

WA COVID-19 STUDENT SURVEY 2022

Feelings and Support Topic Summary

Washington State Middle School Students

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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

W UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Brief Overview of the COVID-19 Student Survey:

In February 2022, nearly 8,000 middle school students grades 6-8 completed an online survey to assess behaviors and attitudes across a number of health domains relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit:

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey>

The purpose of this document is to describe feelings of loneliness and fear as well as worries specific to contracting COVID-19. This report also describes supports cited by students during the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings are presented within subpopulations of the middle school sample to assess whether certain students have been affected differently than others. Specifically, this report will look at feelings and supports by self identified ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, migratory working family status, and financial distress.

Background on Students' Feelings and Support

- Social isolation and loneliness during COVID-19 can impact mental health in adolescents and increase risk of depression and anxiety (Loades et al., 2020).
- While COVID-19 has presented challenges to adolescent health, social and emotional support from adults and peers can foster resilience (Dvorsky et al., 2021).
- Social support during crises is an important coping mechanism that can protect adolescents from the effects of loneliness and isolation that may be particularly pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic when social distancing was advised to slow the spread of the disease (Saltzman et al., 2020).

What Does the Middle School Sample Look Like?

Survey participation was voluntary at both the school and student level. Therefore, **this is a convenience sample and is not intended to be generalized to the state population.** It is important to be thoughtful in how you interpret and use these results. When framing the findings, you might consider using language such as “Among participating students...” or “Of students who took the 2022 COVID-19 Student Survey...”.

The proportion of participating students within each demographic category are described in the table below.

Note: Students who reported “I do not know what this question is asking” or “I prefer not to answer” were not included in the analyses described in this document.

Sample Size and Proportion of Middle School Participants by Demographic Group

Race							Hispanic		Disability Status		Migratory Status	
<u>AIAN</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>NHOPI</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Multiple</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
521	408	319	138	3,643	1,533	800	1,969	5,647	475	5,533	776	5,993
(7.1%)	(5.4%)	(4.3%)	(1.9%)	(49.5%)	(20.8%)	(10.9%)	(25.9%)	(74.1%)	(7.9%)	(92.1%)	(11.5%)	(88.5%)
Gender Identity					Sexual Orientation					Financial Distress		
<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Transgender</u>	<u>Questioning</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Heterosexual</u>	<u>Gay/Lesbian</u>	<u>Bisexual</u>	<u>Questioning</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
2,375	2,048	103	200	189	3,240	227	524	263	318	487	6,768	
(48.3%)	(41.7%)	(2.1%)	(4.1%)	(3.9%)	(70.9%)	(5.0%)	(11.5%)	(5.8%)	(7.0%)	(6.7%)	(93.3%)	

Key: AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native, NHOPI = Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. For Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, “Other” refers to students who indicated that “Something else fits better”.

Survey Items to Identify Student Subgroups

Ethnicity:

Students were asked, “Are you Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx?” Students who indicated “Yes” were coded as Hispanic. Students indicating “No” were not. Ethnicity was treated separately from race. That is, a student’s response to this question was independent to their response for a question about race.

Race:

Students were asked, “What is your race?” They were shown a list of racial groups and were instructed to select all that applied to them. Students who selected more than one racial category were included in the Multiple Race category.

Gender Identity:

For gender identity, students were asked, “How do you currently identify yourself?” Students were shown a list of responses that included “I do not know what this question is asking” and “I prefer not to answer.” Students who did not know what the question was asking or who preferred not to answer were not included in the analyses for these respective subgroup comparisons. **Note that this question was not asked of 6th grade students, so all comparisons by gender identity have excluded 6th grade students.**

Sexual Orientation:

Sexual orientation was assessed with the question, “Which of the following best describes you?” This question was followed by a list of choices that included “I do not know what this question is asking” and “I prefer not to answer.” Students who did not know what the question was asking or who preferred not to answer were not included in the analyses for these respective subgroup comparisons. For the purpose of this summary, students that indicated that they identified as “Gay” or “Lesbian” were combined into one category. **Note that this question was not asked of 6th grade students, so all comparisons by sexual orientation have excluded 6th grade students.**

- LGBTQ+: In this document, we use LGBTQ+ to describe a diverse and encompassing range of minority sexualities and gender identities that include (L)esbian, (G)ay, (B)isexual, (T)ransgender, (Q)uestioning and (+) additional gender identities and sexual orientations.

Students Identifying as Having a Disability or Long-term Health Condition:

Disability status was defined by whether a student responded “Yes” to the item, “Are you limited in any activities because of a disability or long-term health problem including physical health, emotional, or learning problems expected to last 6 months or longer?” Students were given the opportunity to select “I am not sure or I prefer not to answer” and these were excluded from analyses of these subgroup comparisons.

Students From a Migratory Working Family:

Migratory working family status was defined by whether a student endorsed the item, “Have you or your family moved in the past 3 years to another school district or city for **temporary or seasonal** work in agriculture, dairy or fishing?”

Financial Distress:

Financial distress was assessed by a student’s response to a single item, “How often during the current school year did you or your family have to cut meal size or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?” Students that indicated that their family had to cut meal size or skip meals due to insufficient funds at any time during the past year were categorized as financially distressed.

Key Takeaways from Middle School Students Who Took the Survey

Feeling Lonely, Scared and Worried

- More than 1 out of 5 middle school students (21.7%) reported that they often feel lonely. Reports of loneliness were especially common among those students identifying as LGBTQ+, those identifying as having a disability, and those identified as being financially distressed.
- 10.6% of middle school students reported that they often feel scared with higher rates among those identifying as LGBTQ+, those identifying as having a disability, and those identified as being financially distressed.
- 16.8% of middle school students who responded to this survey reported being worried about getting sick with COVID-19 and more than one-third (33.1%) reported being worried about their friends and family getting sick with the virus.

Support

- Nearly 4 out of 5 middle school students (79.3%) who took this survey reported that they had a supportive adult that they could turn to if needed. Only 48.2% of students identifying as transgender reported having a supportive adult. Rates of adult support were also lower among those students identifying as LGBTQ+, those identifying as having a disability, and those identified as financially distressed.
- 88.7% of middle school students responding to this survey reported that they had a safe place that they could go to outside of school hours if they needed help.
- Over half (61.5%) of middle school students felt that they were often supported by peers. Students identifying as transgender (48.9%), disabled (52.8%) and those identified as financially distressed (42.8%) were less likely to report having peer support.
- Nearly two thirds (64.5%) of middle school students reported that a teacher or adult at their school would check in with them at least “sometimes” to see how they were doing. Students identifying as transgender (49.4%) and students identified as financially distressed (53.4%) reported lower rates of teacher support.
- 41.6% of middle school students reported that they received emotional support from others to help them cope with stress. Less than 1 out of 3 students identified as financially distressed reported that they received emotional support from others.

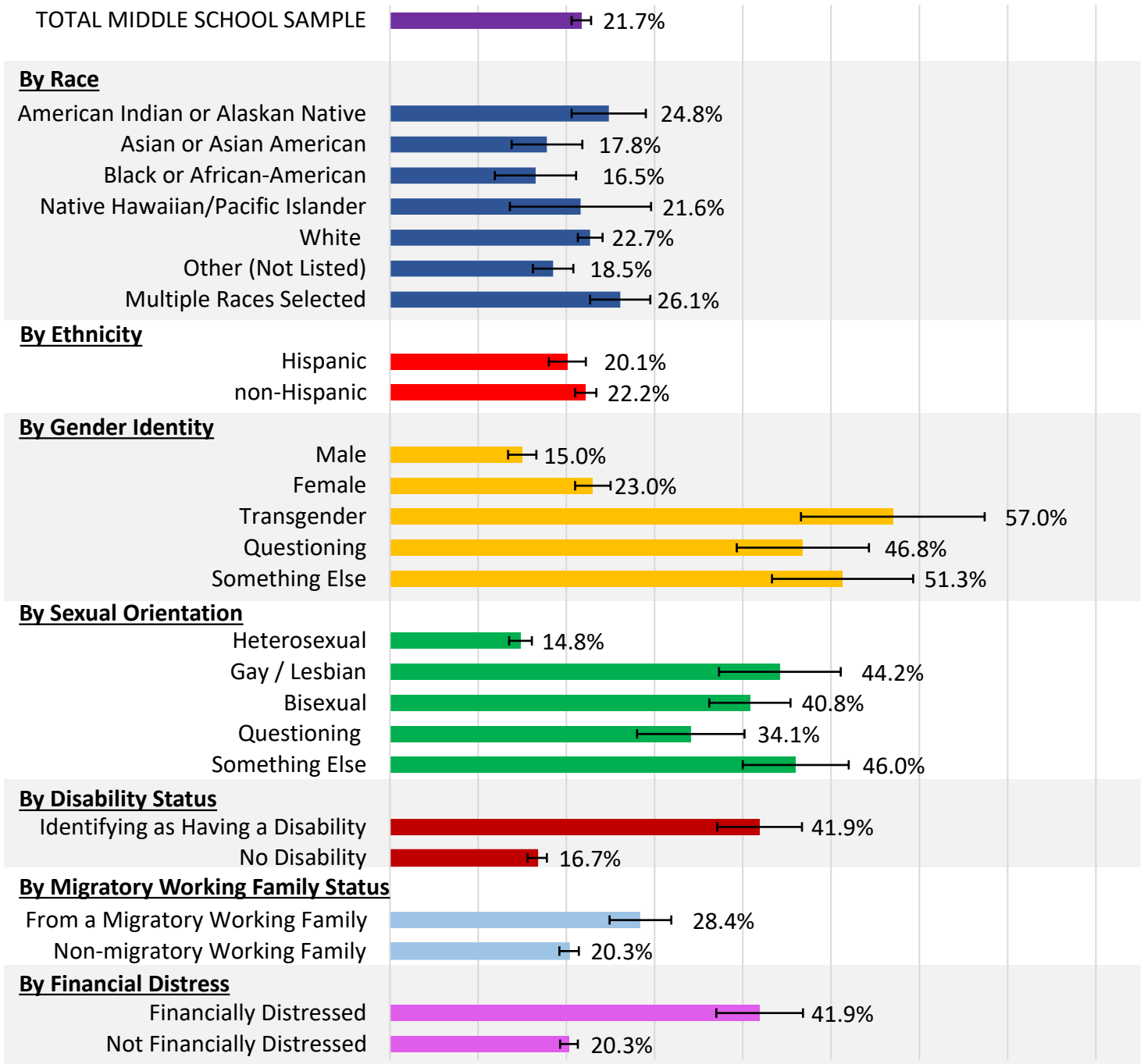
Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Feeling Lonely

Question: How often do you feel lonely?

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling Lonely "Often"

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%



NOTES:

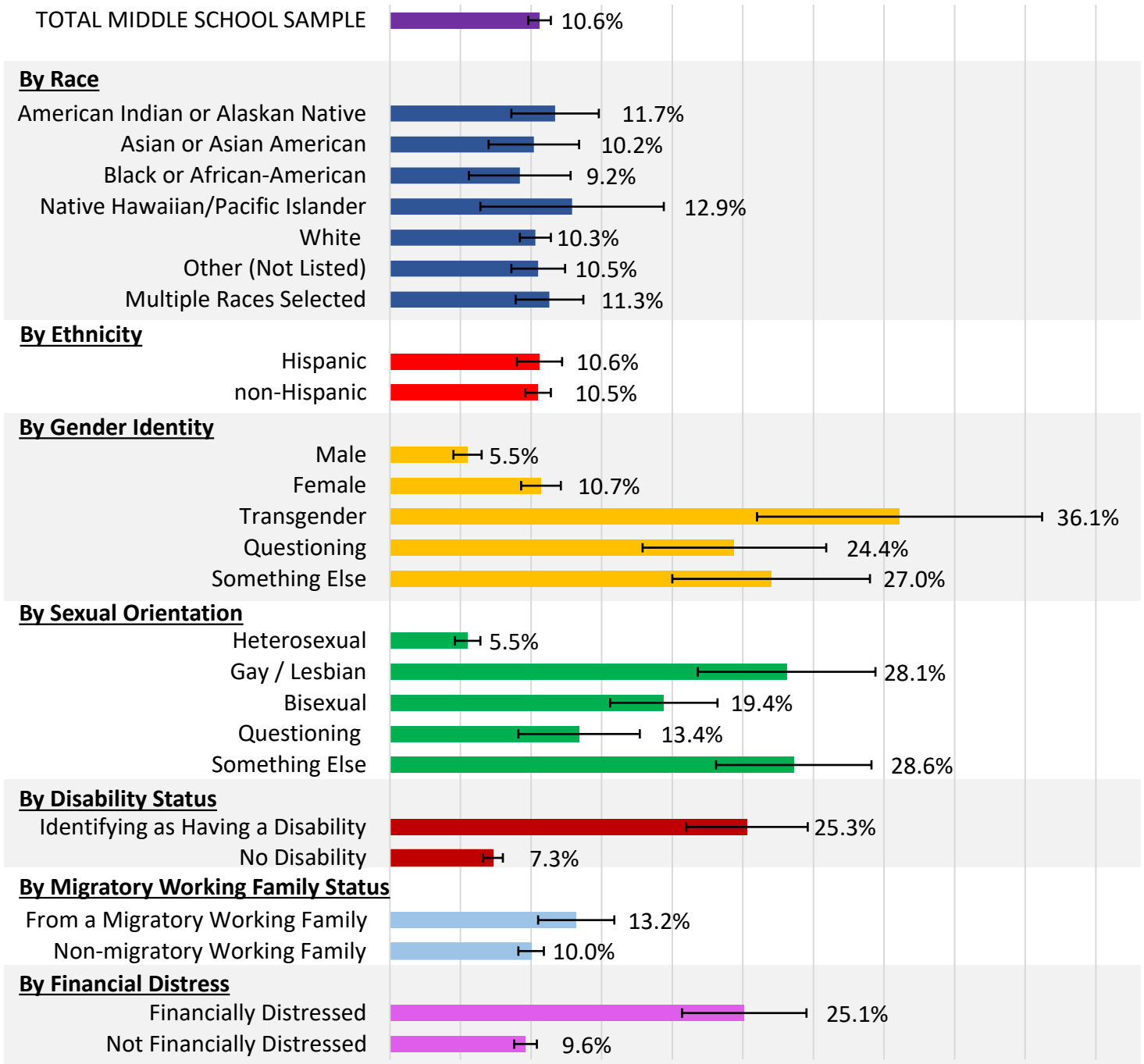
- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling lonely often.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included "Hardly Ever", "Some of the Time", and "Often." Percentages shown above indicate those who selected "Often."
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Feeling Scared

Question: How often do you feel scared?

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling Scared "Often"
0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling scared often.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included "Hardly Ever", "Some of the Time", and "Often." Percentages shown above indicate those who selected "Often."
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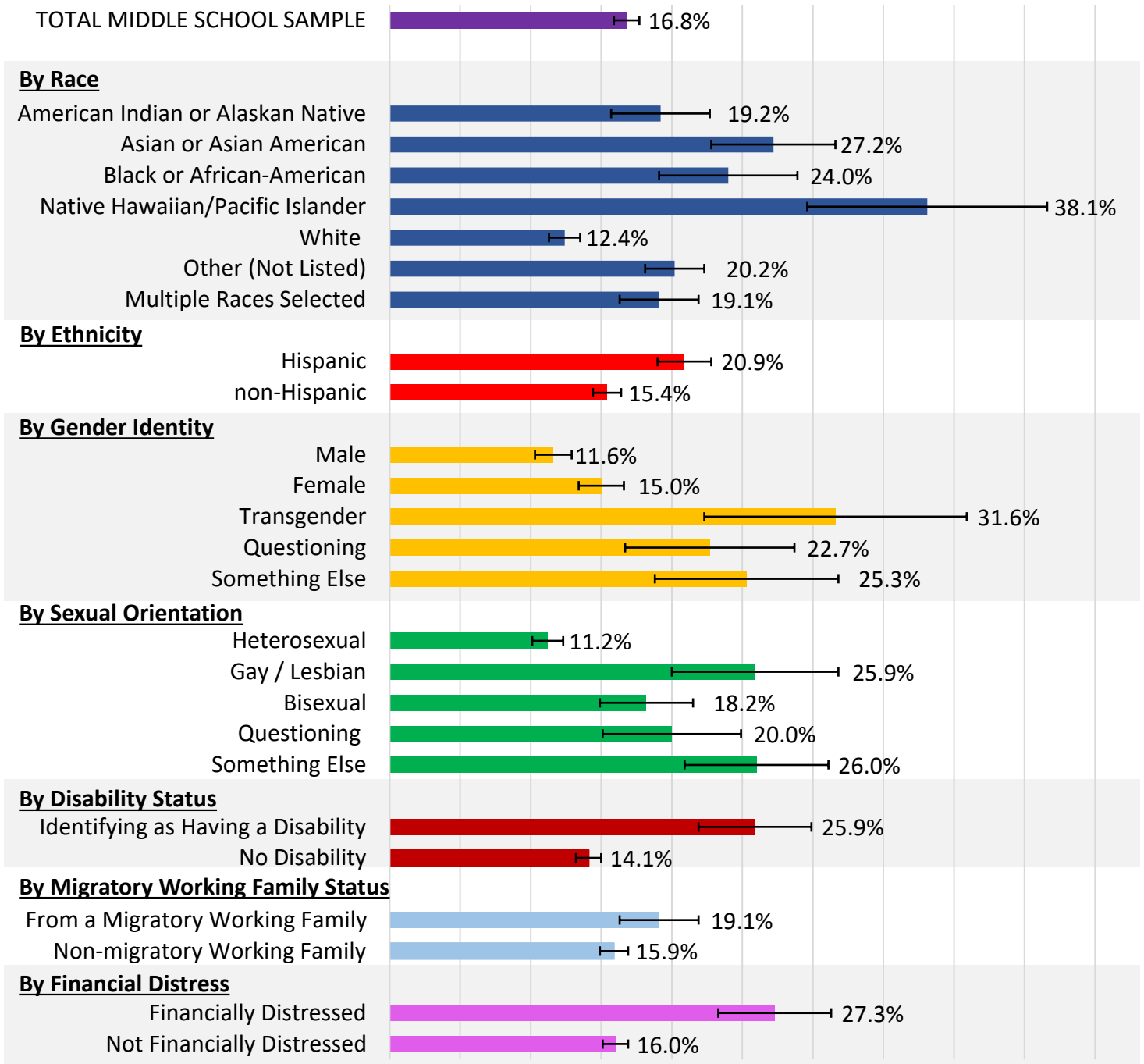
Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Worried about getting Sick from COVID-19

Question: How much are you worried right now about the following things as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? **Getting sick with COVID-19.**

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling “Pretty Worried” or “Extremely Worried”

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling worried about getting sick.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Pretty Worried” or “Extremely Worried”.
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

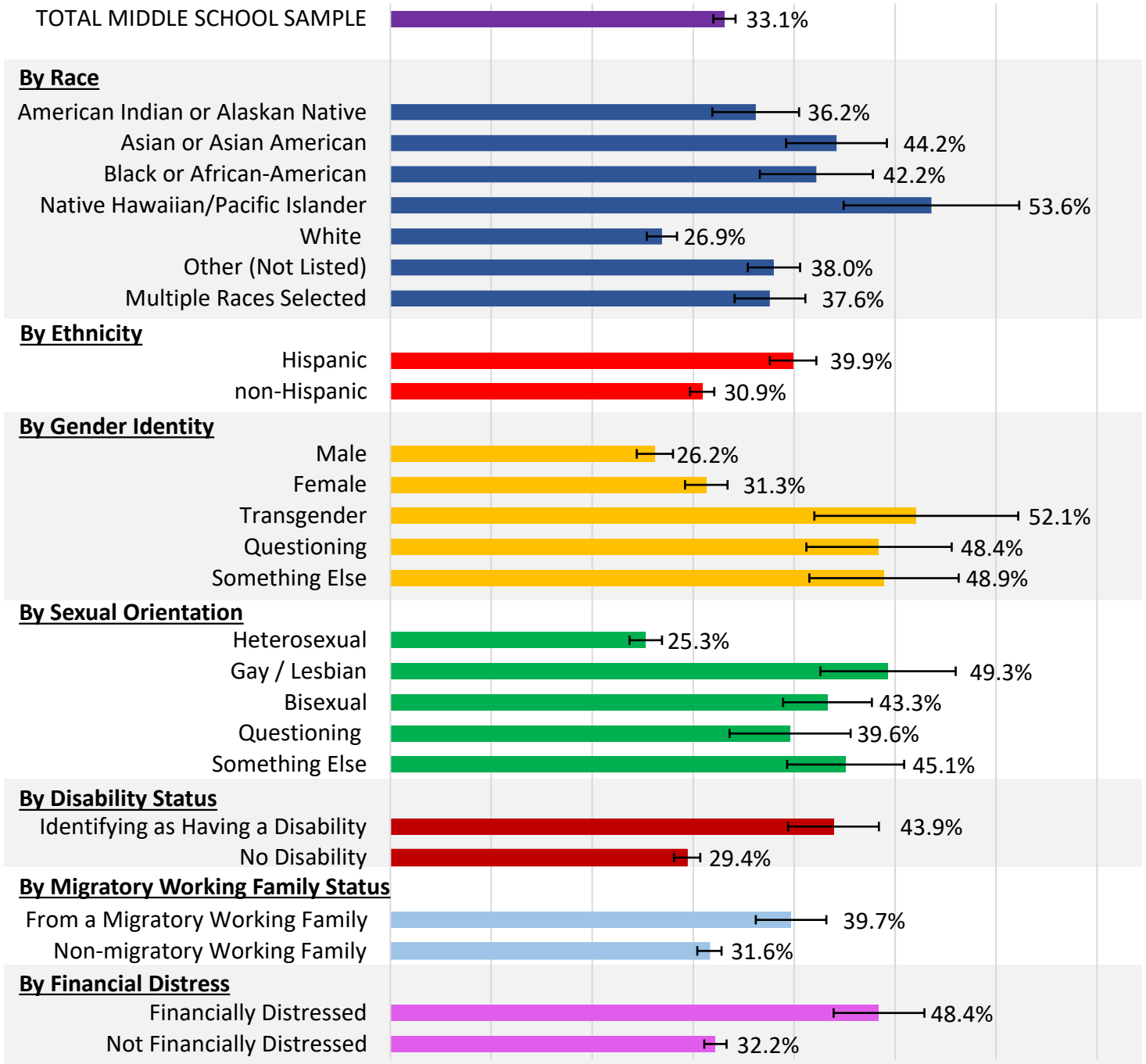
Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Worried about Friends/Family getting Sick from COVID-19

Question: How much are you worried right now about the following things as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? **Your friends or family getting sick with COVID-19.**

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling “Pretty Worried” or “Extremely Worried”

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students reported feeling worried about friends/family getting sick.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Pretty Worried” or “Extremely Worried”.
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

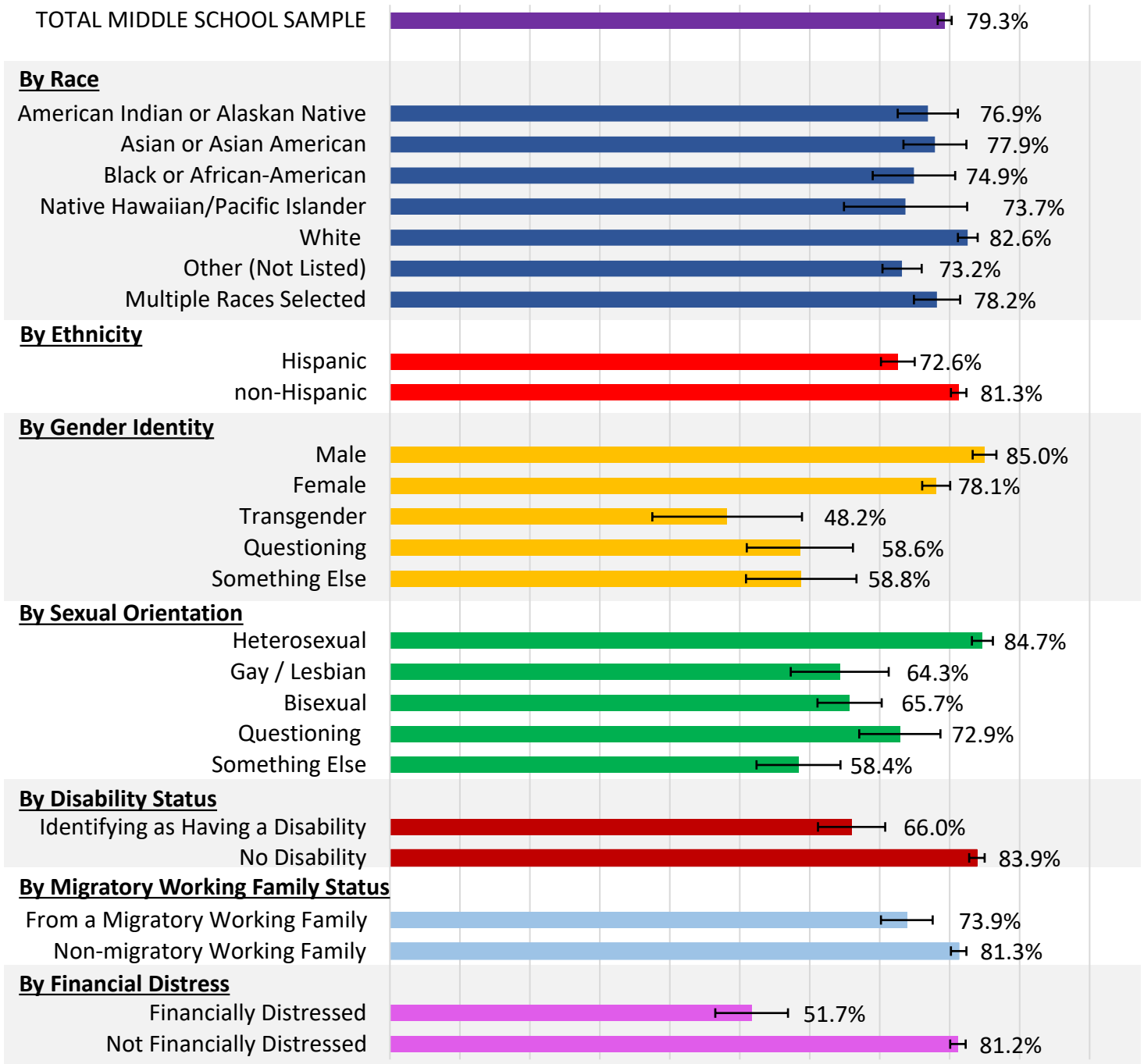
Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Supportive Adults

Question: Are there adults you can turn to for help or support if needed?

Percent of Students that Reported having a Supportive Adult

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported having a supportive adult.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Yes”.
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

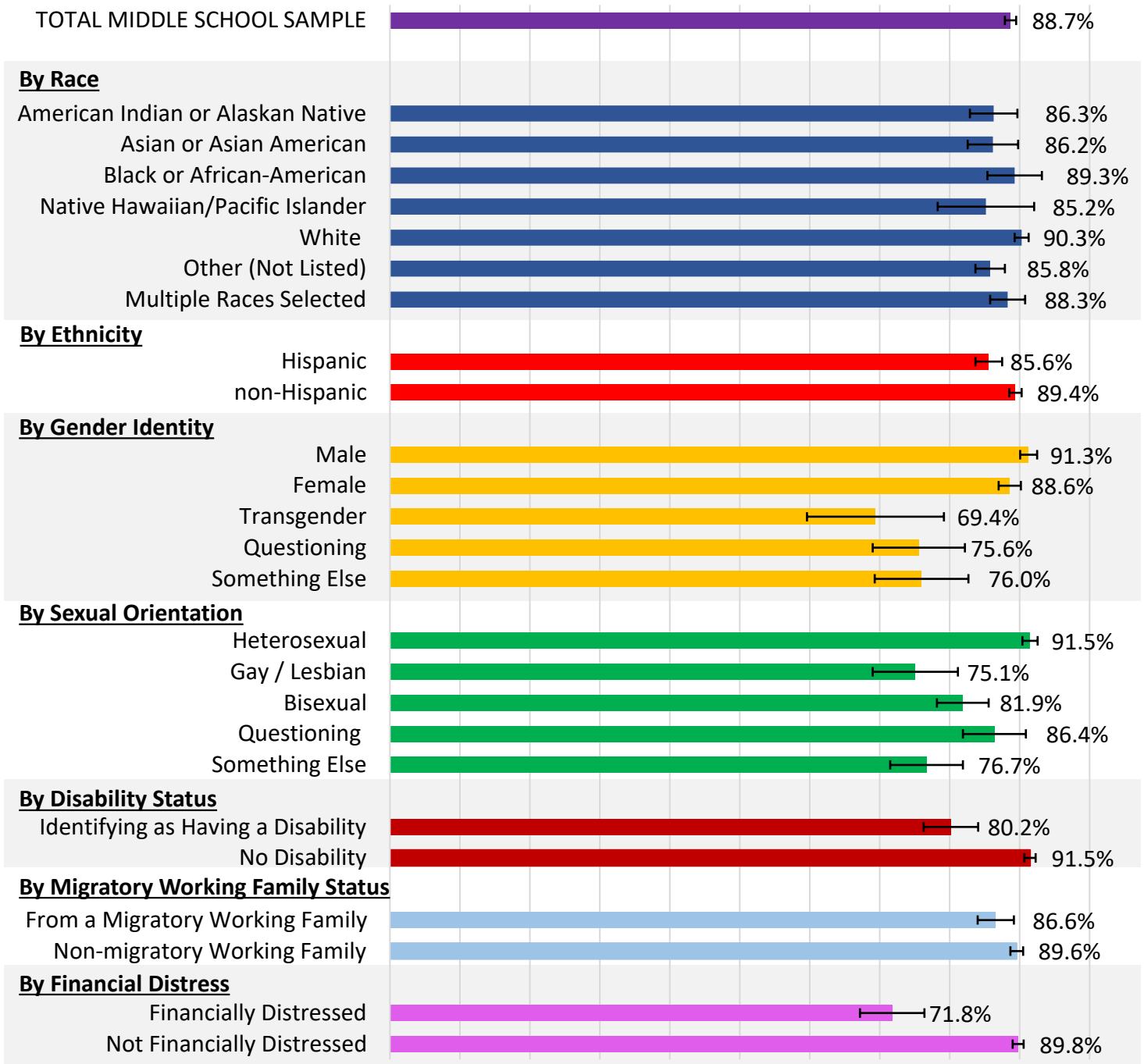
Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Safe Place Outside of School

Item: Outside of school hours, there is a safe place or person I can go to if I need help.

Percent of Students that Reported having a Safe Place

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



NOTES:

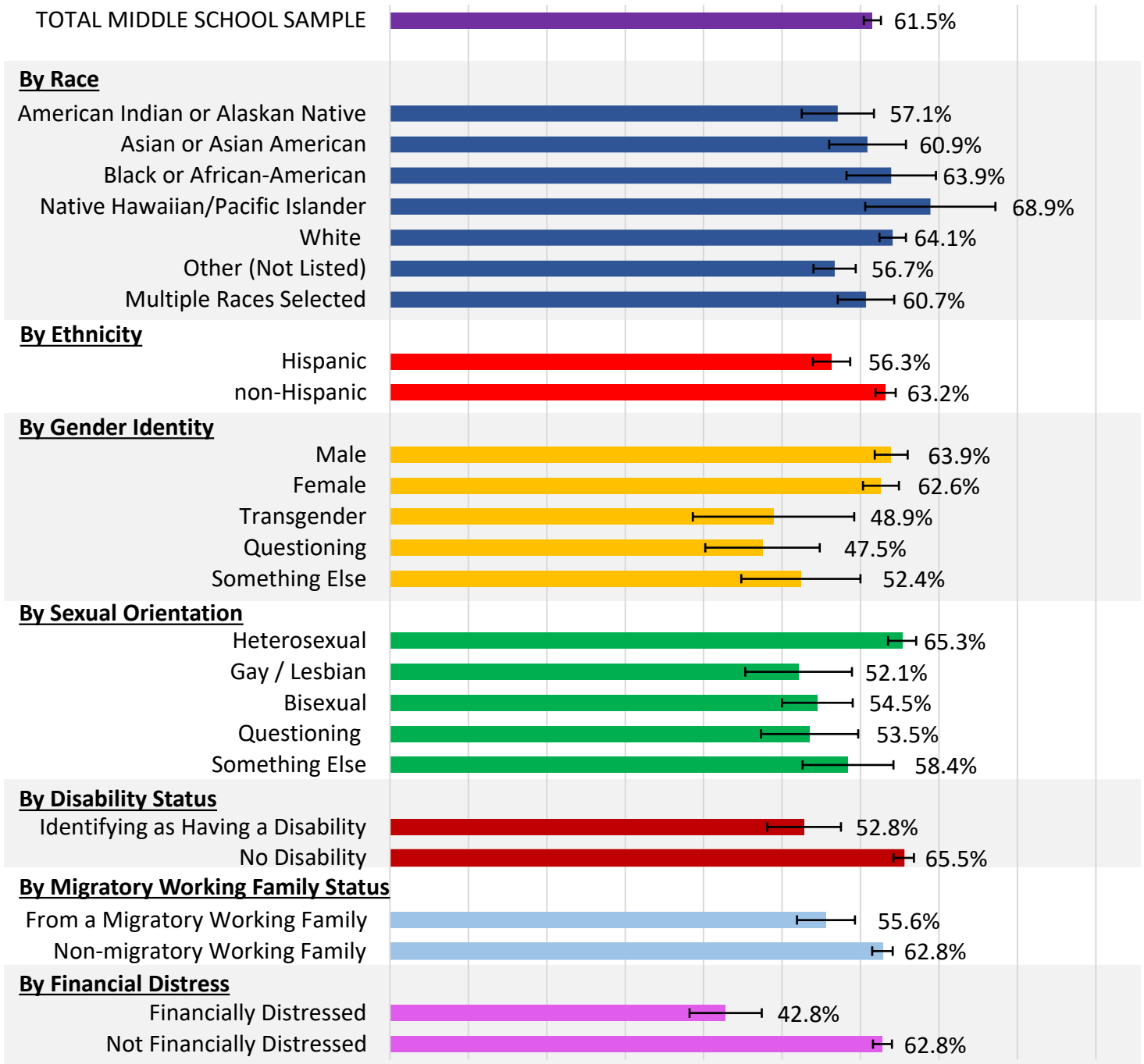
- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported having a safe place they can go.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”.
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Peer Support

Question: *In the past school year, how often have you felt supported by your friends or classmates?*

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling Supported by Peers “Often” or “Very Often”
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%



NOTES:

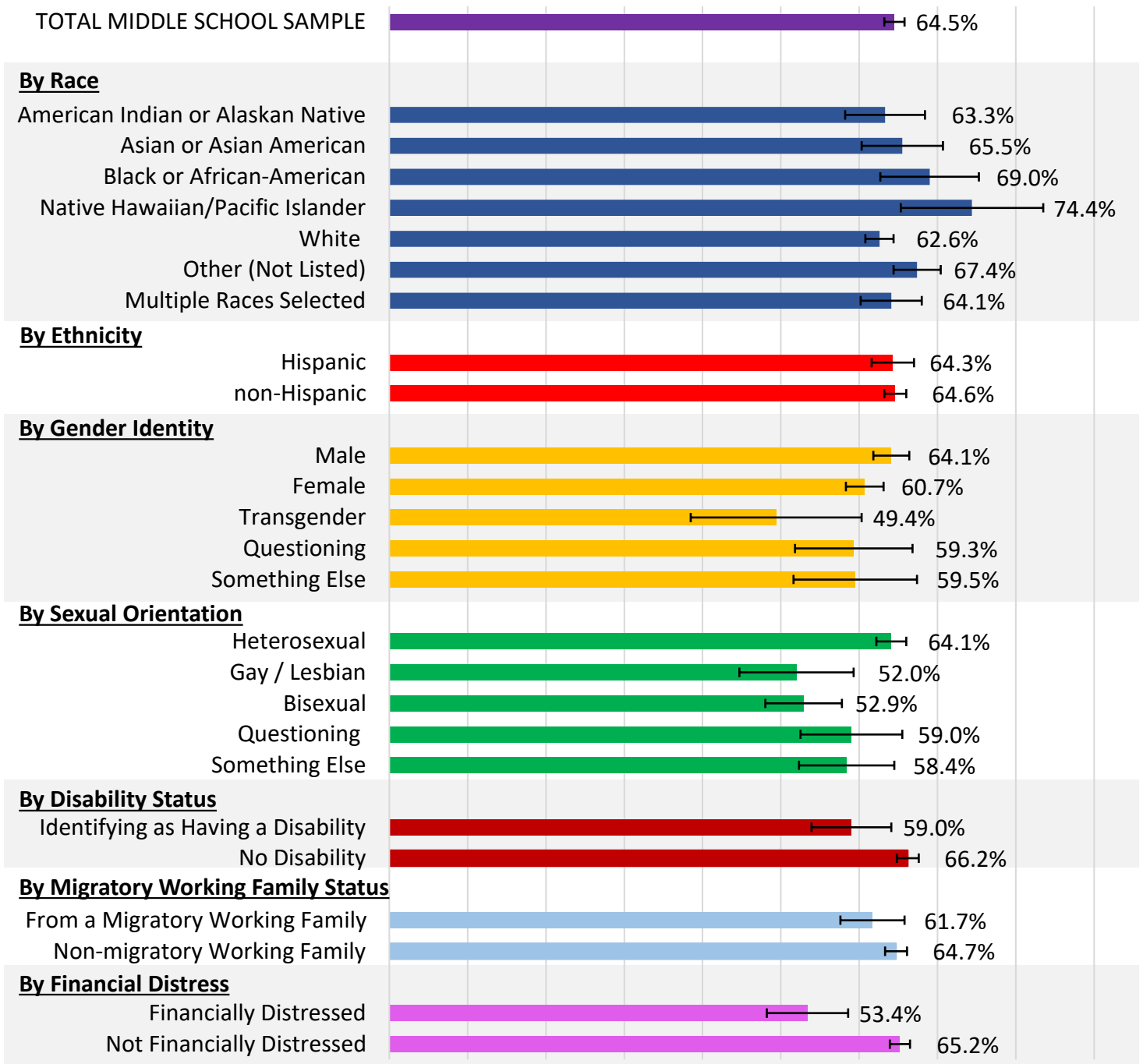
- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling supported by peers.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Often” or “Very Often”.
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Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Teacher Support

Question: Thinking about this school year, how often have one or more of your teachers or adults at school checked in to see how you were doing?

Percent of Students that Reported Teachers or Adults Checked-In on Them at Least "Sometimes"



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling supported by teachers.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Percentages shown above indicate those who selected "Sometimes", "Often" or "Always".
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

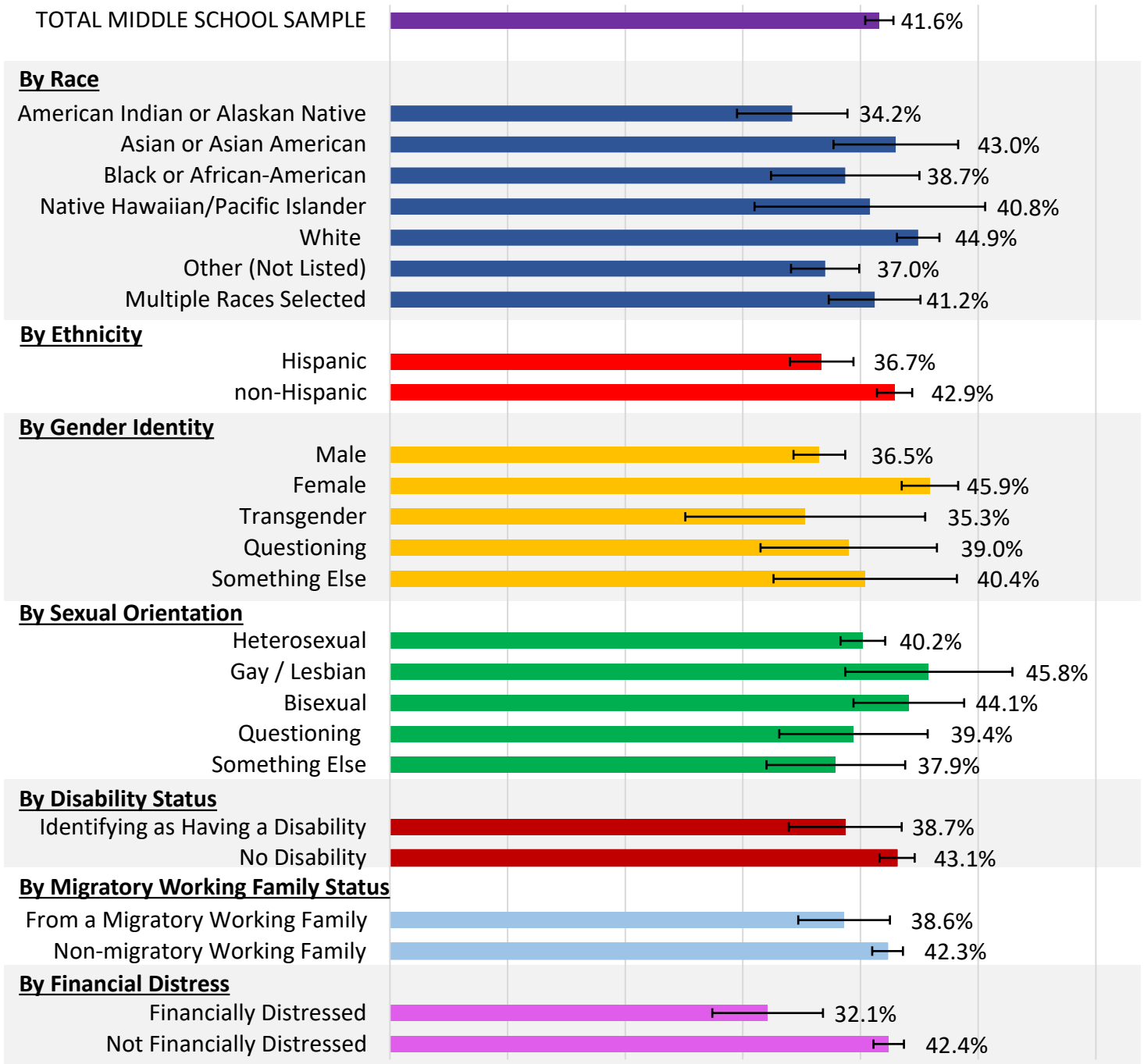
Feelings and Support: Middle School Students

Emotional Support

Item: I get emotional support from others.

Percent of Students that Reported getting Emotional Support

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported getting emotional support from others.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “I do this a medium amount” or “I do this a lot”.
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**Feelings and Support Topic Summary
Washington State Middle School Students**

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