

# Transgender health: Disparities and protective factors

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## Stigma

- Enacted
- Anticipated
- Internalized

## Mental health

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicidal ideation

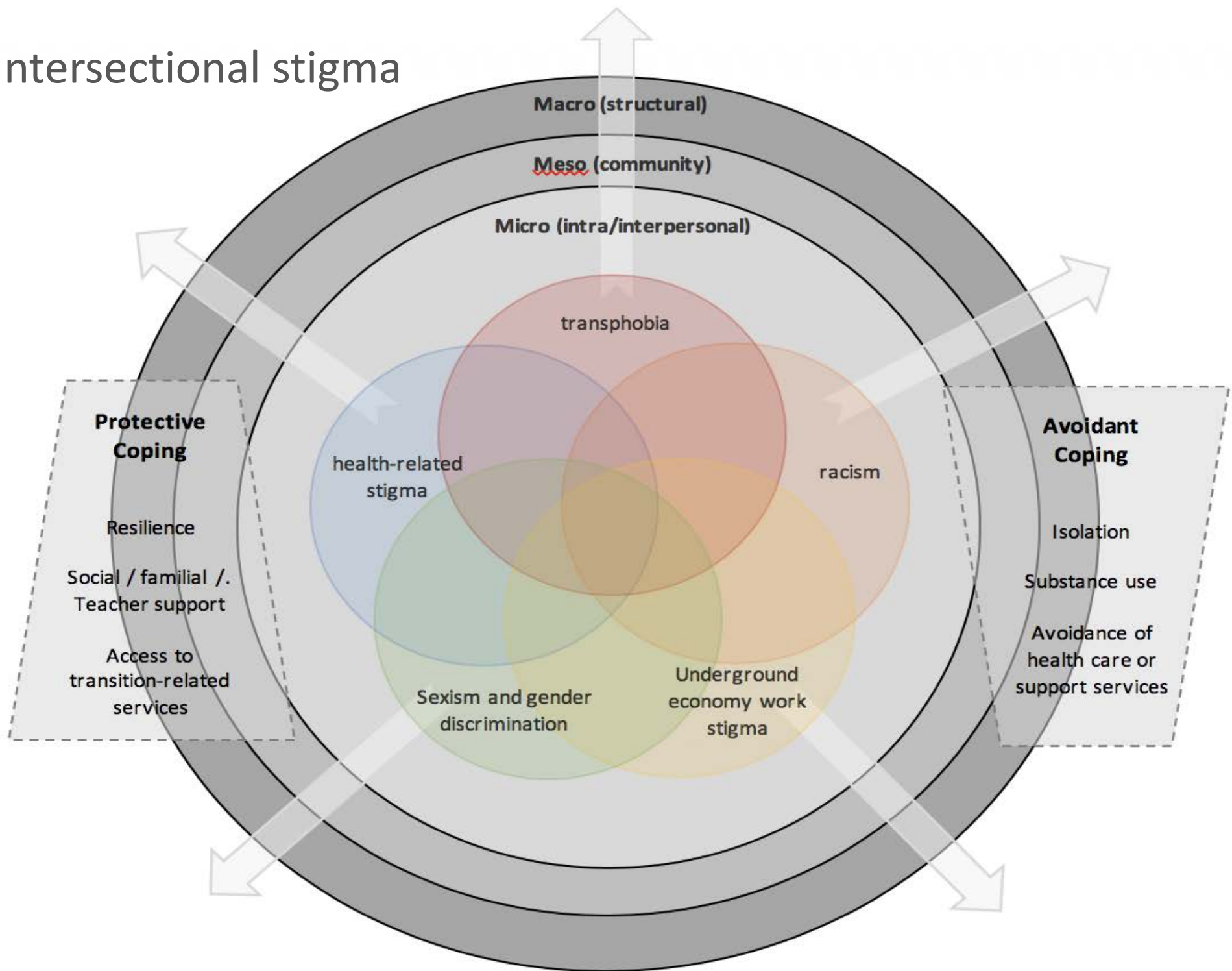
## Behavioral health

- Healthcare avoidance
- Substance use
- Lower levels of treatment adherence

## Health outcomes

- Reduced access to health care
- Health disparities
- Higher rates of HIV, lower rates of viral suppression

# Intersectional stigma



# The Washington Post

## **The murder of black transgender women is becoming a crisis**

Petula Dvorak

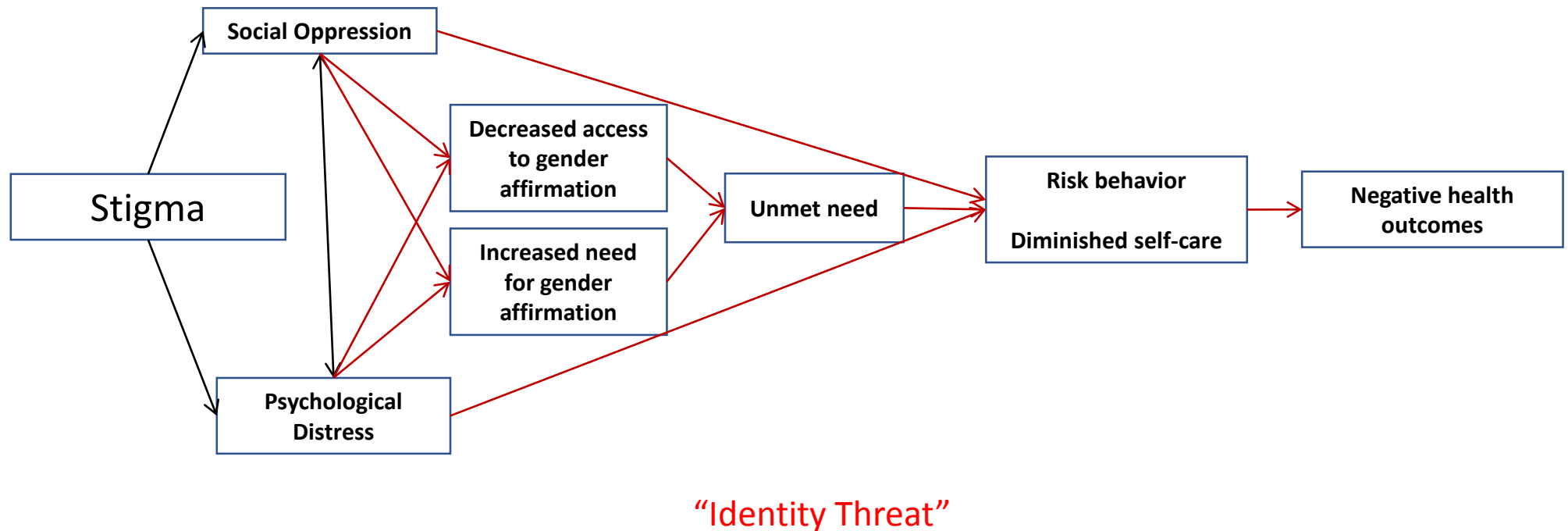
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# Gender affirmation

- an interpersonal, interactive process whereby a person receives social recognition and support for their gender identity and expression
  - can also include medical processes, such as transition-related health care, and legal processes, such as changing one's gender marker on legal documents.

# Model of Gender Affirmation





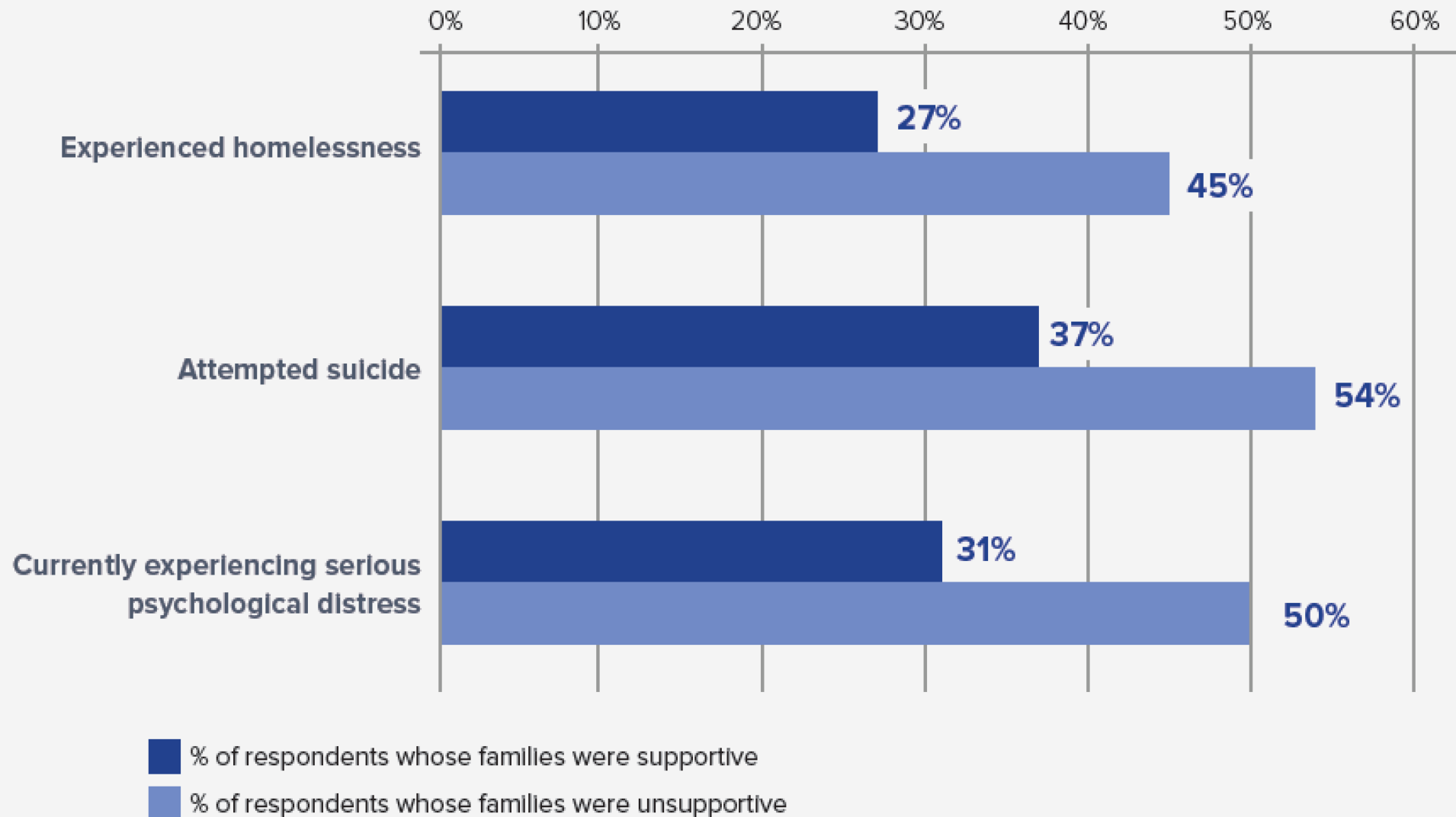
# Enacted stigma



- Violence
  - Physical assault (53% lifetime, 13% past year)
  - Sexual assault (47% lifetime, 10% past year)
- Harassment
  - Verbal (54%, past year)
- Employment “mistreatment” (30% in past year)
- Family violence and rejection
  - Physical violence from family member (10% past year)
  - Being kicked out of the family home (8% ever)



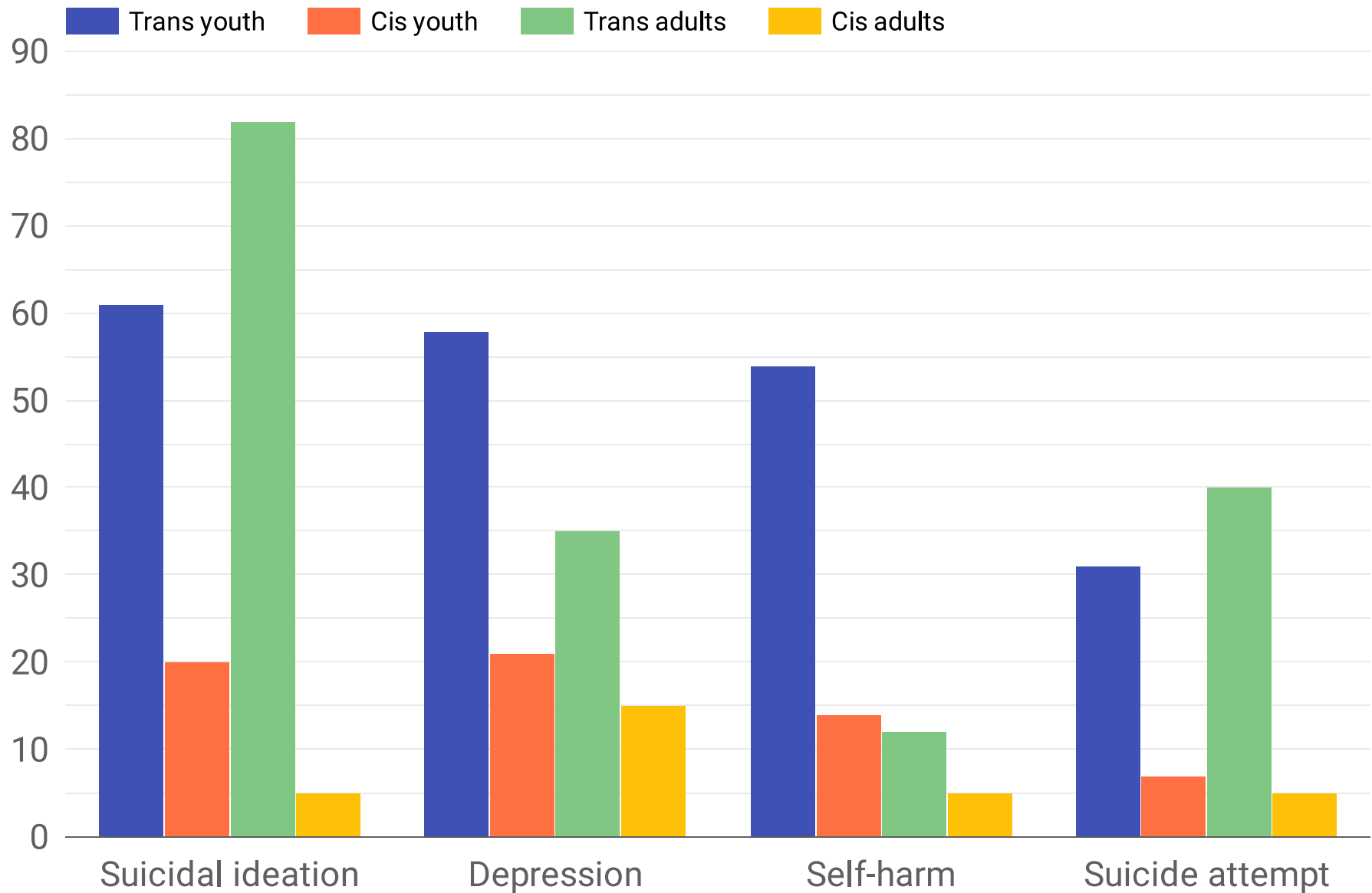
## Negative experiences among those with supportive and unsupportive families



From the U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS, 2015)



# Psychological Distress



USTS, 2015; MN Student Survey, 2013; NIMH, 2018

**Self-Reported Physical and Mental Health of Gender Nonconforming Transgender Adults in the United States.**

Streed CG Jr<sup>1</sup>, McCarthy EP<sup>2</sup>, Haas JS<sup>1</sup>.

Retrospective analysis of the 2014-2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

	<i>Gender nonconforming transgender adults (n=450), n (%)<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Gender-binary transgender adults (n=1779) n (%)<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>p (gender nonconforming vs. gender-binary transgender adults)</i>
Self-reported health outcomes			
Poor or fair health	133 (30.3)	454 (20.2)	<b>0.008</b>
Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions	111 (27.6)	323 (19.3)	<b>0.03</b>
Limitation in any way	132 (36.3)	404 (20.1)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

## **Health disparities between genderqueer, transgender, and cisgender individuals: An extension of minority stress theory.**

Lefevor GT<sup>1</sup>, Boyd-Rogers CC<sup>1</sup>, Sprague BM<sup>1</sup>, Janis RA<sup>1</sup>.

Participants were college students from the Center for Collegiate Mental Health's 2012-2016 database, N=3,568 (892 identified outside the gender binary)

Compared to binary-identified cis and trans people, genderqueer participants reported higher levels of:

- harassment
- sexual abuse
- traumatic events
- anxiety
- depression
- psychological distress
- self-harm and suicidality (nearly 50% had attempted suicide)

# Substance use as coping strategy

- In a 3-year prospective study of 230 transgender women in NYC:
  - ‘Gender abuse’ (enacted stigma) was found to be associated with substance use, and heavily mediated by depressive symptoms. (Nuttbrock et al, 2014)
- In a study of 292 young transgender women in San Francisco:
  - 69% reported recent drug use
  - Those with a history of gender-related discrimination and/or PTSD were almost twice as likely to use drugs
  - Those reporting psychological distress had higher odds of using multiple heavy drugs (Rowe et al, 2015)

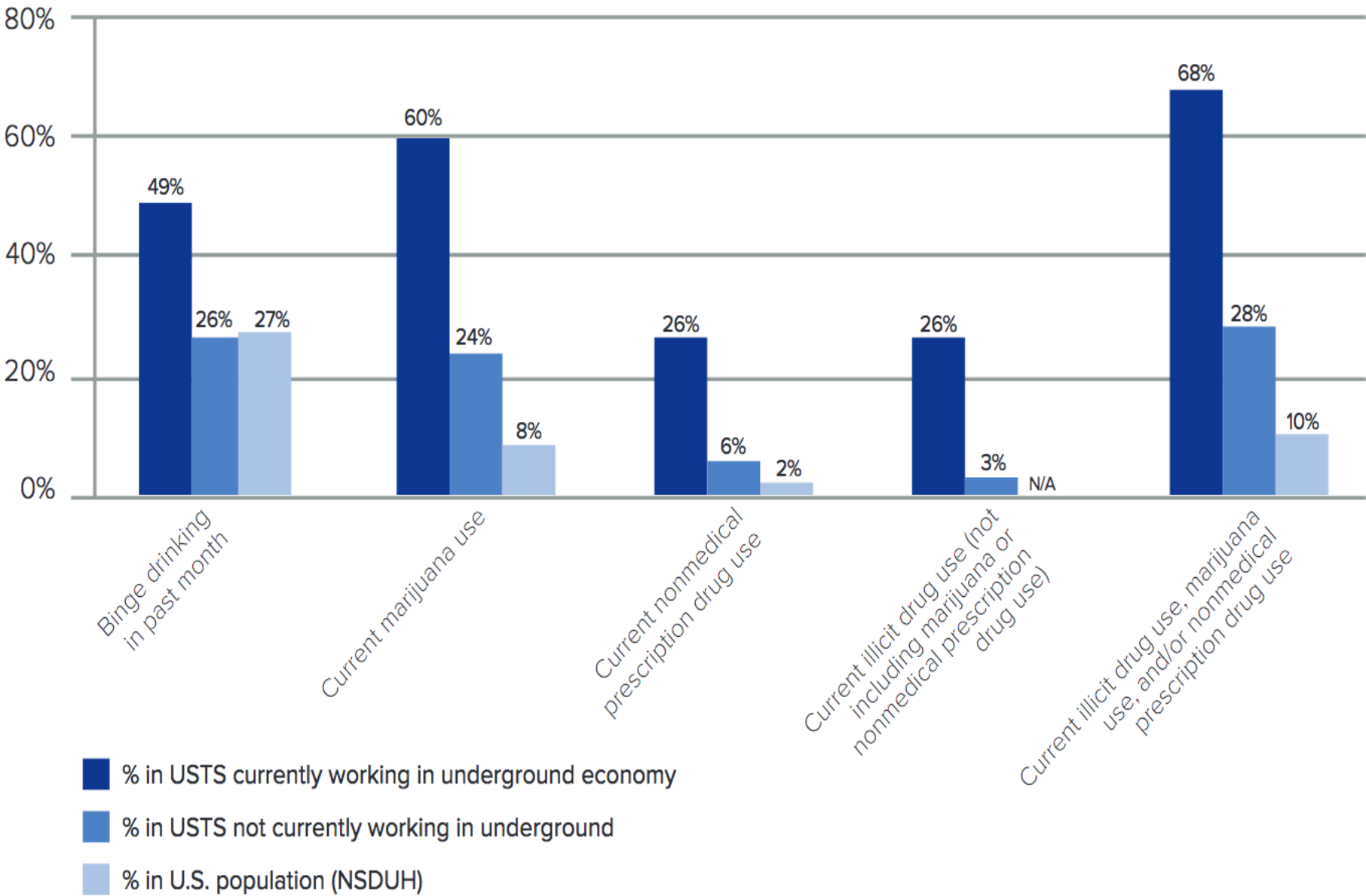
Trans adults use illicit drugs at 3 times the rate of cis adults in the US.

Trans youth use illicit drugs at 2.5 to 4 times the rate of cis youth.

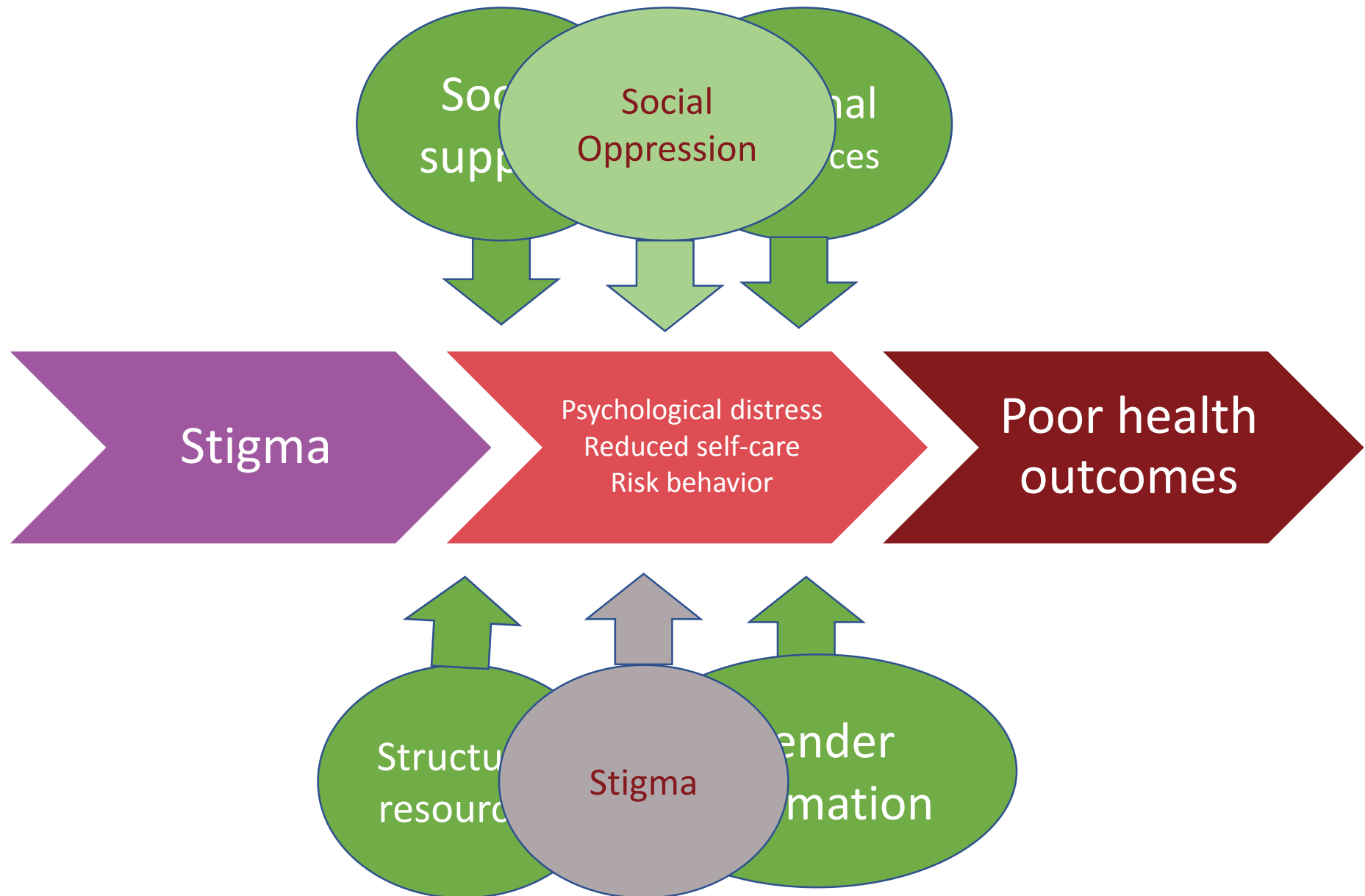


(USTS, 2015; Johns et al, 2019)

**Figure 7:38: Substance use in the past month among respondents currently working in the underground economy**



# Resilience / Protective Factors





Social support: Family



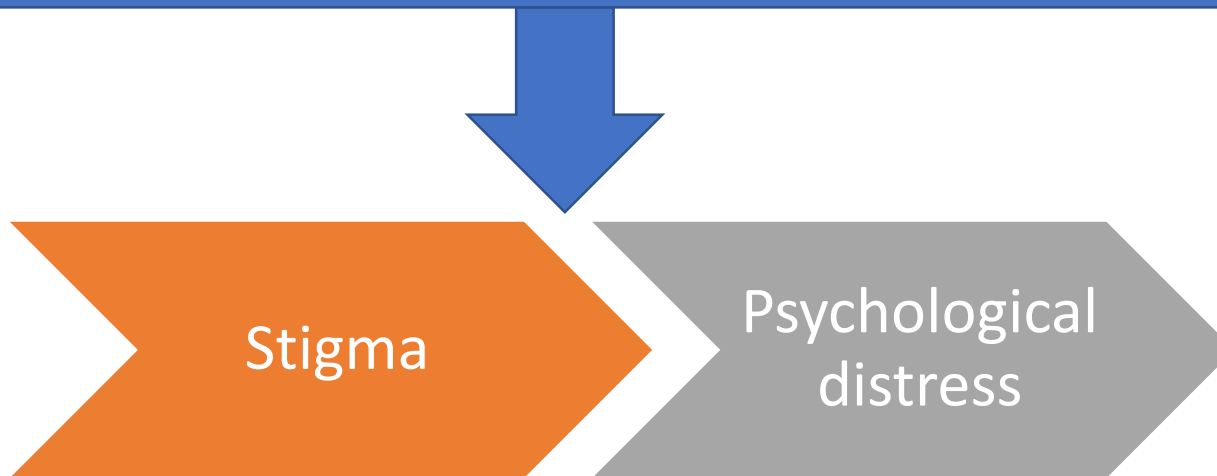
Stigma

Psychological  
distress

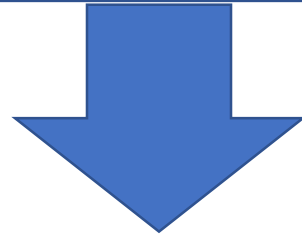


Gower et al, 2018  
Bockting et al. 2013

## Social support: Trans community & peers



Gender affirmation:  
medical/social



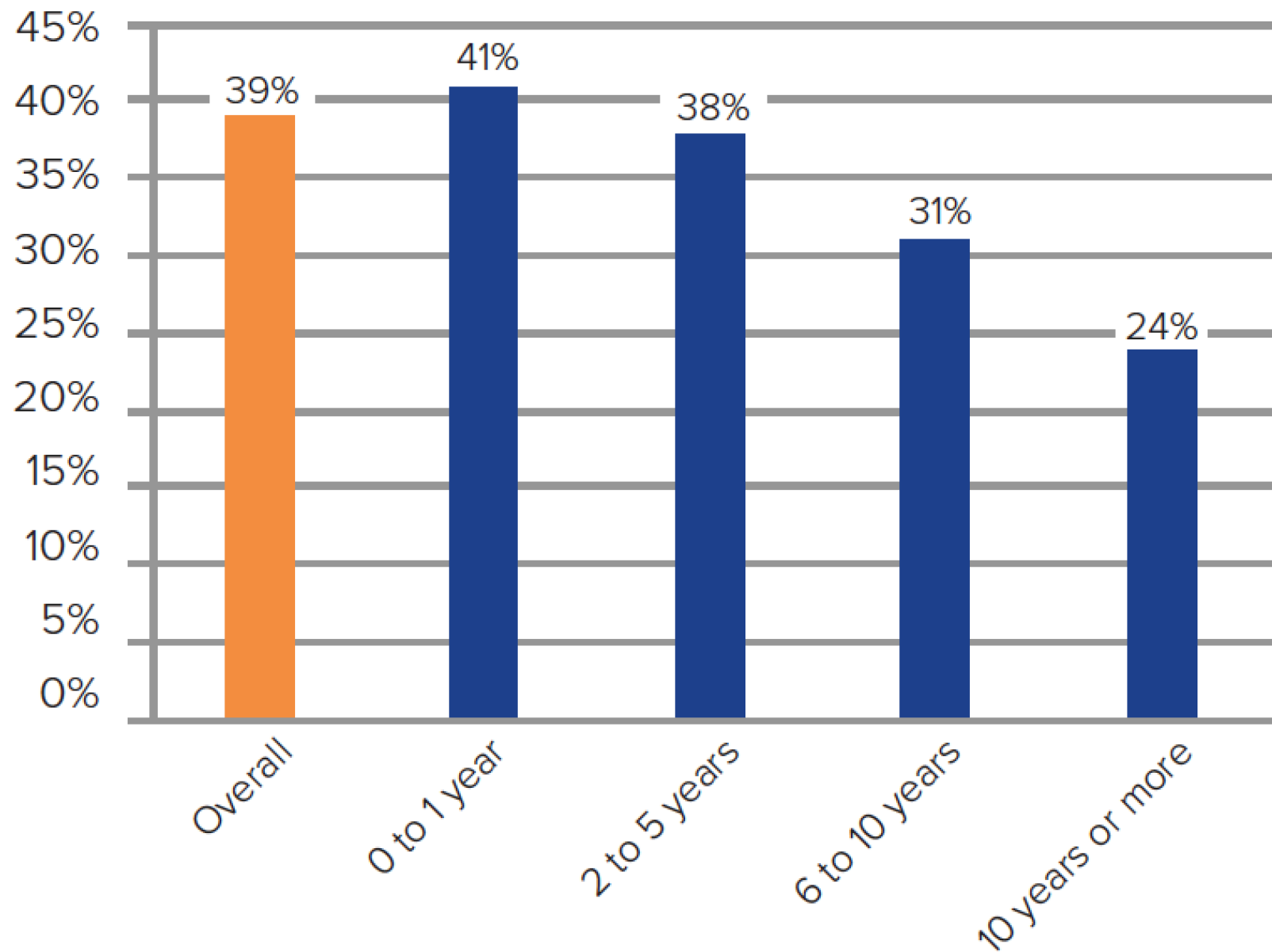
Stigma

Psychological  
distress



**Figure 7.24: Currently experiencing serious psychological distress**

**YEARS SINCE BEGAN TRANSITIONING (%)**



# Conclusions

- Due to stigma, trans and gender diverse youth and adults experience poorer health outcomes than their cisgender peers.
  - *Intersectional stigma* influences who is most severely impacted
- Protective/resilience factors and potential points of intervention include:
  - Social support from peers, family, and trans community
  - Access to gender affirming healthcare
  - Structural resources: housing, employment, education
  - Internal resources: identity pride, coping





Triunfo









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