

Dr Charlotte Silke

**Exploring the
Relationship
Between
Adversity and
Suicidality and
Self-Harm among
Irish Adolescents**



Planet Youth in Ireland **Conference**





OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



Adversity, Suicidality & Self-Harm: Associations Among Irish Adolescents

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National Suicide
Research Foundation

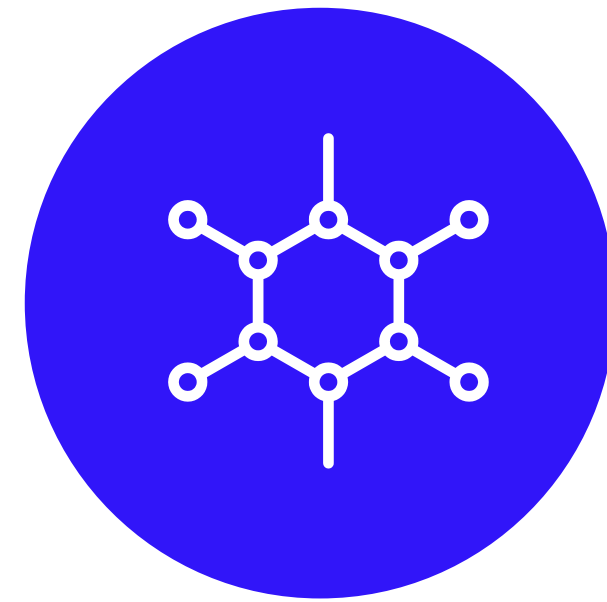


RESEARCH AIMS & OBJECTIVES



1. Prevalence Rates

Explore rates of suicide attempts & self-harm among Irish adolescents



2. Patterns of Adversity

Identify the dominant patterns of adversity experienced by adolescents



3. Adversity Related Risk

Understand the link between adversity & risk of suicide or self-harm



4. Protective Factors

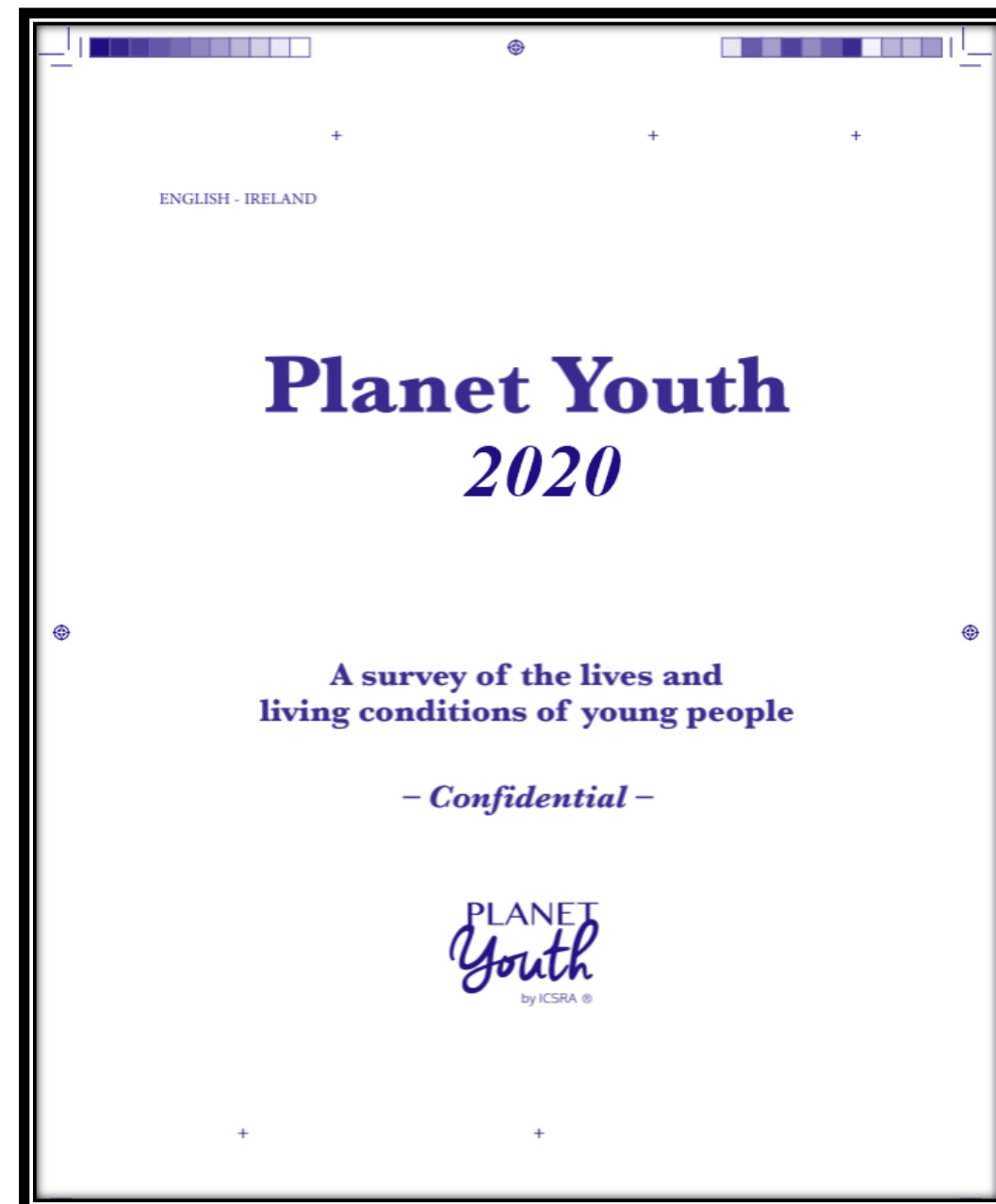
Determine whether certain social & personal factors act as protective factors

PARTICIPANTS

Participants included 10,281 Irish secondary school students from Galway, Mayo and Roscommon who participated in the 2020 and 2022 Planet Youth Survey.

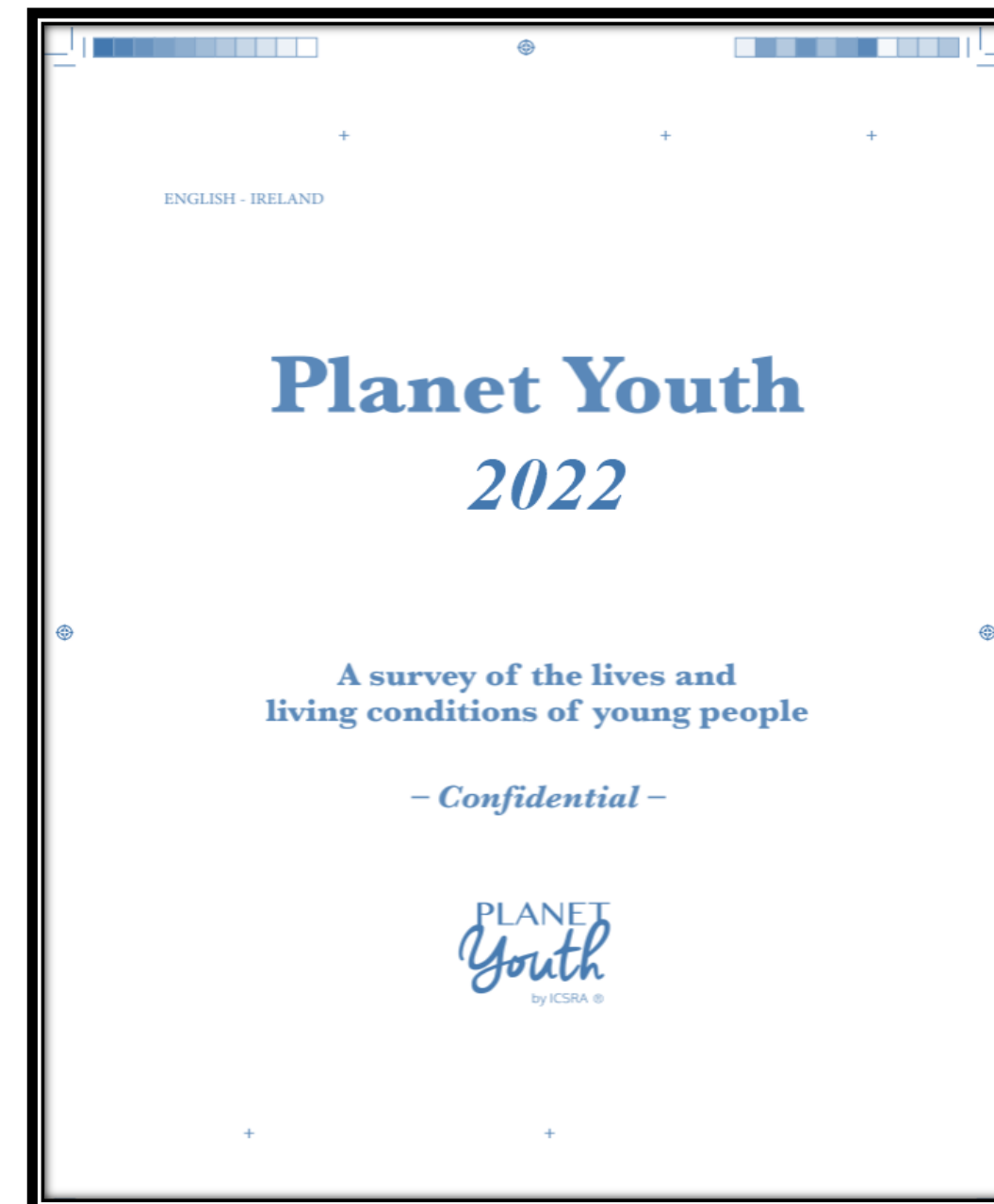
2020 Survey

5004 Participants
(2444 male,
2459 female,
41 non-binary,
60 other)



2022 Survey

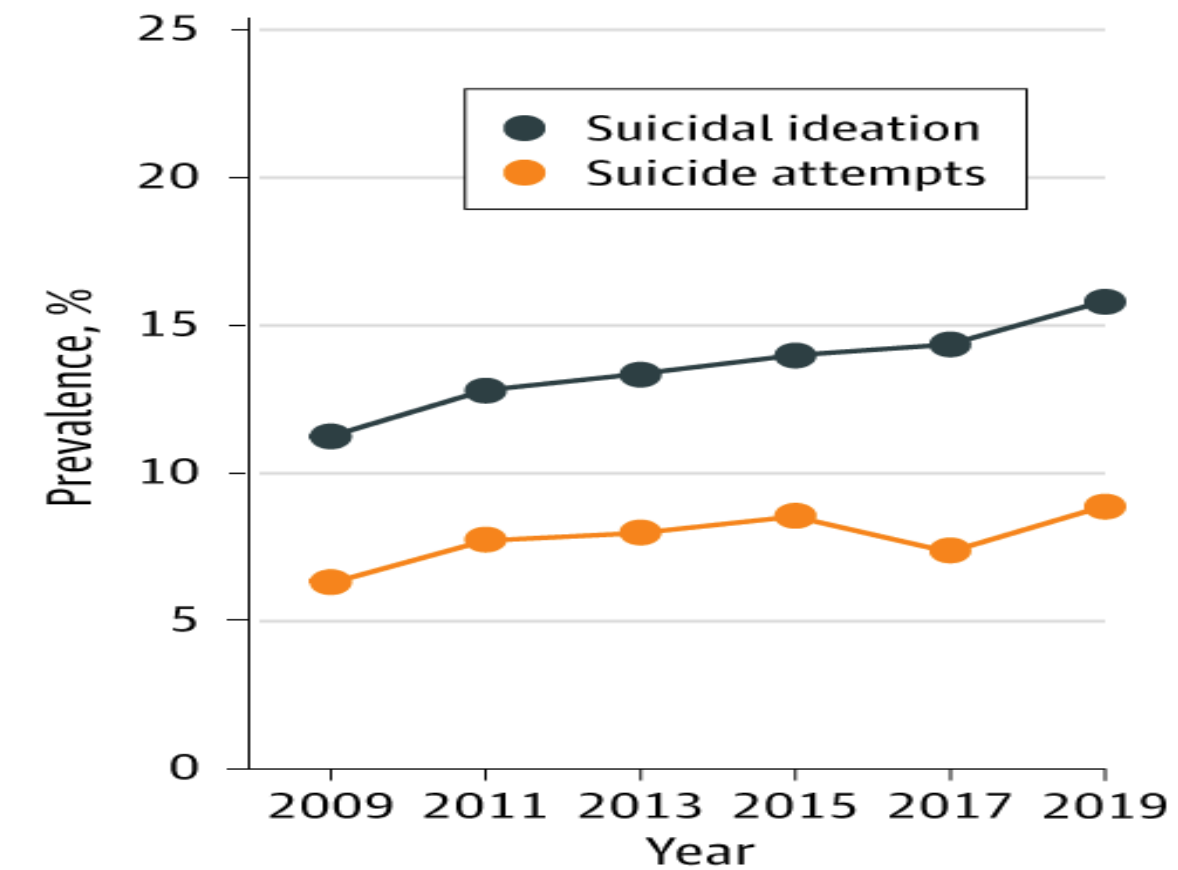
5277 Participants
(2577 male,
2540 female,
83 non-binary,
77 other)



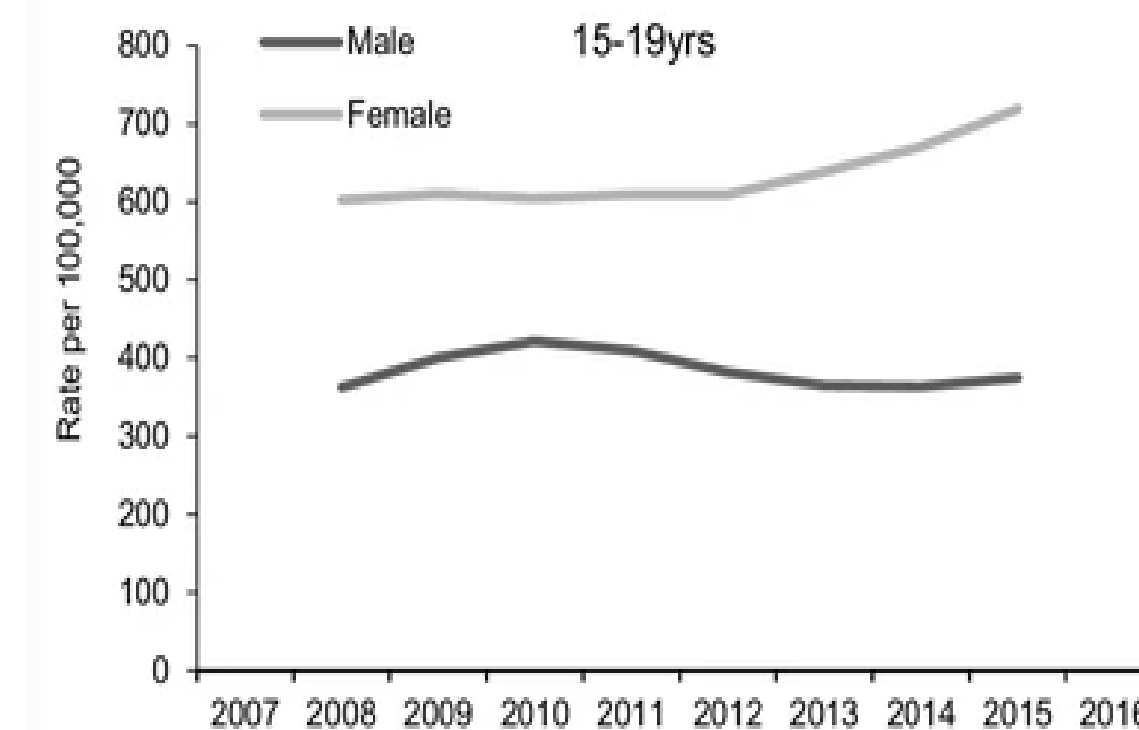


1. Youth Suicidality & Self-Harm

- Youth suicide & self-harm are major public health concerns ([World Health Organisation, 2021](#)).
- Globally, an estimated 6% of adolescents engage in suicide attempts, while 22% engage in non-suicidal self-harm ([Lim et al., 2019](#)).
- Evidence suggests rates of youth suicide & self-harm are on the rise ([Sara et al., 2023](#)).



Suicidal Ideation & Suicide Attempts among US Adolescents from 2009-2019
([Xaoi et al., 2021](#))



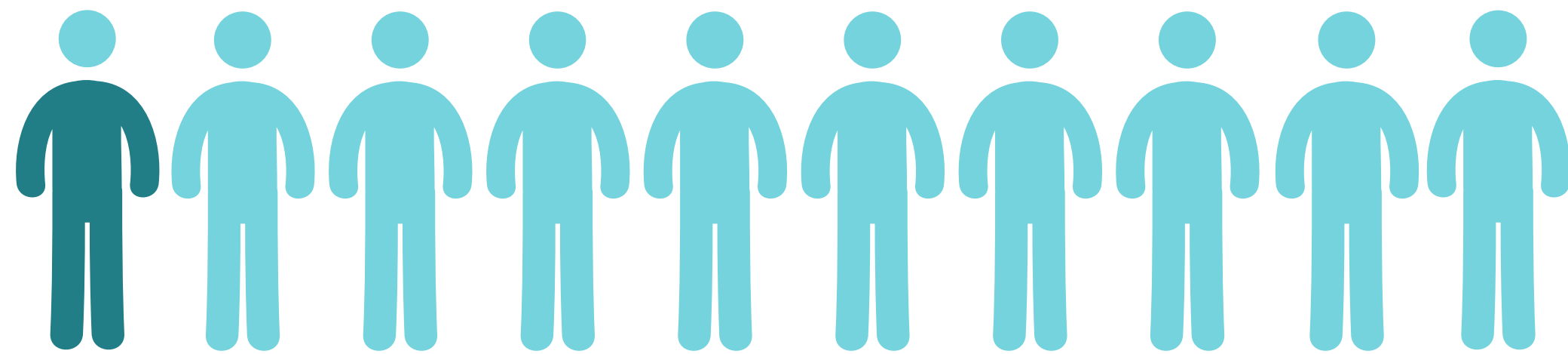
Adolescent Self-Harm Presentations at Emergency Departments in Ireland from 2007-2016
([Griffin et al., 2018](#))



Prevalence of Self-Harm & Suicide Attempts

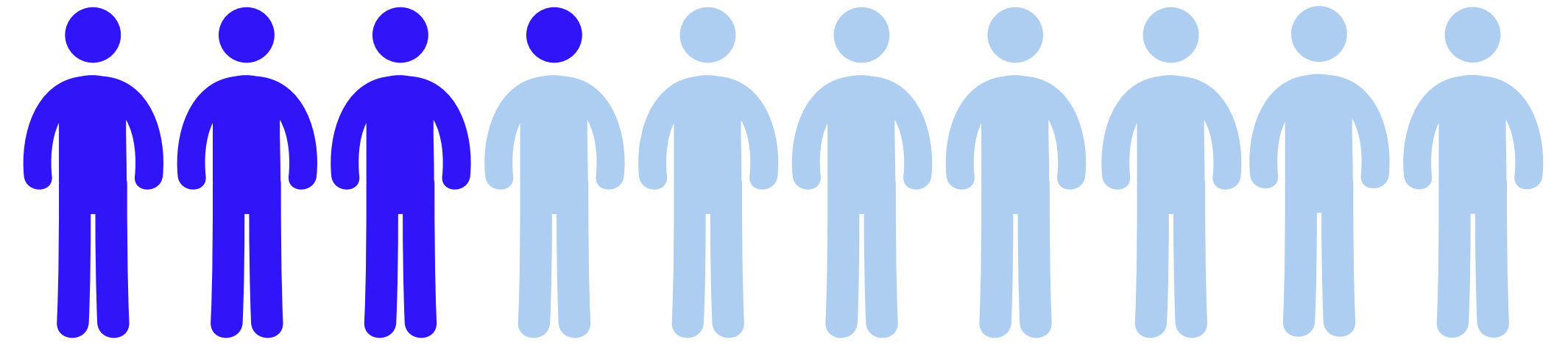
9%

of students had attempted suicide

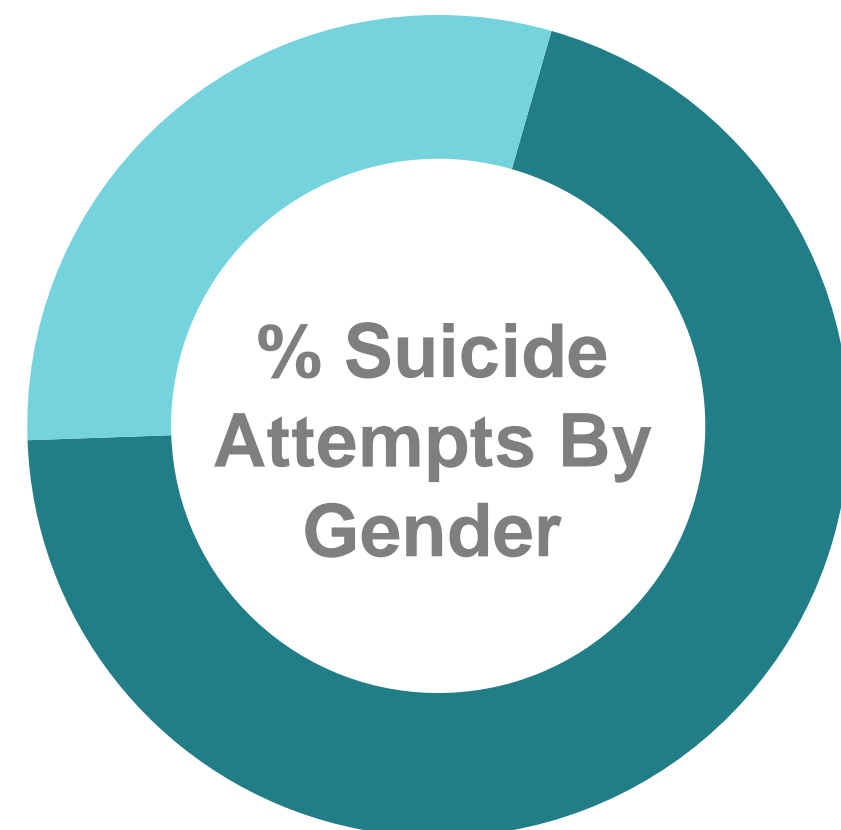


32%

of students had self-harmed



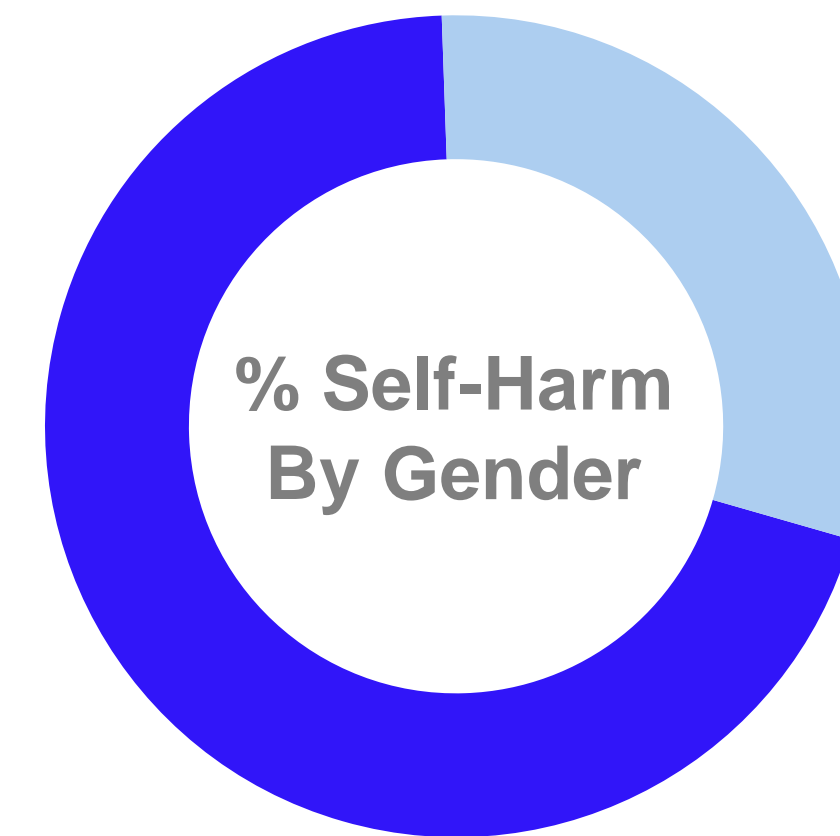
6%
Males



Girls were more likely to self-harm & attempt suicide than boys

11%
Females

23%
Males

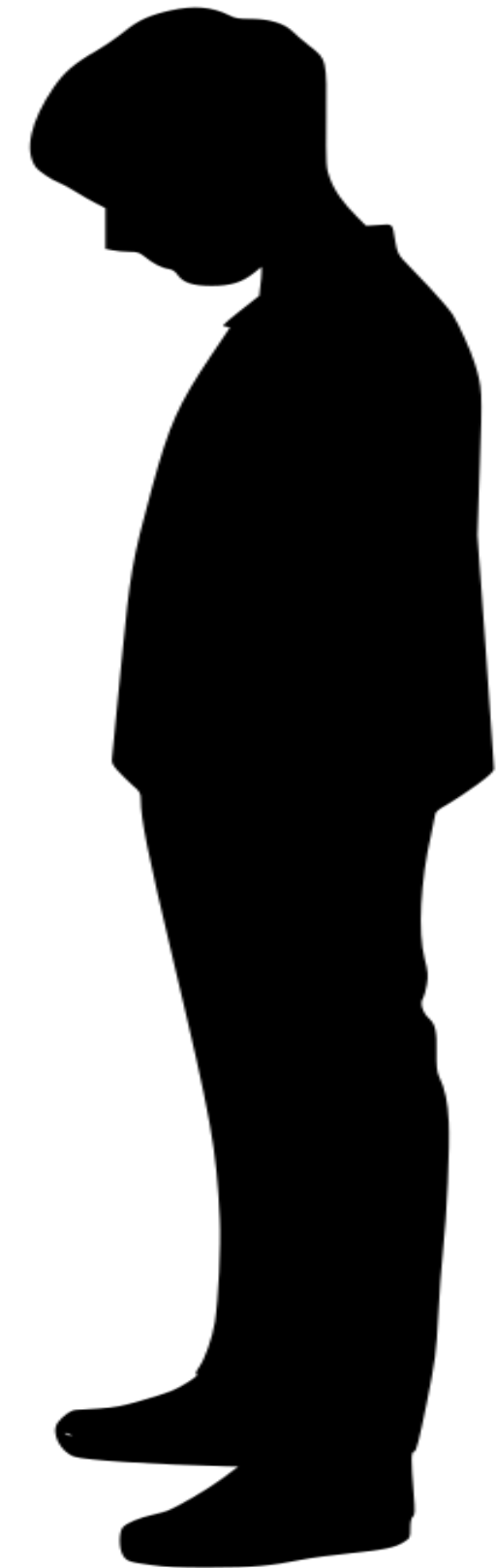


40%
Females



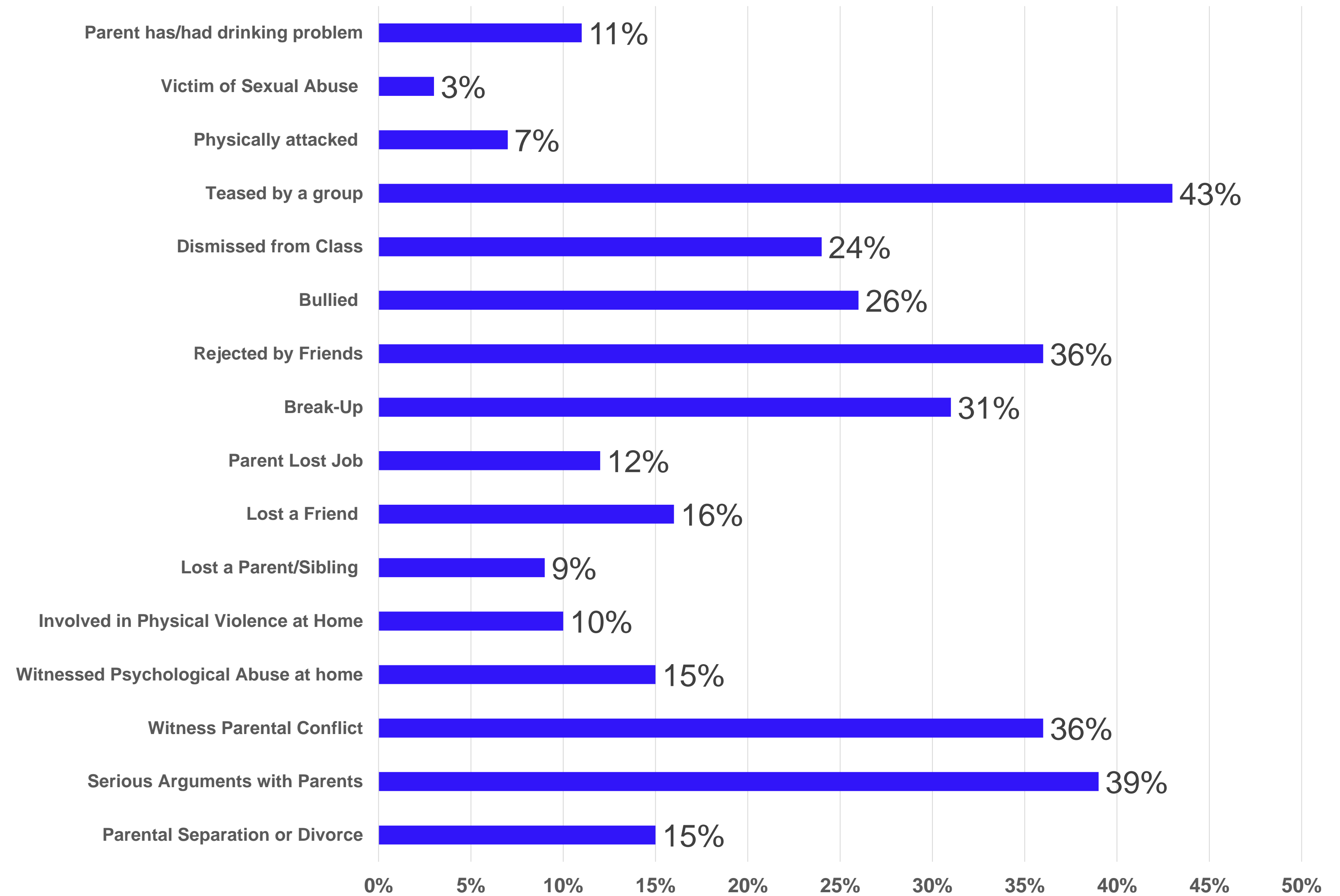
2. Youth Adversity

- Evidence suggests that exposure to adverse or negative life events increases risk of suicide & self-harm ([Li et al., 2021](#); [Russell et al., 2019](#)).
- Greater research on childhood adversity in Ireland is called for to inform policy and practice ([Prevention & Early Intervention Network, 2019](#)).
- More understanding about the patterns of adversity youth experience across school, peer and home contexts is needed ([Gobel & Cohdres, 2021](#)).



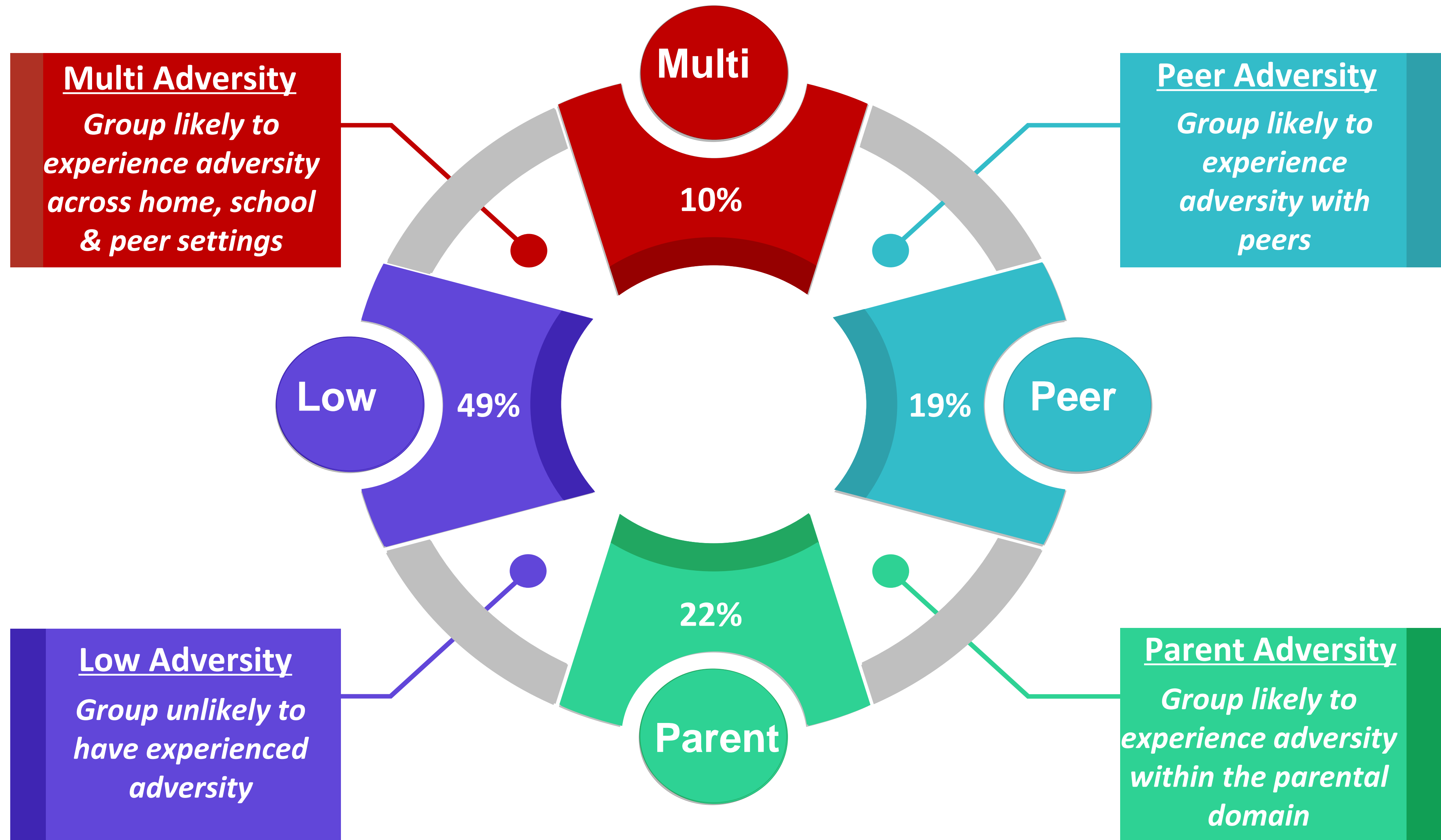


Prevalence of Youth Adversity



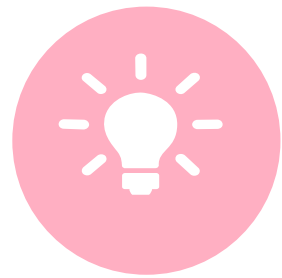


Patterns of Youth Adversity

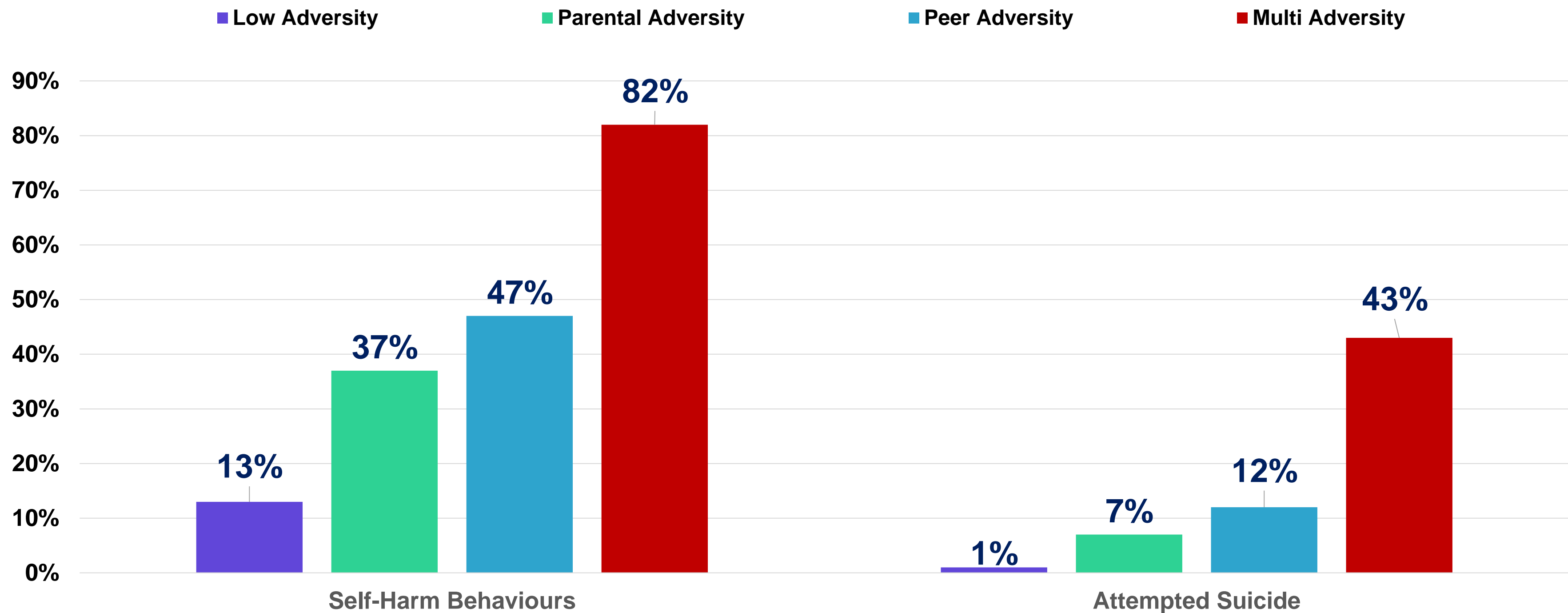




3. Associations Between Adversity & Youth Suicidality & Self-Harm



Youth who experience adversity across multiple contexts are at substantial risk of engaging in self-harm & suicide attempts





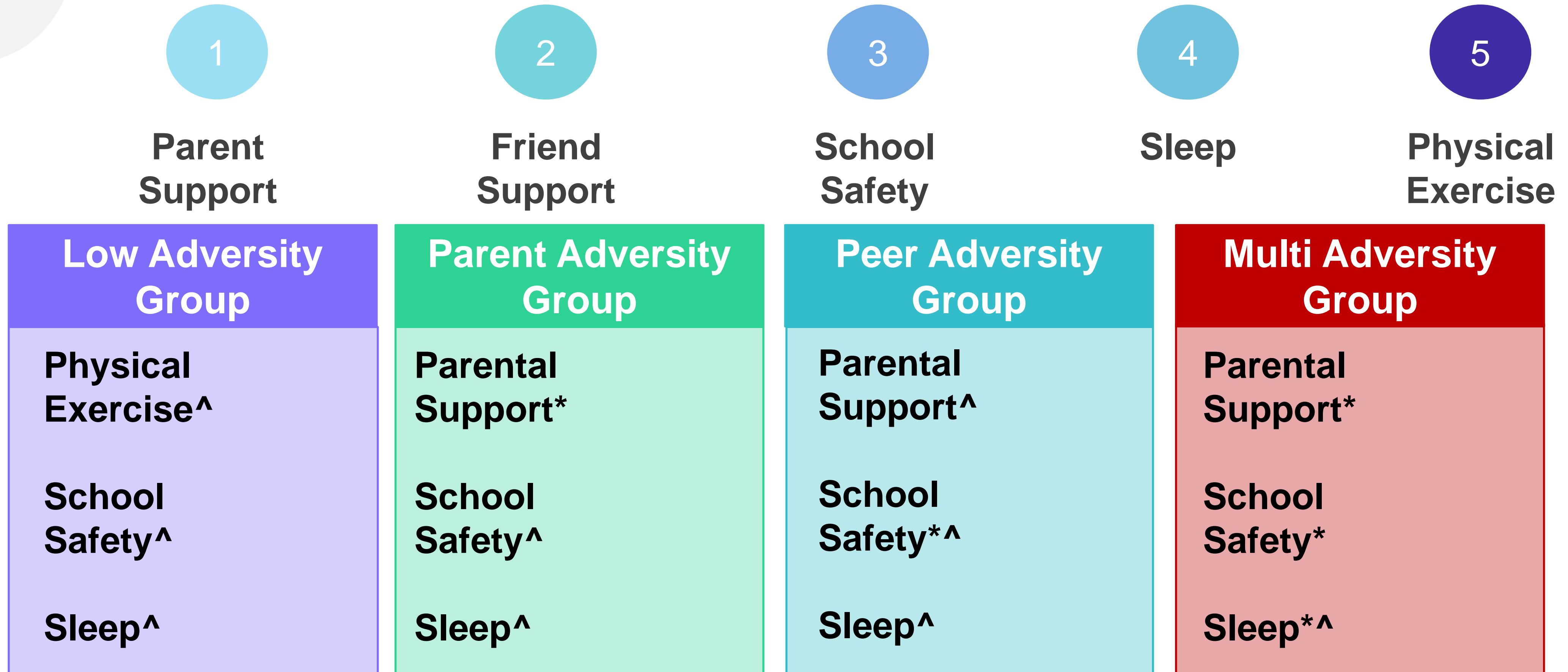
4. Protective Factors

- Greater understanding of the factors that help mitigate the risk associated with exposure to childhood adversity is needed ([Buchanan et al., 2023](#)).
- Protective factors may operate at an individual (e.g., sleep, exercise) and community (e.g., schools, parents, friends) level ([Gallagher & Miller, 2018](#)).
- Protective factors should be promoted across the multiple levels of influence in youth's lives ([Twum-Antwi et al., 2020](#)).





Protective Factors



NOTE:

* Significantly linked to lower risk of suicide attempts; ^ Significantly linked to lower risk of self-harm



Conclusions

- High rates of suicide attempts and self-harm among young people in Ireland.
- The context in which young people experience adversity is an important consideration.
- Young people who experience adversity across multiple (e.g. peer, home & school) contexts are at substantial risk of engaging in suicide and self-harm.
- Protective factors appear to operate differently, depending on youths' prior exposure to adversity-related risk.



Thanks



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