



INTRODUCTION

New England Regional Health Equity Council (RHEC)

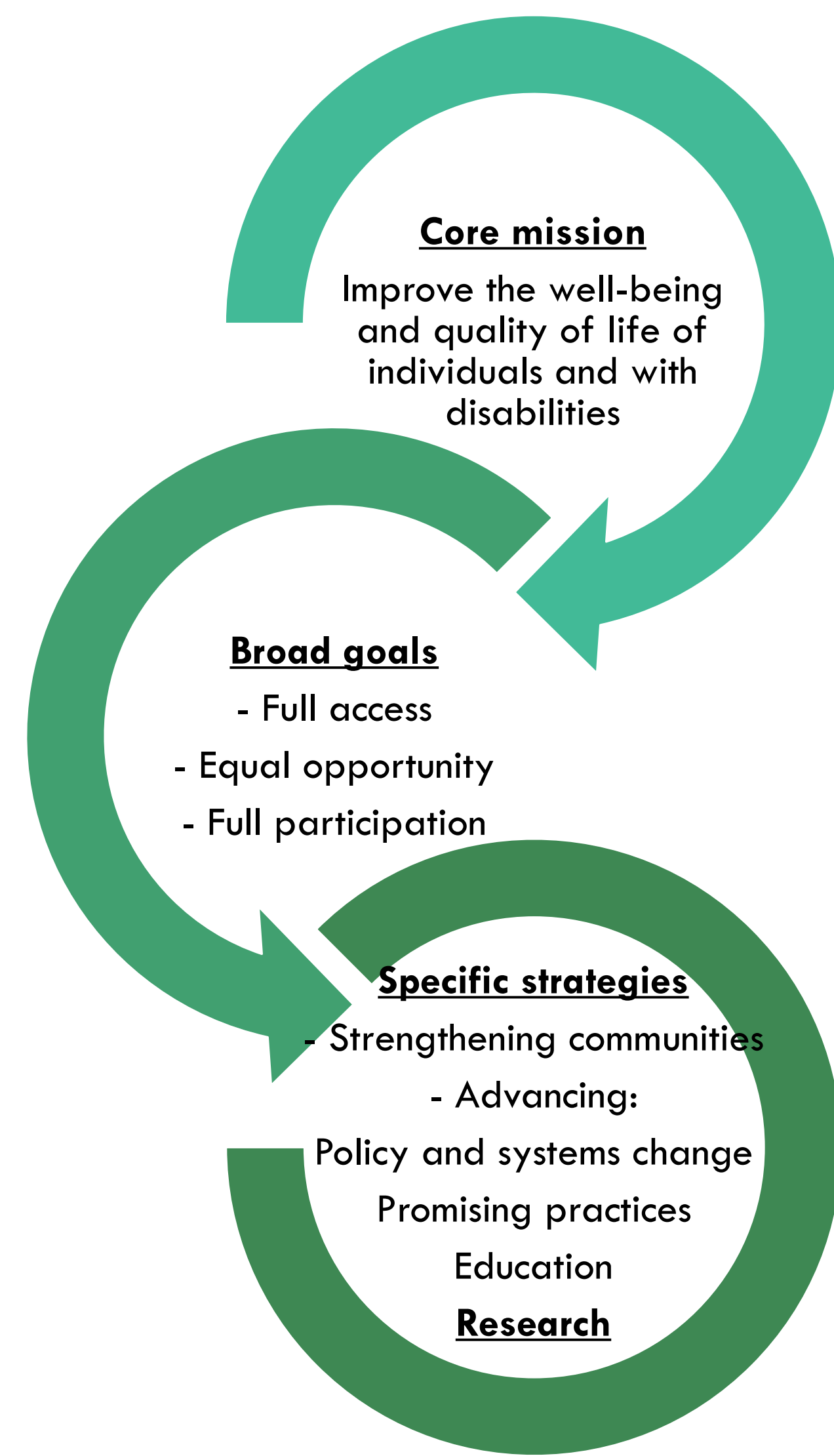


The New England RHEC is one of 10 regional health equity councils formed by the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities...

Data, Evaluation & Policy Subcommittee (DEPS)

The DEPS is a sub-committee of the RHEC whose mission is to promote the use of data to identify and address health disparities among racial/ethnic groups and persons with disabilities in New England.

As such, the mission of the DEPS in the context of the RHEC is directly linked to the mission of LEND. A data-driven approach will be used to address questions of disability and health equity with the broad aim of increasing the well-being and quality of life of individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities.



METHODS

Question: We sought to address the question of how race/ethnicity and disability status affected mental health quality and appropriate access to mental health care.

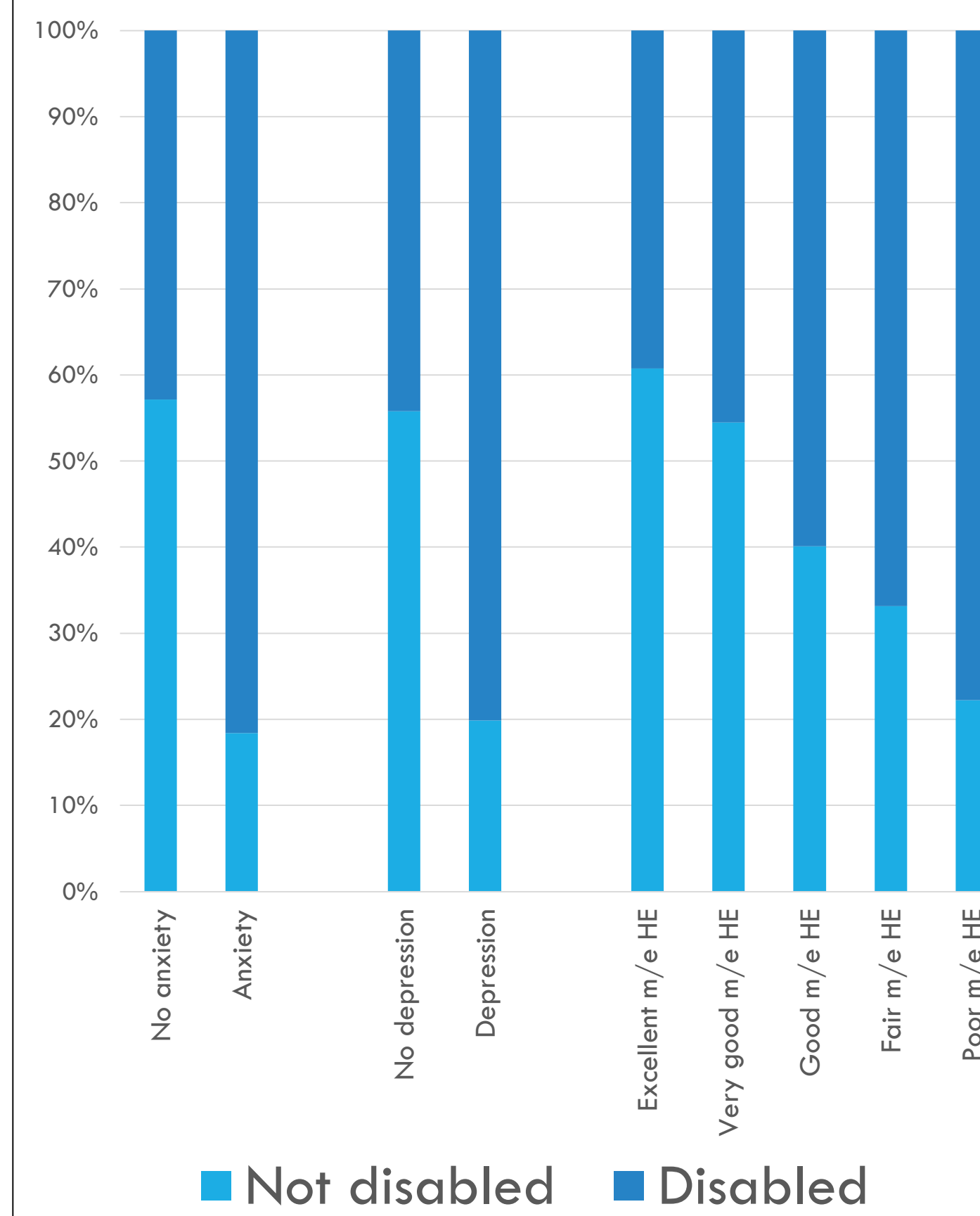


Analyses: To do so, after evaluating 7 national youth health surveys, we used the 2012 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) to address our questions. This dataset is comprised of 367 health-related questions answered by parents of 95,677 children ages 0-17 nationally.

RESULTS

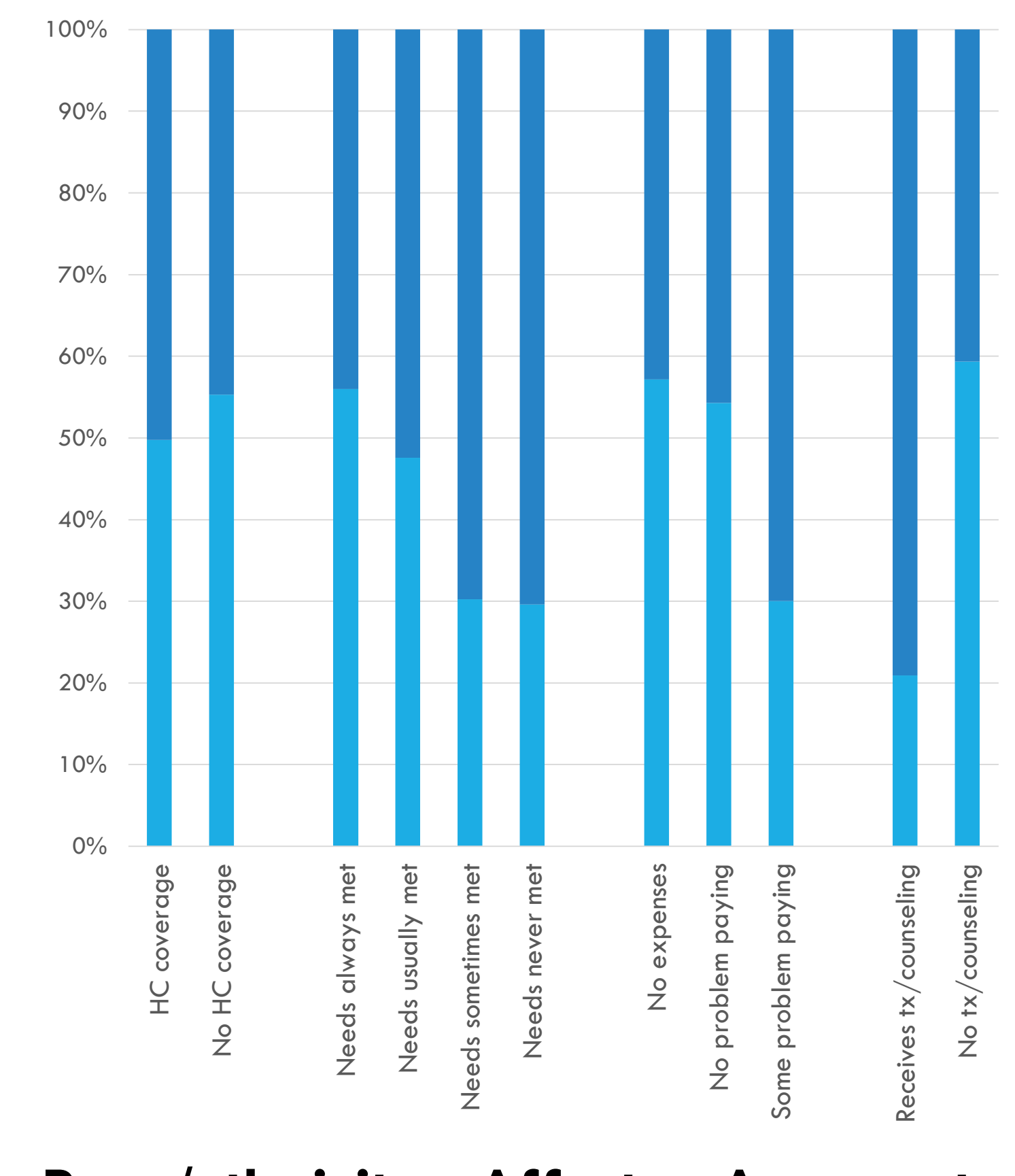
Youth with a Disability Experience More Mental Health Challenges

Youth with a disability in NE are more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, and be surrounded by a poorer mental health environment.



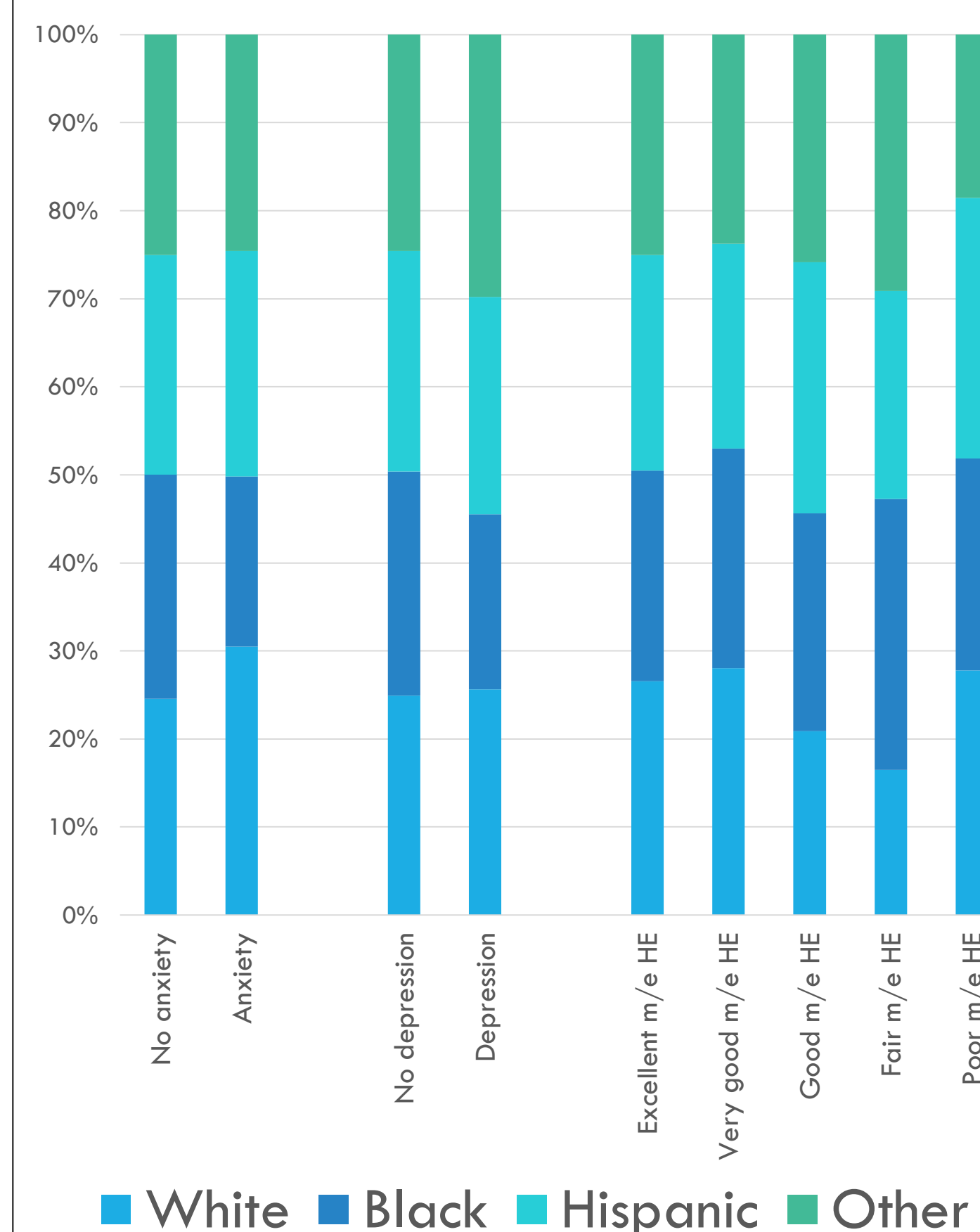
Youth with a Disability Have Inadequate Access to Care

Youth with a disability in NE are less likely to have their mental health care needs met and more likely to have difficulties paying for their health care coverage.



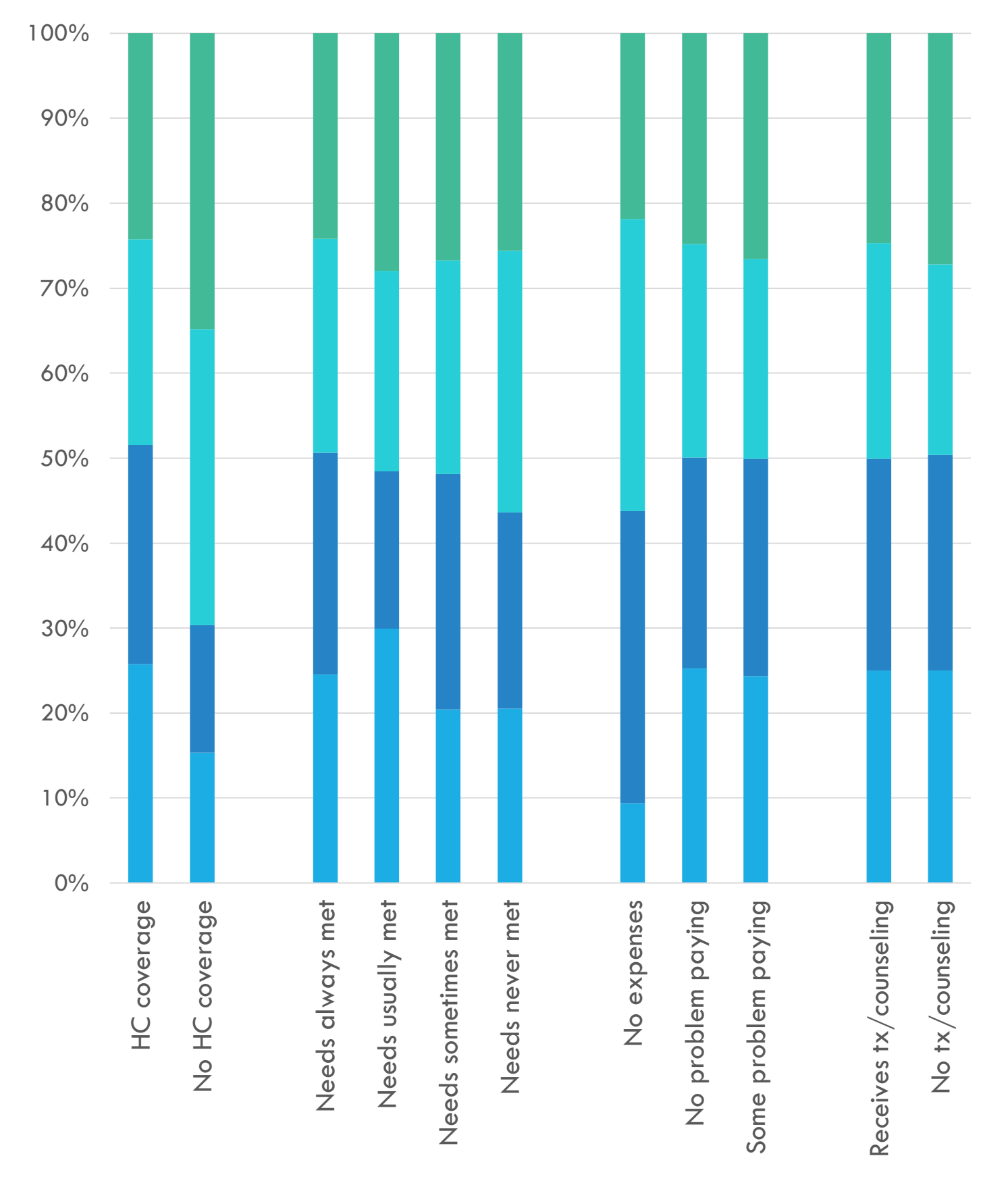
Race/ethnicity Does Not Impact Mental Health

There was no significant difference in mental health across youth of various ethnicities in NE.



Race/ethnicity Affects Access to Mental Health Care

Hispanic youth in NE are less likely to have health care coverage, as well as less likely to have their health care needs met.



Legend for race/ethnicity and mental health environment terms.

DISCUSSION

Conclusions so far:

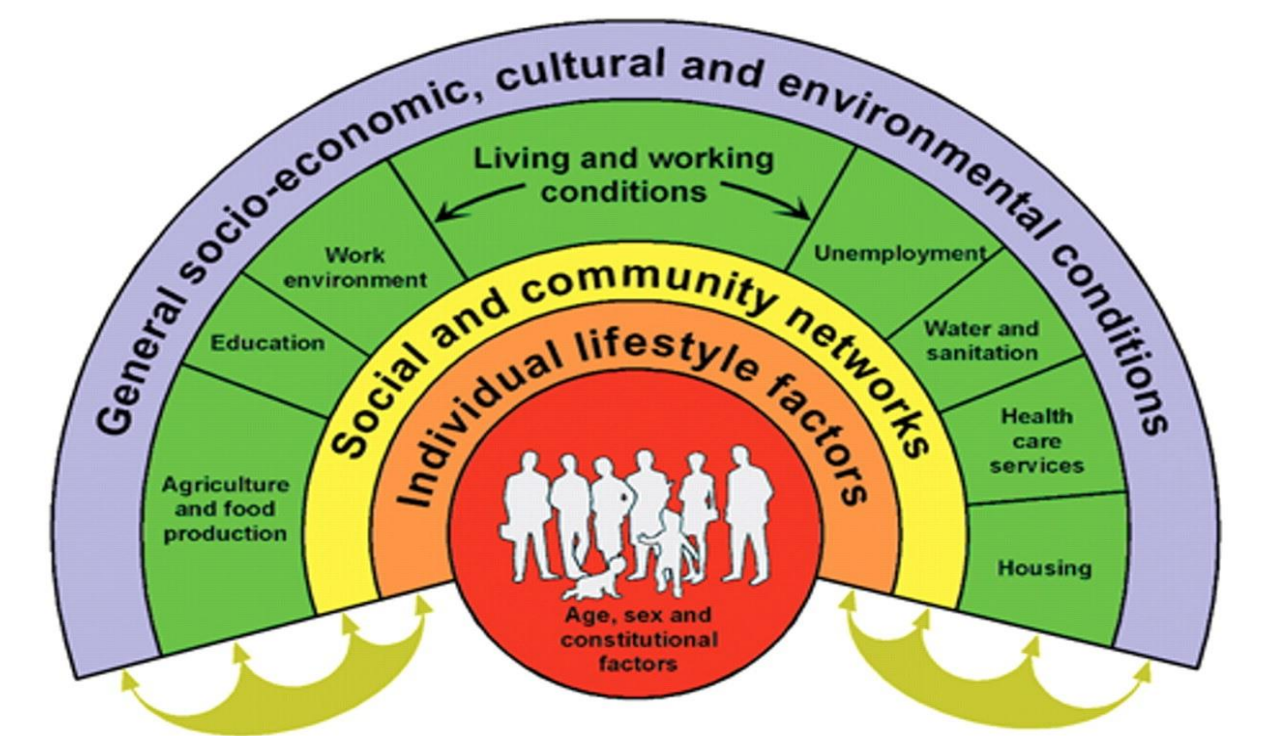
- These results are consistent with previous research on the prevalence of mental health difficulties and disability... A number of factors contribute to the link between disability and mental health, including: 1) the lifestyle consequences of having a disability, 2) the poorer health of individuals with disabilities, and 3) the relationship between disability, social exclusion and mental health difficulties.

These results are significant because they:

- provide evidence that youth with disabilities in New England are at a greater risk of mental health difficulties than other members of the community... provide evidence that such youth have greater difficulty receiving the mental health care they need, and that the most vulnerable such youth may be of Hispanic ethnicity.

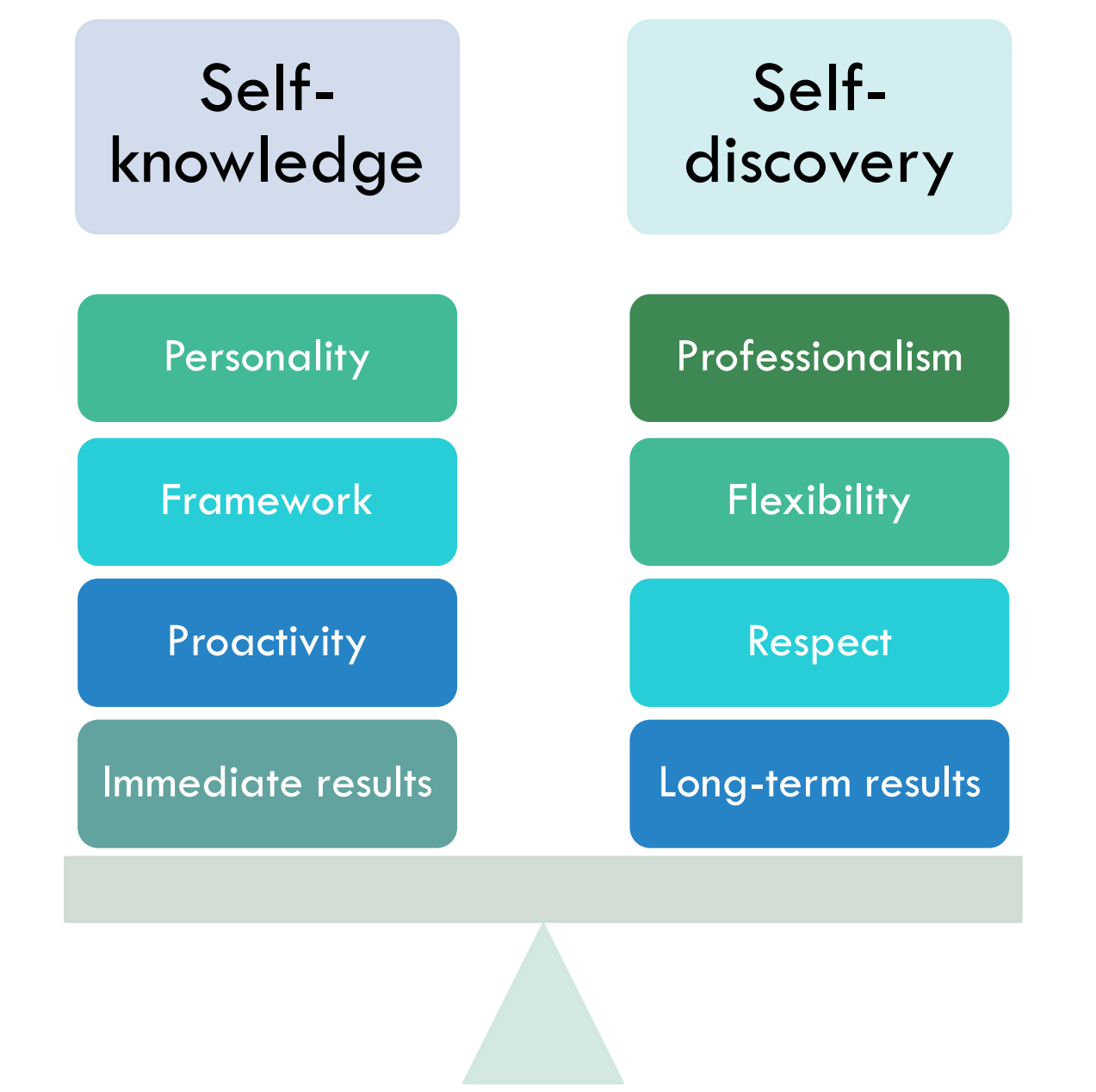
Future directions include:

- building upon these results to study the intersection of mental health and other factors within the framework of the social determinants of health (Marmot 2005)... disseminating these results in various formats to appropriate stakeholders, including educators, policy makers, and health care providers.



REFLECTION

Being an effective leader seems to be a balance of many factors. As I navigated the process of learning about the various national health care datasets accessible to me and learning to use specialized statistical analysis software to answer specifically formulated questions about disability and mental health, I found myself constantly trying to strike the right balance between self-knowledge and self-discovery...



REFERENCES

See attached reference sheet.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A sincere thank you to Dr. Charles Drum and Kimberly Phillips of the IOD and the entire LEND faculty.