponsors

- Hospital
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Health department
- CLSC
- Community organization
- Child and Family service organization

Safety Net/Clinical Back-up

- psychologists/psychiatrists
- public health nurses
- crisis workers - hospital or community program

Satellites

Population Health Fund, McConnell Foundation

Operational

- Ottawa, ON
- Halton, ON
- Peel, ON
- Hamilton, ON
- Abitibi, QC
- Courtney, BC
- Halifax, BC

In Development

- Grey/Bruce Region, ON
- Timiskaming, ON
- Vancouver, BC
- Montréal, QC
- Montérégie, QC
- Montmagny, QC

Projected

- Cornerbrook, NF
- York Region, ON
- Whitehorse, YT

What Do We Need To Start Youth Net?

- Community interest and support
- Youth-friendly back-up
- Youth coordinator
- Facilitators
- Resources (funds and in-kind support)
- ENERGY + ENTHUSIASM