

Adolescents (ages 10-19) in Arizona

The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) & Supportive Relationships on Mental Well-Being

Findings from the 2021 Arizona Youth Risk Behavior Survey

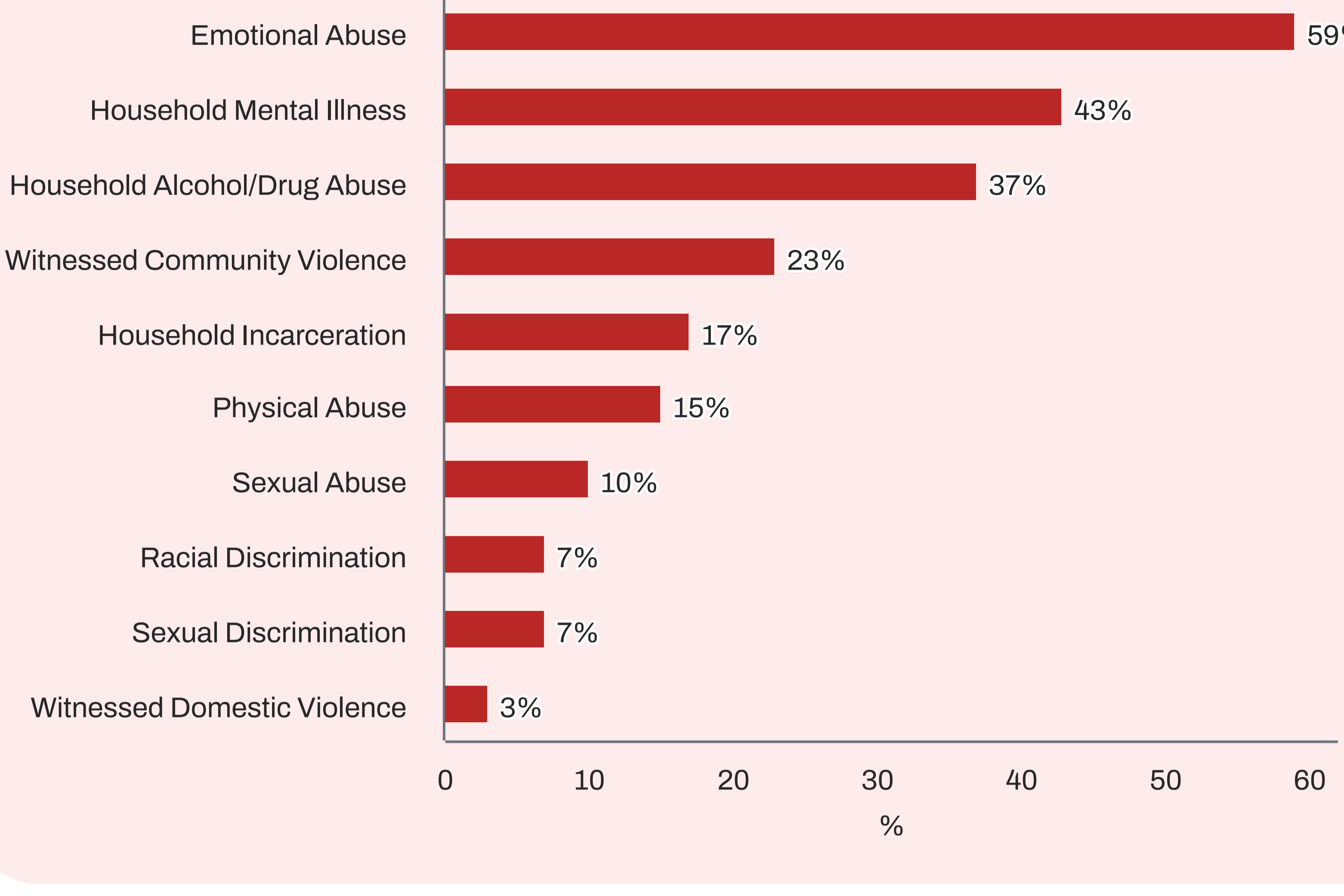
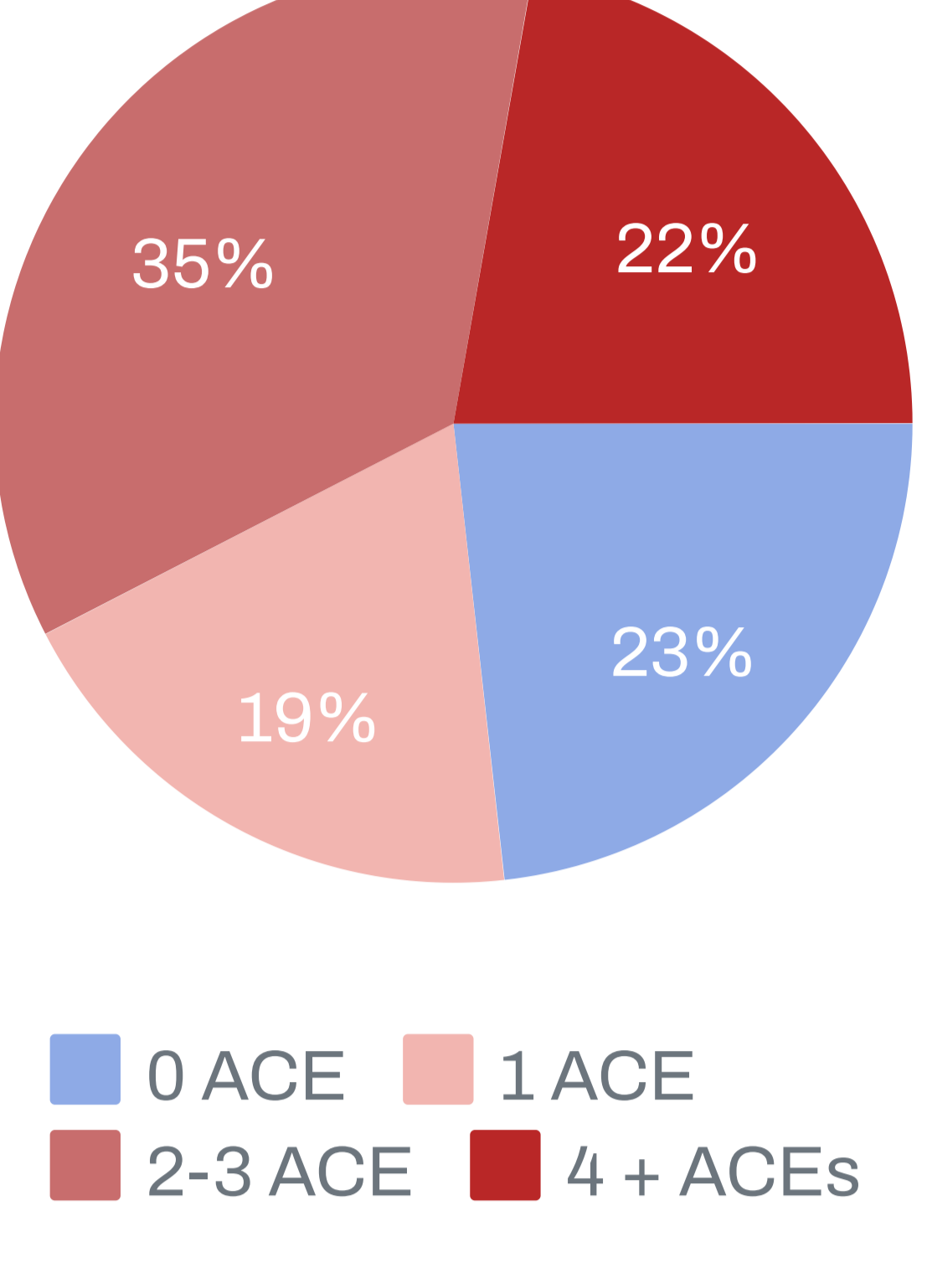


Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance use problems. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. [\[Click here to learn more\]](#)

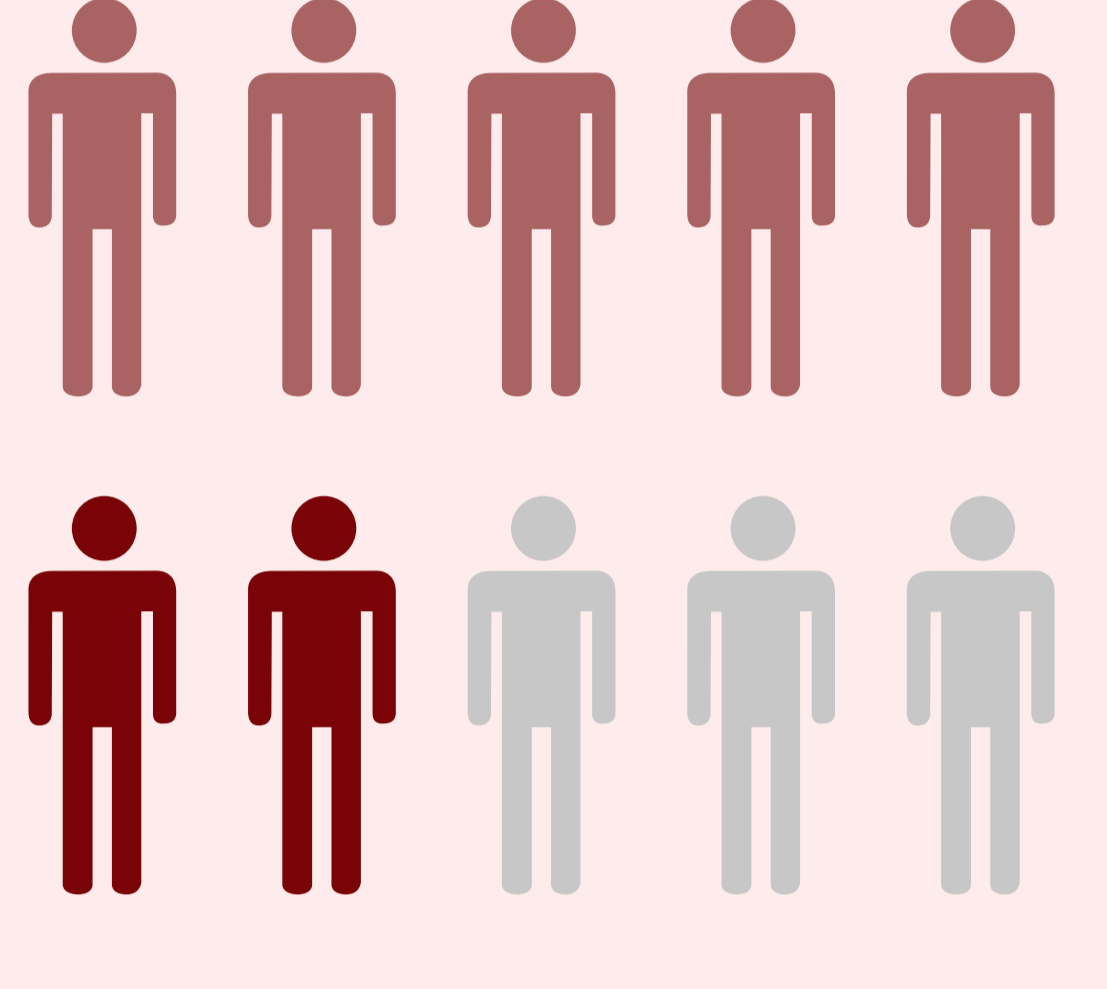


Having supportive relationships can help shield children and adolescents from the negative impacts of ACEs on their health. However, individuals with multiple ACEs often lack such support.

Prevalence of ACEs in Adolescents in Arizona



Quick Facts



7 out of 10 adolescents in AZ had at least 1 ACE, and 2 out of 10 had 4 or more ACEs

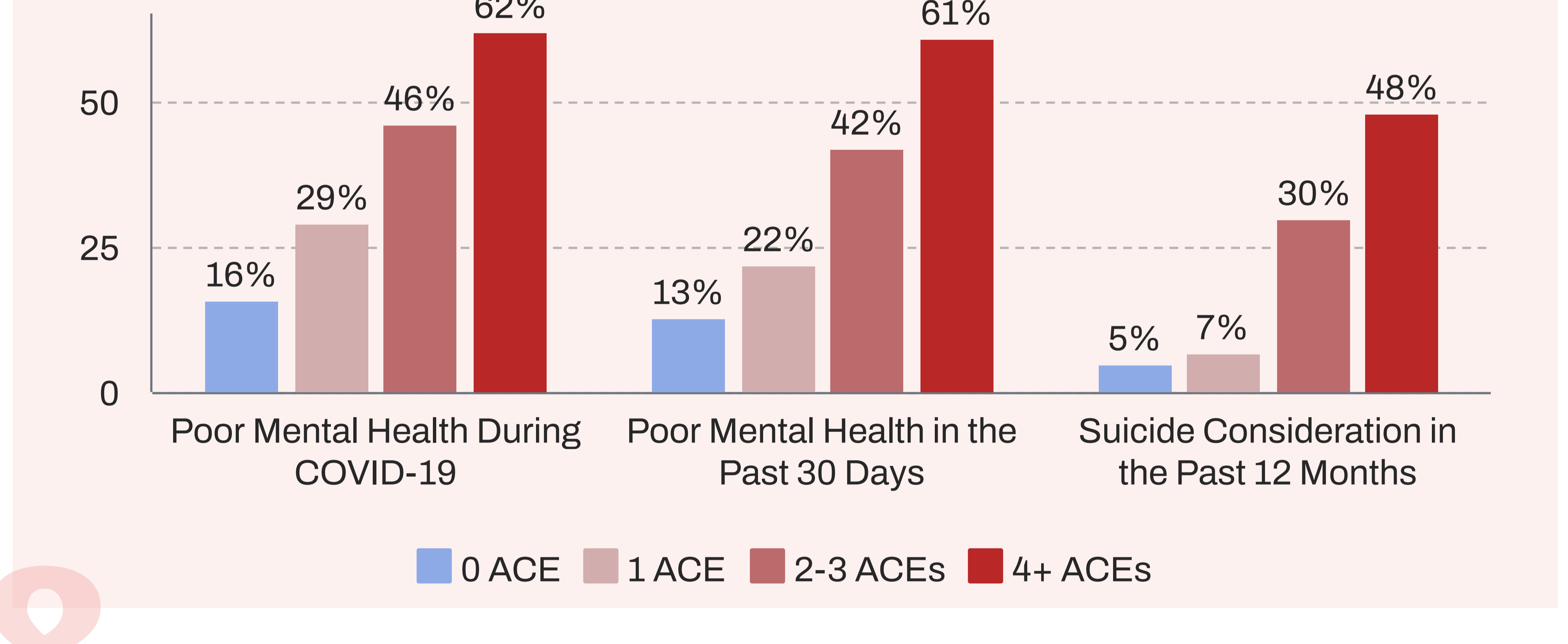
40% of adolescents reported their mental health was not good during the COVID-19 pandemic

36% of adolescents reported their mental health was not good in the past 30 days

24% of adolescents reported they thought about taking their own life in the past 12 months

22% The percentage of adolescents who made a plan to die by suicide increased by 22% since 2019

1 Having a higher amount of ACEs lead to poorer mental health in adolescents

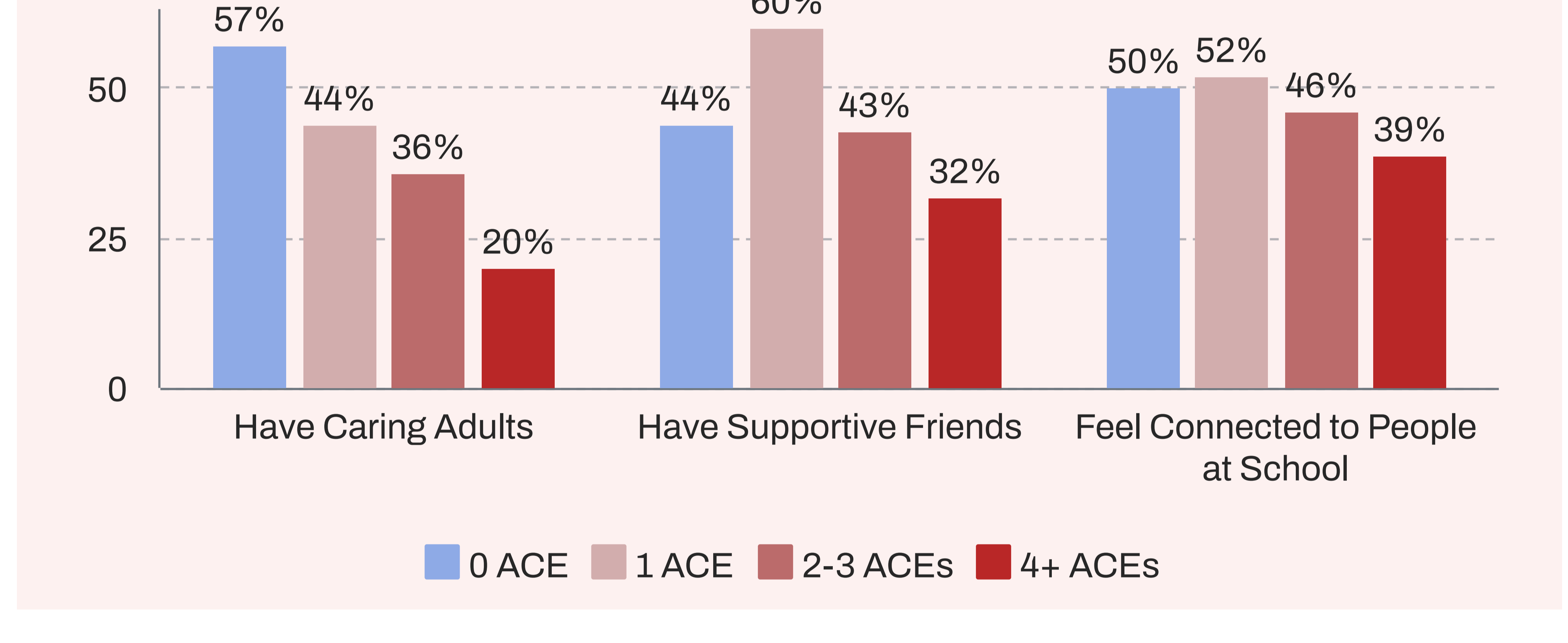


Adolescents with 4 or more ACEs in Arizona experience more of ...

- 6.4 times** Poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 8.6 times** Poor mental health in the past 30 days
- 18.2 times** Suicide consideration in the past 12 months

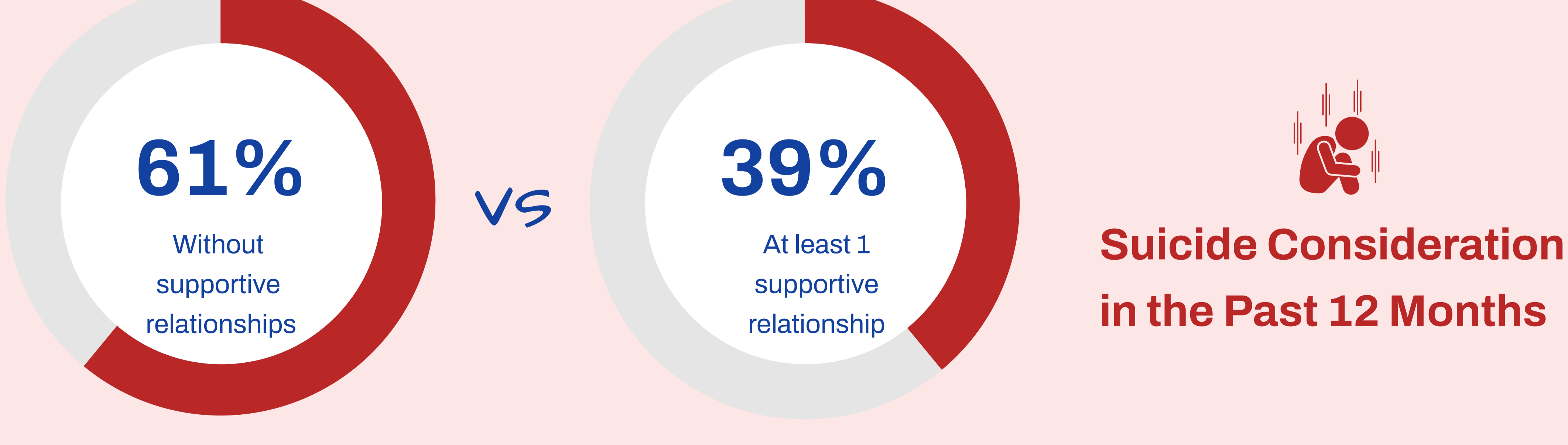
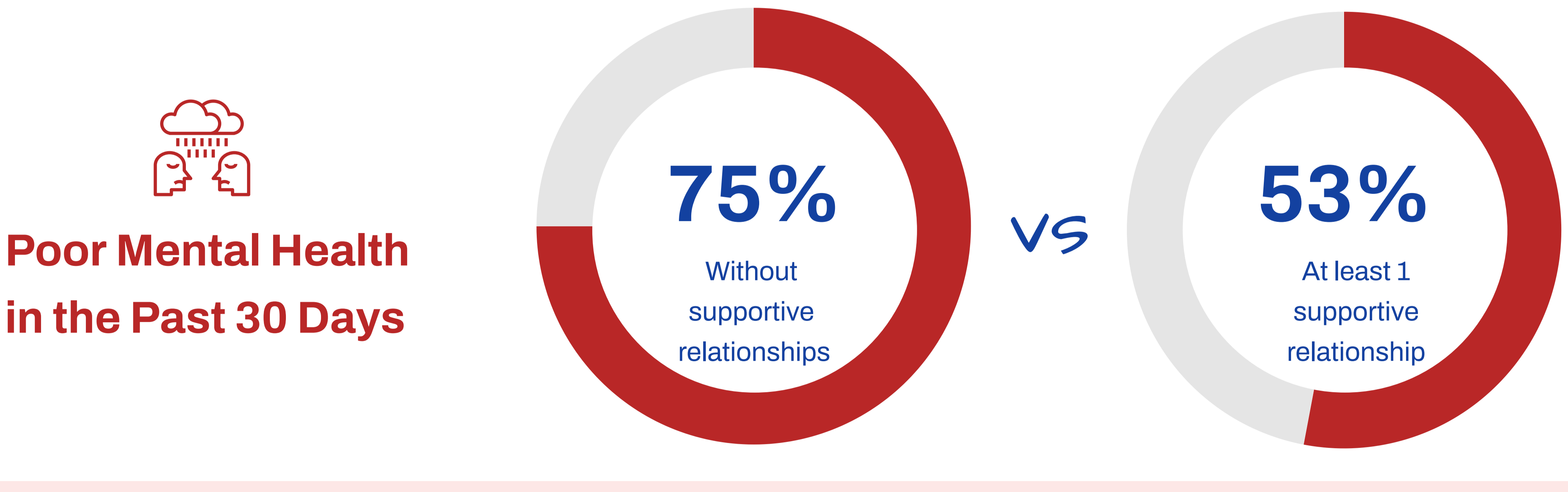
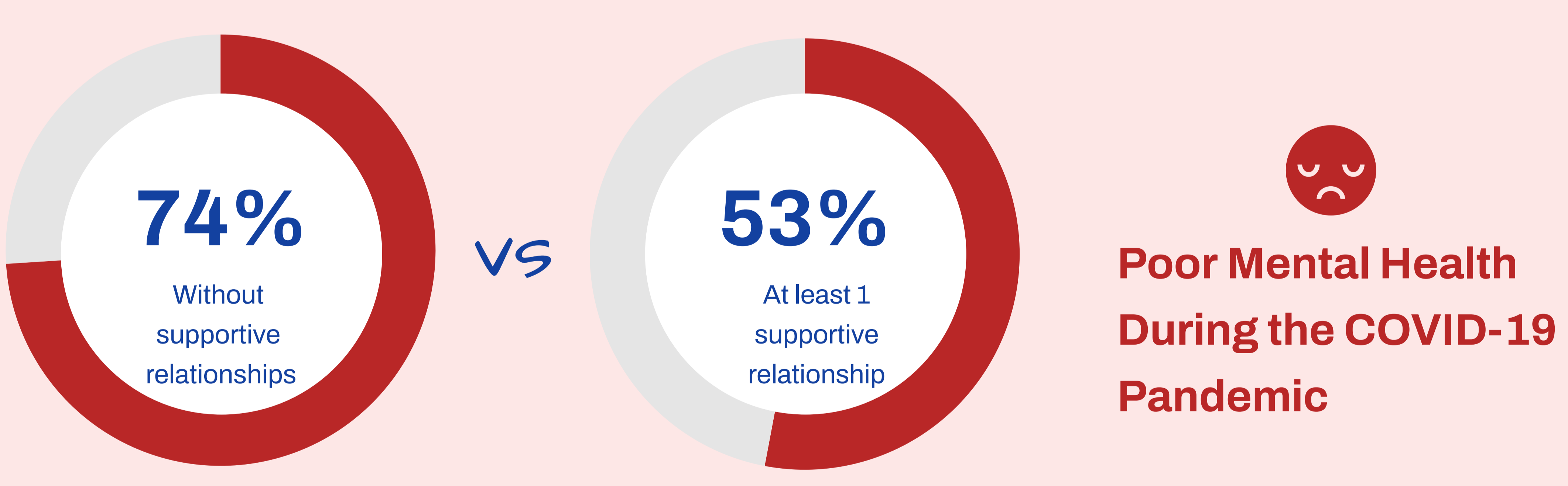
... compared to adolescents with no ACE*

2 Adolescents with 4 or more ACEs reported the lowest level of support from adults and friends, and had the least sense of belonging in school



3 Having supportive relationships can protect adolescents' mental health from the harmful effects of ACEs and COVID-19

Among adolescents with 4 or higher ACEs...



*after accounting for age, sex, and race/ethnicity; all analyses are based on 1,181 respondents from grade 9 to 12 from public and charter schools across the state of Arizona

Take Away

Evidence-based public health programs that help adolescents form supportive relationships with adults, peers, and people at their school can protect them from ACEs and pandemic-related stress