

WA COVID-19 STUDENT SURVEY 2022

Mental Health and Substance Use 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 mental health and substance use during the COVID-19 pandemic 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 behaviors by self identified ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, migratory working family status, and financial distress.

Background on Mental Health and Substance Use

- Mental health in adolescents is crucial and mental health challenges have profound implications for subsequent development (Kieling et al., 2011).
- Adolescence is a critical developmental period for shaping mental health as roughly half of mental health disorders develop before age 14 (Kessler et al., 2005).
- Adolescents who experience more COVID-19-related worries, more learning difficulties, and more conflict with parents/family may be at greater risk for mental health concerns (Magson et al., 2021).
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, social interactions and other factors related to substance use behaviors may have changed. Understanding patterns of substance use among adolescents is important for promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing.

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

Mental Health

- Extended periods of sadness and hopelessness were reported by 3 out of 10 students (29.5%).
- 15.6% of middle school students reported having seriously considered suicide during the past year.
- Conversely, over two-thirds (68.7%) of all middle school students reported having at least “moderate” hope.
- More than half (58.4%) of students reported that their stress was manageable.

Mental health risks were not equally distributed among all students.

- Middle school students identifying as LGBTQ+, those identifying as having a disability, those from a migratory working family, and those identified as financially distressed reported high levels of prolonged sadness and hopelessness, high rates of suicidal ideation, low levels of hope and were less likely to report that their stress was manageable.

Substance Use

- Only 1.9% of middle school students reported past year cigarette use. 5.3% reported past year electronic cigarette use, 5.7% reported past year alcohol use and 3.1% who reported past year marijuana use.
- Overall, past year substance use was more common among students who identified as LGBTQ+, those identifying as having a disability, those who were from a migratory working family, and those identified as financially distressed.

Note: Students who indicated any suicidal ideation during the past year immediately received information and a list of support resources. This information read:

Thank you for answering those questions. Please talk to someone more about your thoughts and feelings. We also suggest you do one of these things right away:

- Talk to an adult you trust in your family or community, such a parent, coach, mentor, neighbor, or faith leader.
- Talk to an adult you trust at school, such as a teacher, counselor, nurse, intervention specialist, or principal.
- Contact one or more of the places listed below for emotional support and to find out where to get help.

Washington Teen Link

<https://www.teenlink.org/>

1-866-TEENLINK (833-6546)

Crisis Text Line

<https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Text HOME to 741741

You Are Not Alone Network (for Native youth):

<http://www.youarenotalonenetwork.org/>

1-877-209-1266

The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ youth):

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/> to text or chat

1-866-488-7386 to talk

National Teen Line:

<https://teenlineonline.org/>

1-800-852-8336 or text TEEN to 839363

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

1-800-273-8255 (TRS: 1-800-799-4889)

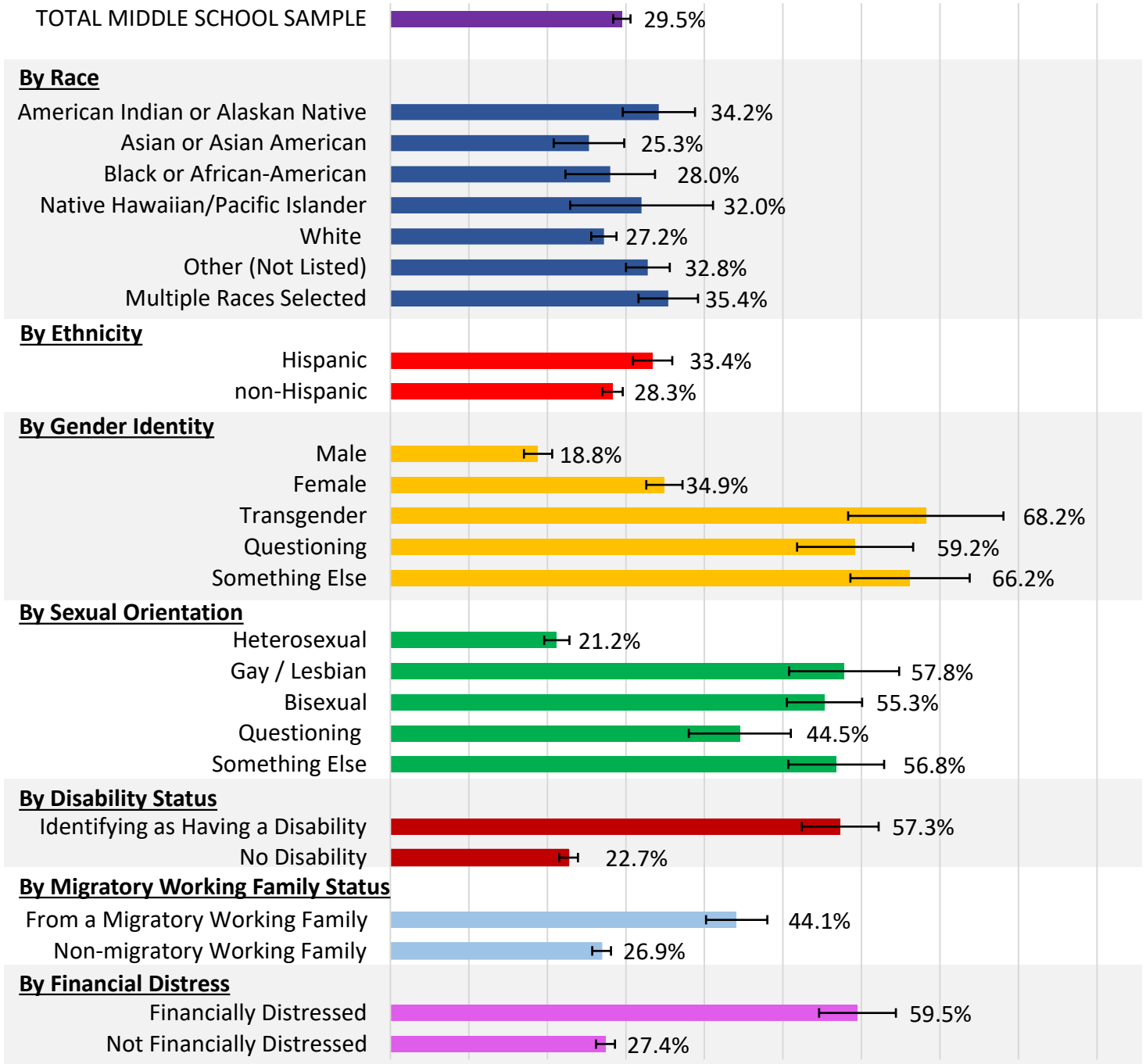
Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Sadness / Hopelessness

Question: During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling Sad / Hopeless

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



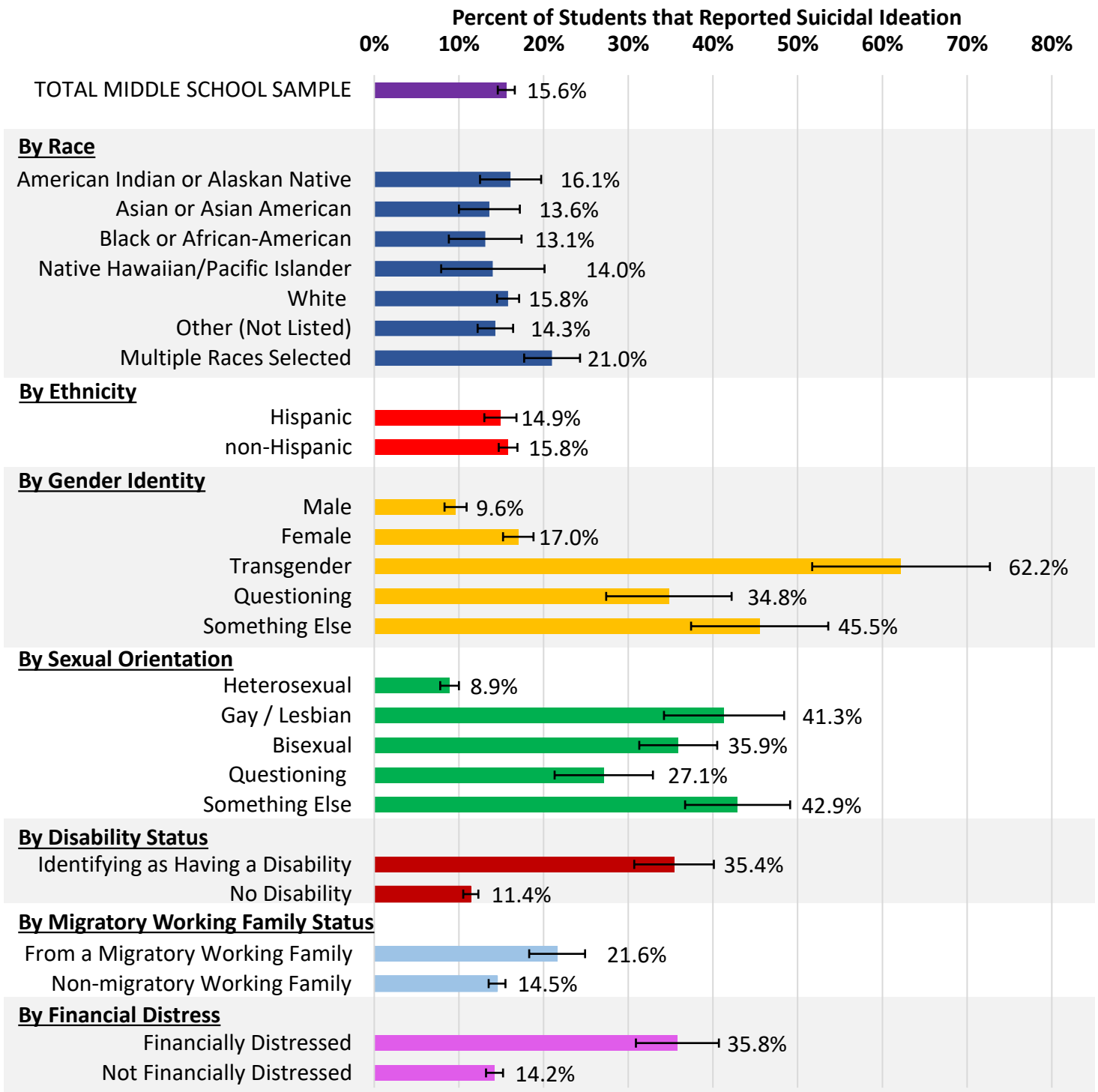
NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feelings of sadness/hopelessness.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “Yes” and “No.” 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.

Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Suicidal Ideation

Question: During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?



NOTES:

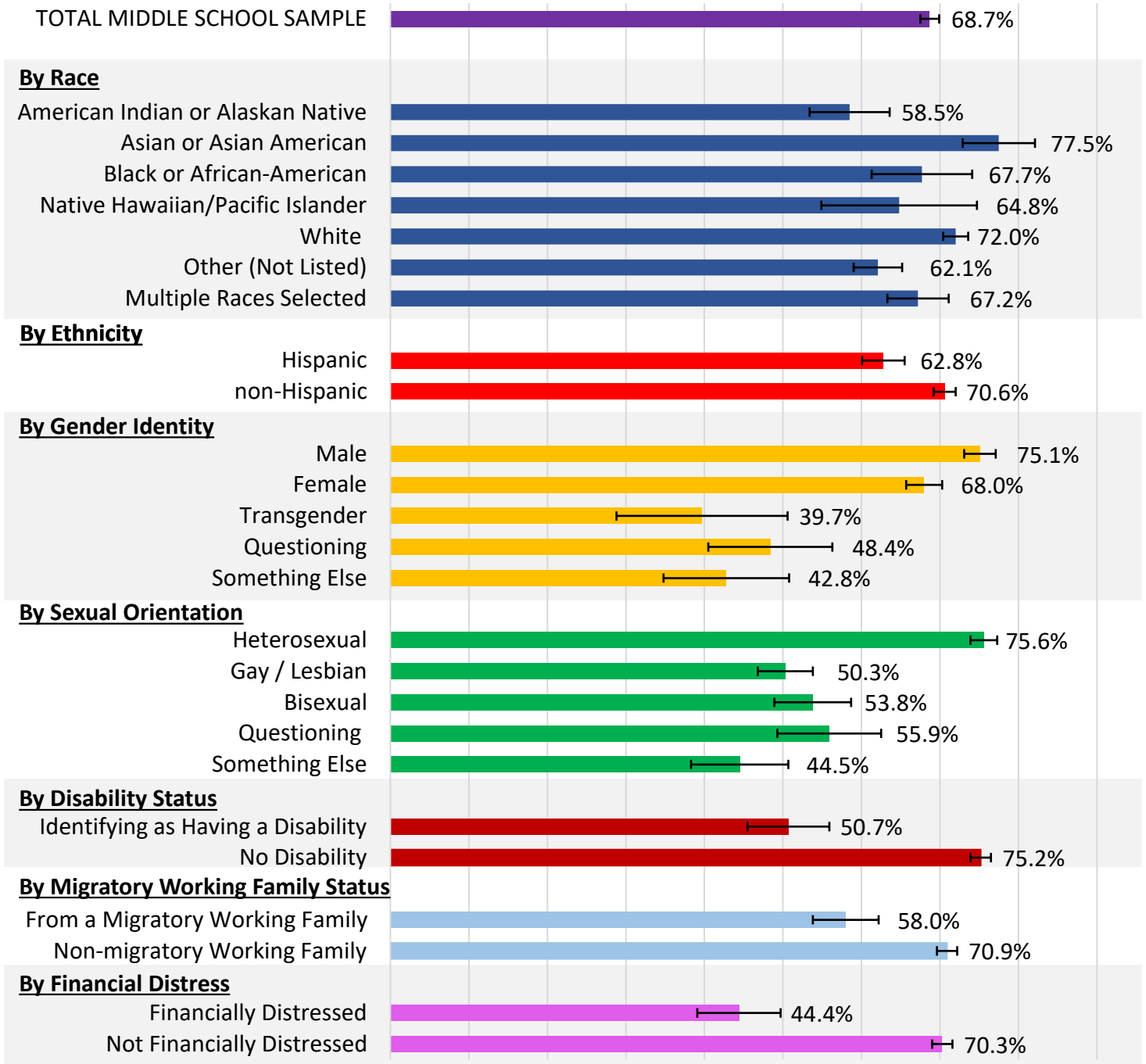
- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling suicidal.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “Yes” and “No.” Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Yes.”
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Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Hope Scores

Scale: Hope scores based upon an abbreviated 4-item Children's Hope Scale.

Percent of Students Scoring "Moderate" or "High" on Hope Scale
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%



NOTES:

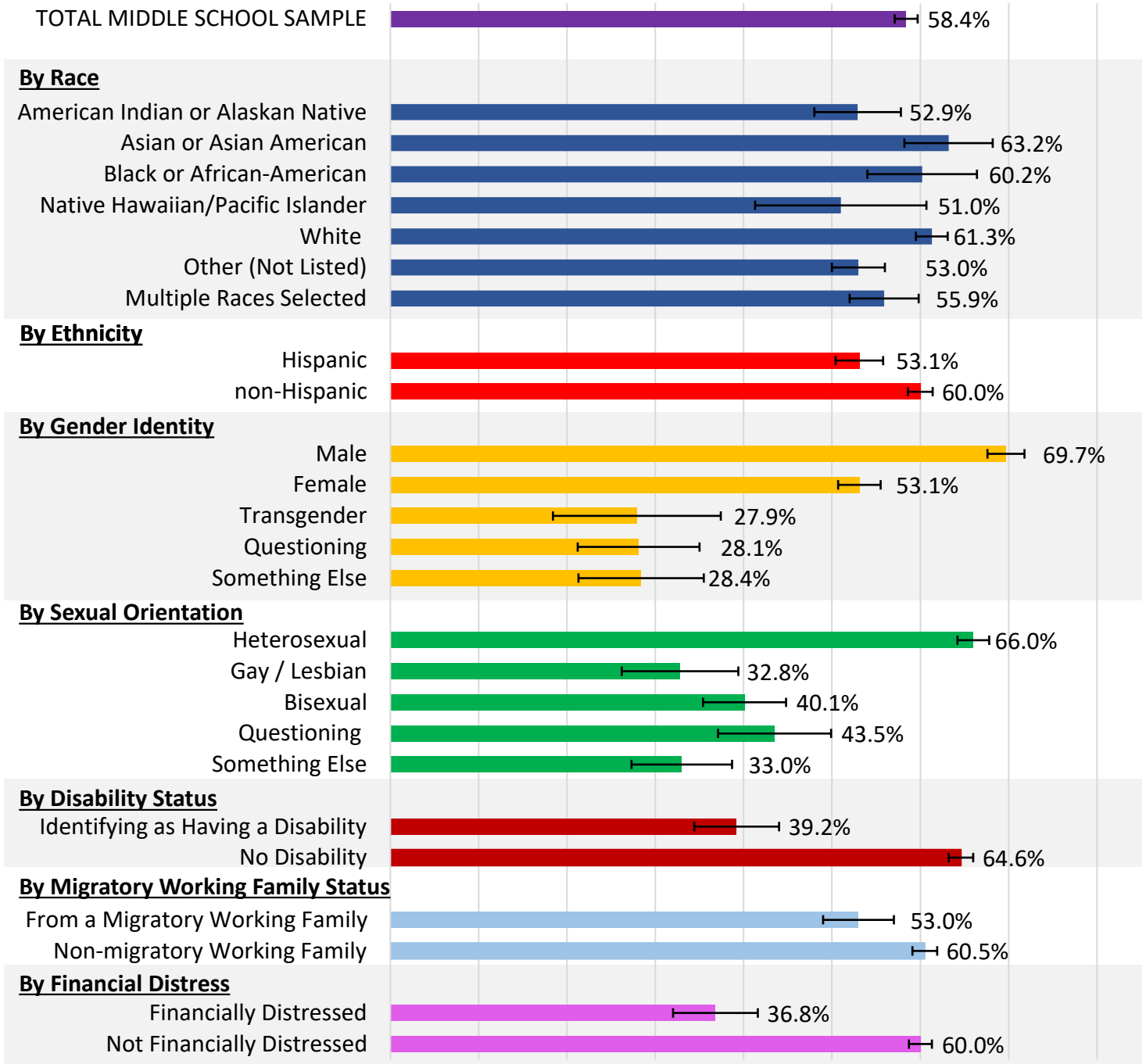
- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported moderate to high hope.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Hope scale items derived from a measure created by Snyder (1997). Additional information on this scale can be found in the 2022 state reports.
- 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.

Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Stress Management

Item: My stress level is manageable most days.

Percent of Students Reporting that their Stress Level was Manageable
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%



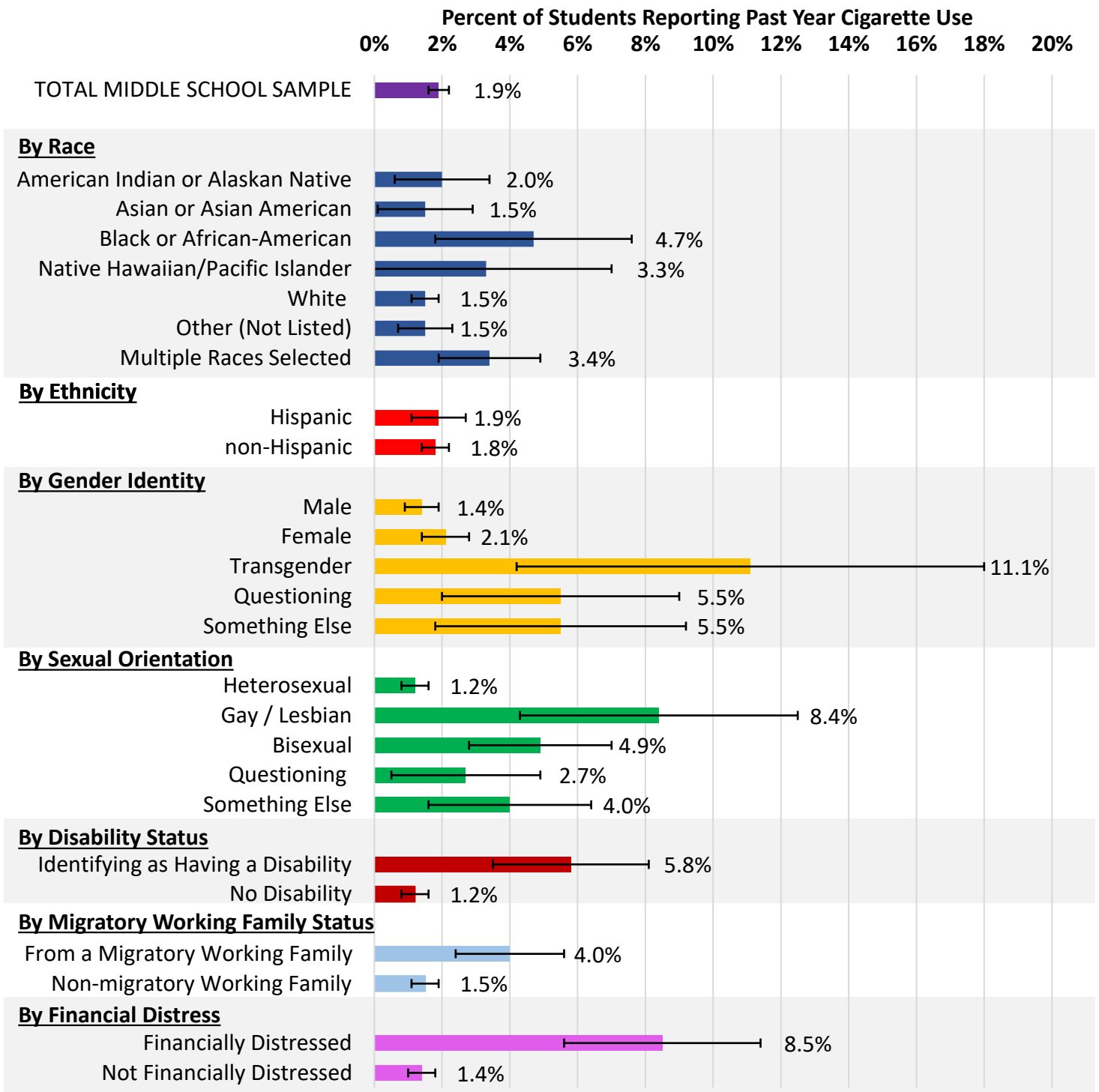
NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feelings stress manageable most days.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item ranged from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.” Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Strongly agree” or “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.

Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Substance Use - Cigarettes

Question: During the past year did you smoke cigarettes?



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported using cigarettes during past year.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “Yes” and “No.” 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.

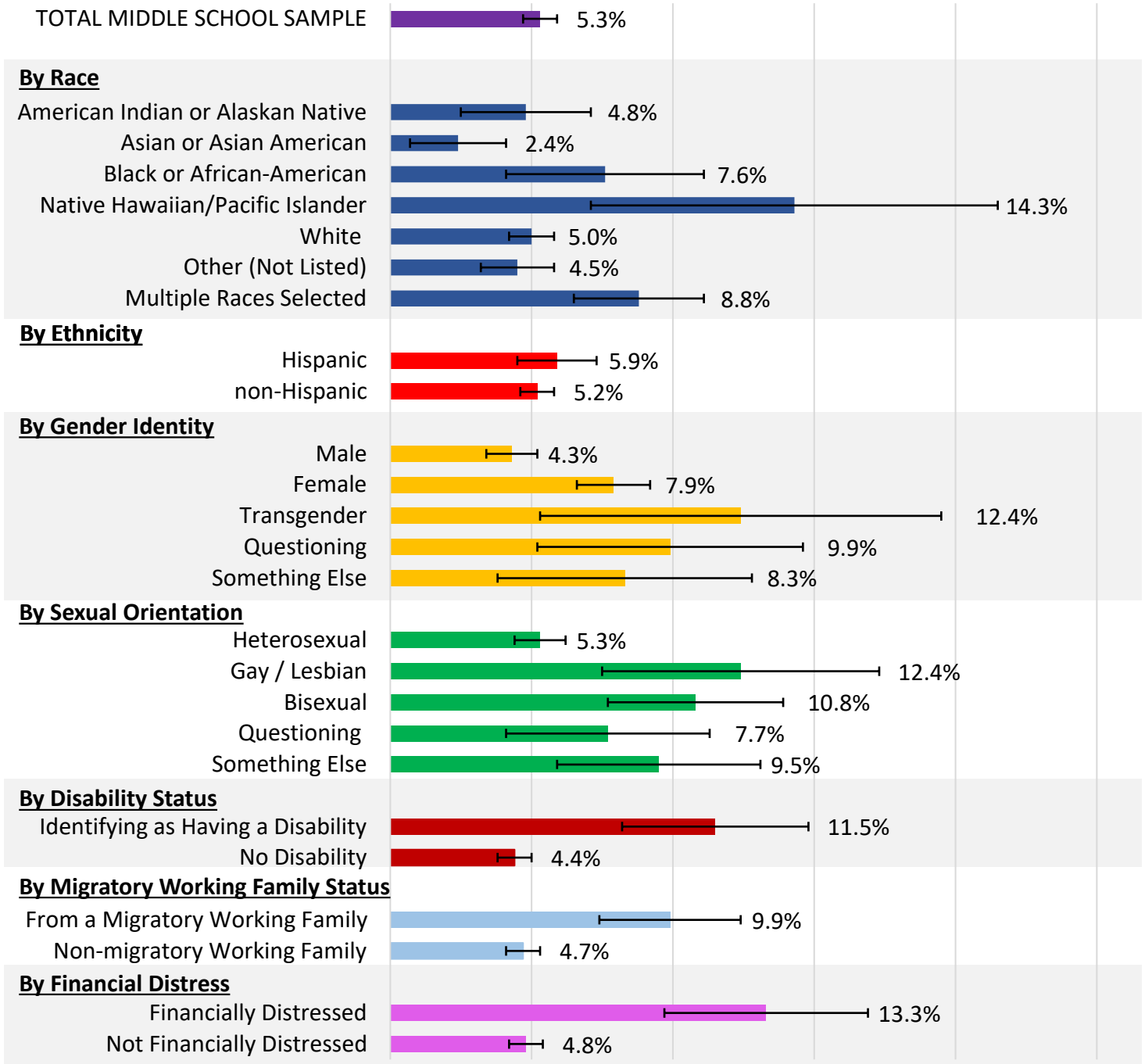
Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Substance Use – Electronic Cigarettes

Question: During the past year did you use an electronic cigarette, also called e-cigs, JUUL, or vape pens?

Percent of Students Reporting Past Year Electronic Cigarette Use

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25%



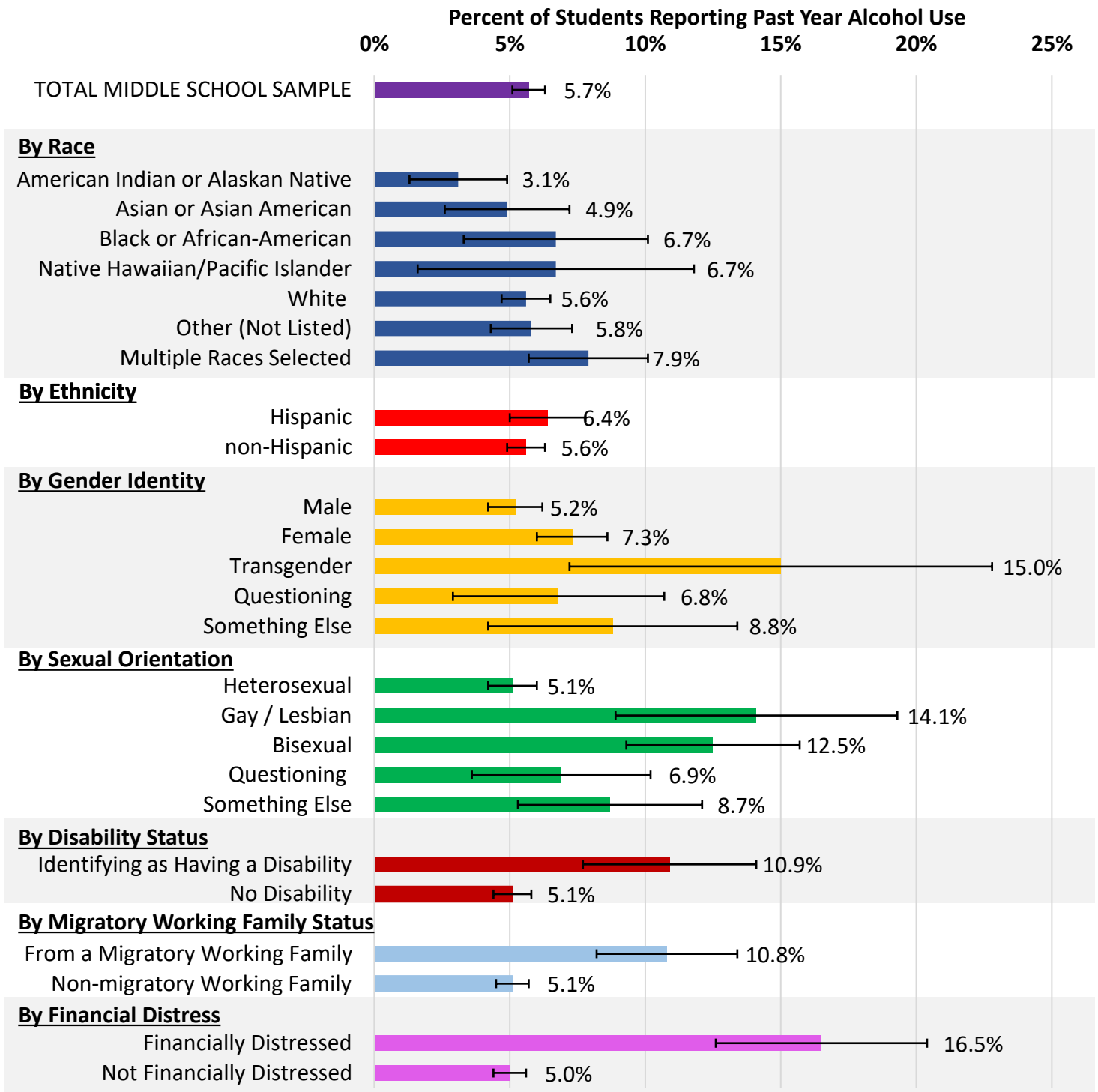
NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported using e-cigarettes during past year.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “Yes” and “No.” 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.

Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Substance Use – Alcohol

Question: During the past year did you drink a glass, can, or bottle of alcohol?



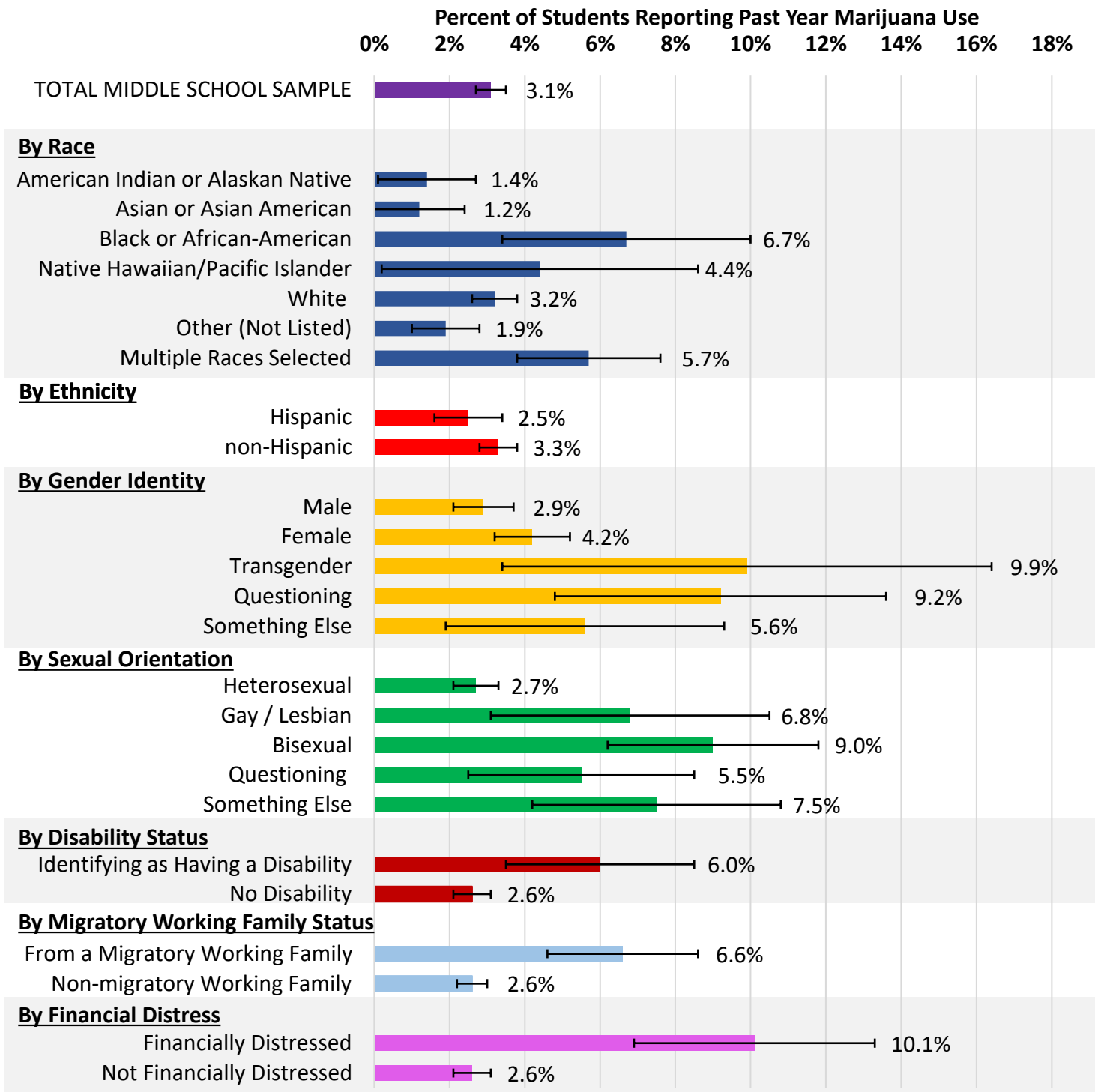
NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported using alcohol during past year.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “Yes” and “No.” Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Yes.”
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Mental Health and Substance Use: Middle School Students

Substance Use – Marijuana

Question: During the past year did you use marijuana or hashish?



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported using marijuana during past year.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “Yes” and “No.” Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Yes.”
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**Mental Health and Substance Use Topic Summary
Washington State Middle School Students**

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