



Town Hall 2022



Drug User in Higher Education in Ireland Survey
Results, Recommendations & Reflections

INTRODUCTION

Survey Sections

1. DEMOGRAPHICS
2. STUDENT LIFE
3. DRUG USE
4. READINESS TO CHANGE
5. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
6. COGNITIVE ENHANCERS
7. STUDENT WELLBEING
8. SOCIAL NORMS
9. COVID-19 & DRUG USE
10. DRUG & ALCOHOL RECOVERY



PARTICIPANTS

21 publicly funded HEIs in the Republic of Ireland participated in DUHEI

11,500+ responses were included for analysis

60% were female

81% were undergraduates

the median age was **21**

9% were registered with a Disability Support Service

90% were EU students

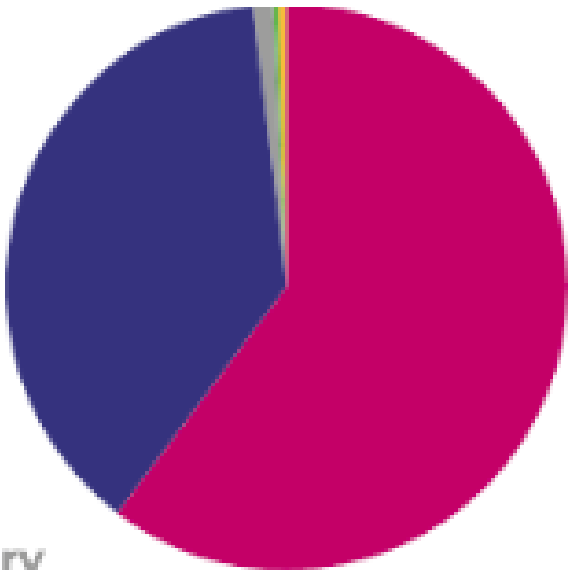
The response rate to the survey was **29%**

PARTICIPANTS

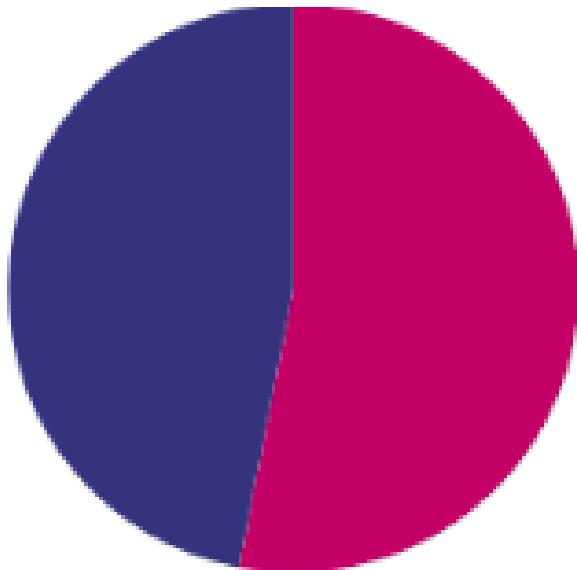
Participants - Gender



60.2% Female
37.9% Male
0.9% Non-binary
0.5% No Selection
0.3% Other

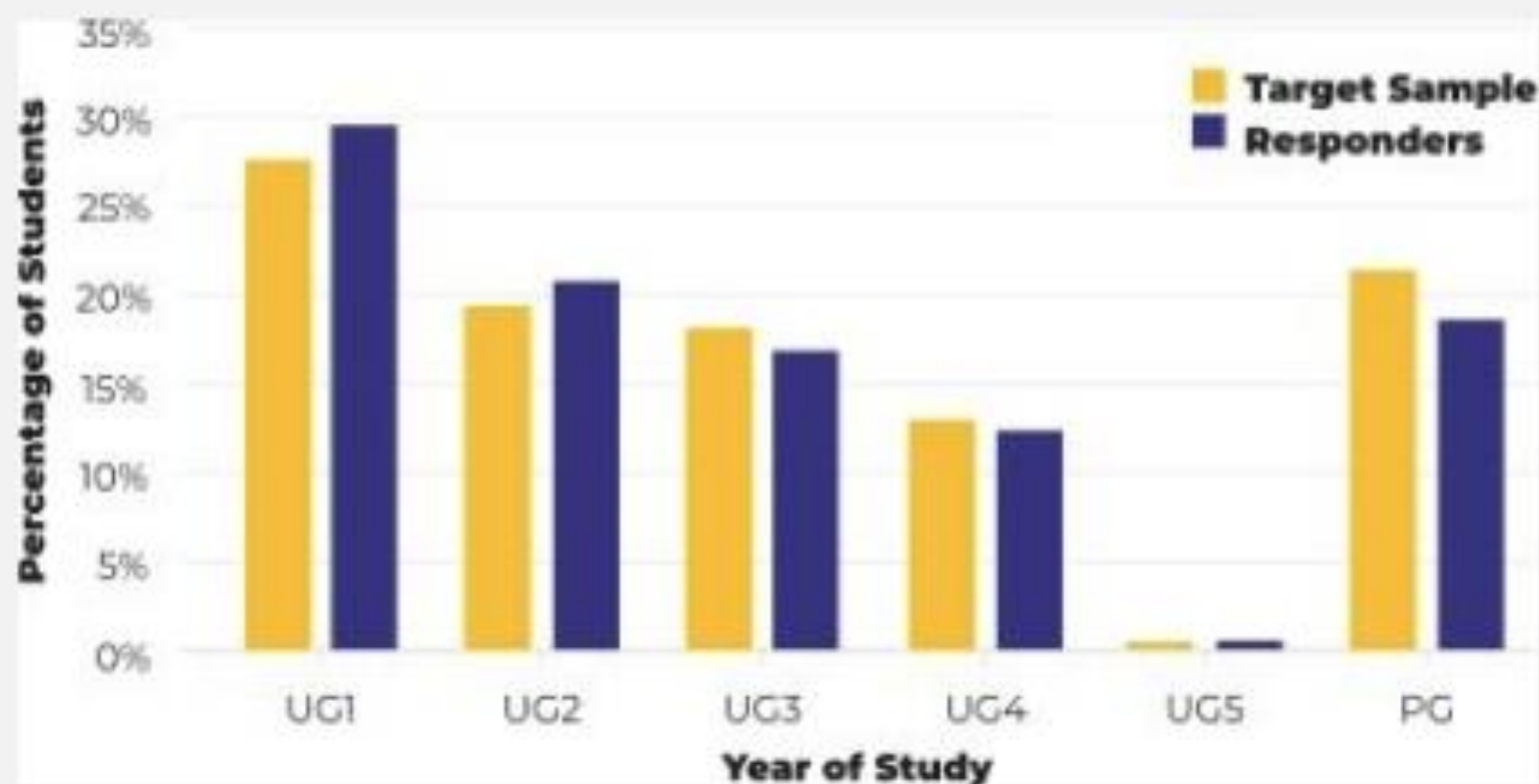


53% Female
47% Male



PARTICIPANTS

Participants – Year of Study : DSS Registration



8.6%

Disability Support
Service at their
institution.
(v 6.3% HEA 2019)

PARTICIPANTS

Drug User Group Definitions

DUHEI Group	DUHEI Definition	EMCDDA Categories
Never User	Reporting never using drugs.	Never
Prior User	Reporting using drugs at least once, but > 12 months ago.	Lifetime
Recent User	Participant reporting using drugs within the last 12 months, but not within the last 30 days.	Last Year (12 months)
Current User	Participant reporting using drugs in the last 30 days.	Last Month (30 days)



Never User



Prior User



Recent User



Current User

FINDINGS- SMART DRUGS

Cognitive Enhancers – "Smart Drugs"

less than one in twenty

(3.4%)

of participants reported using
smart drugs to enhance their
academic performance

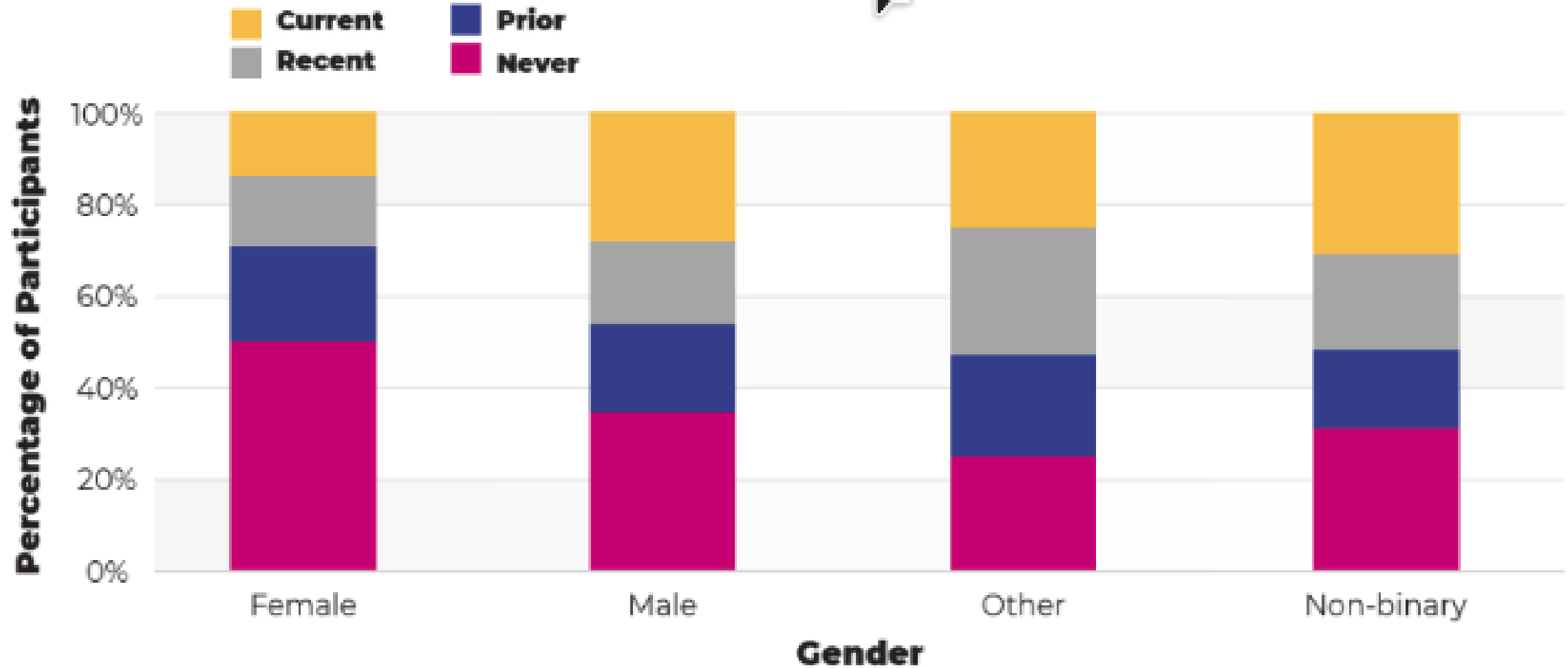


one in ten
current users
reported using smart drugs



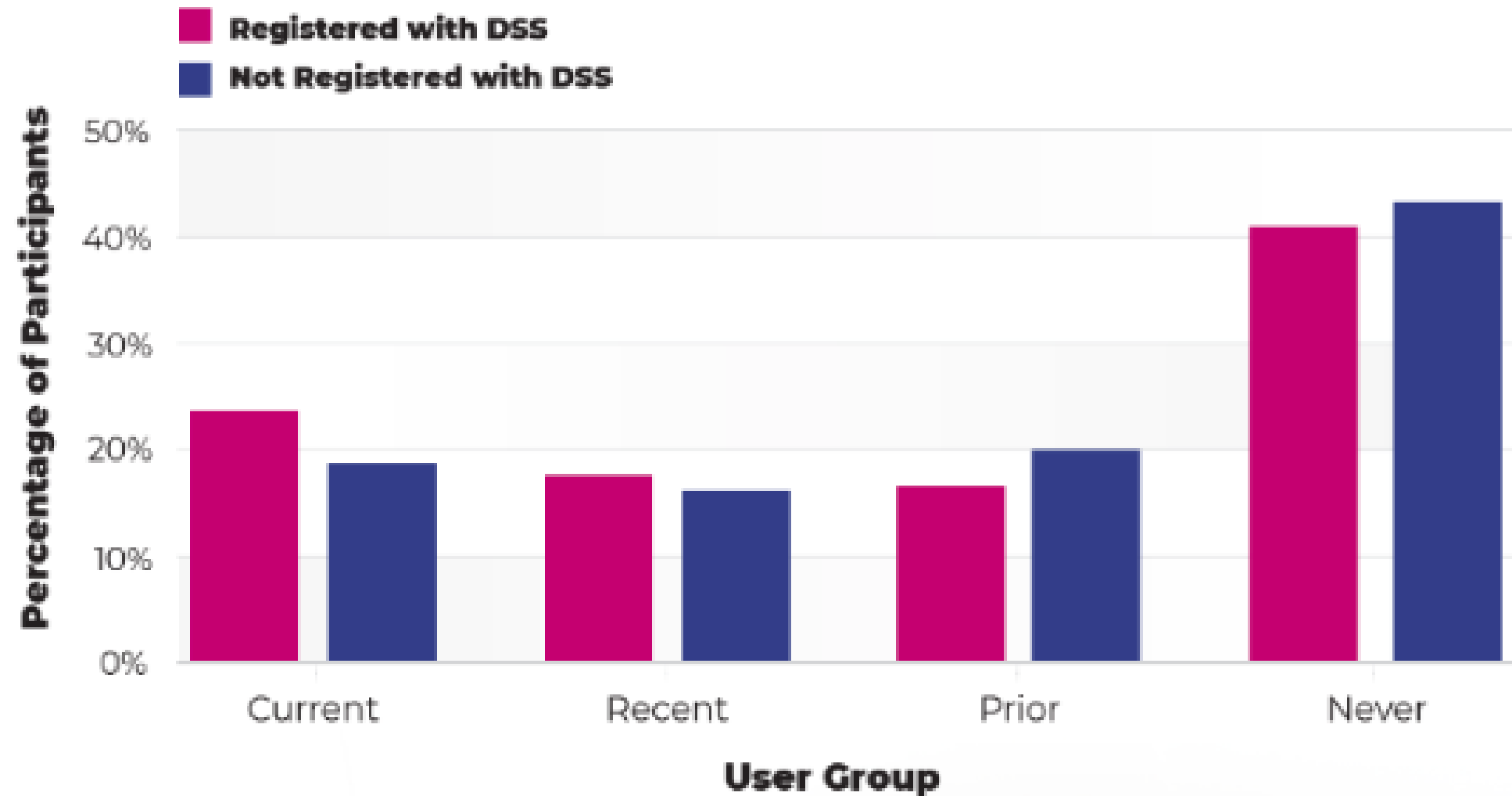
FINDINGS - OVERALL

Drug Use by Gender



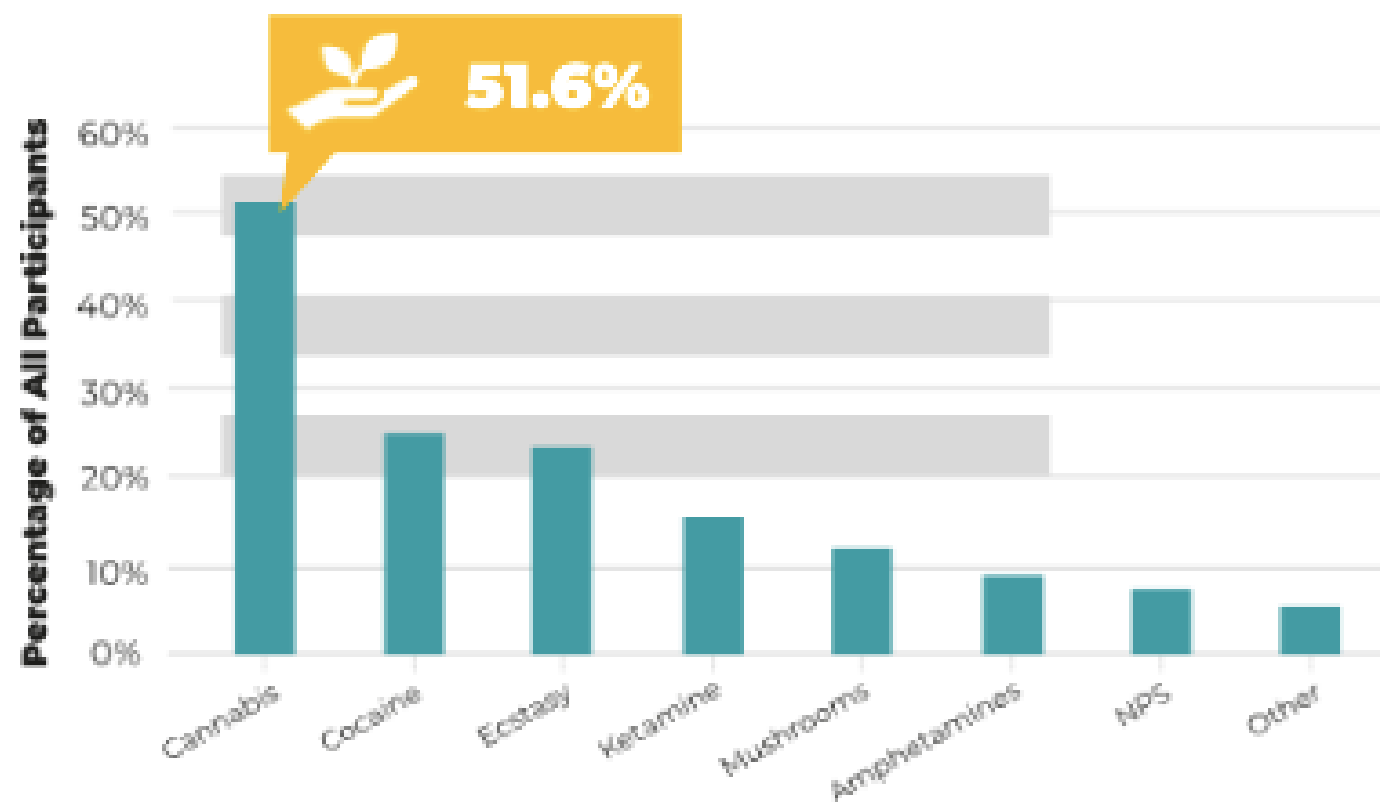
FINDINGS - OVERALL

Drug Use in Students registered with DSS



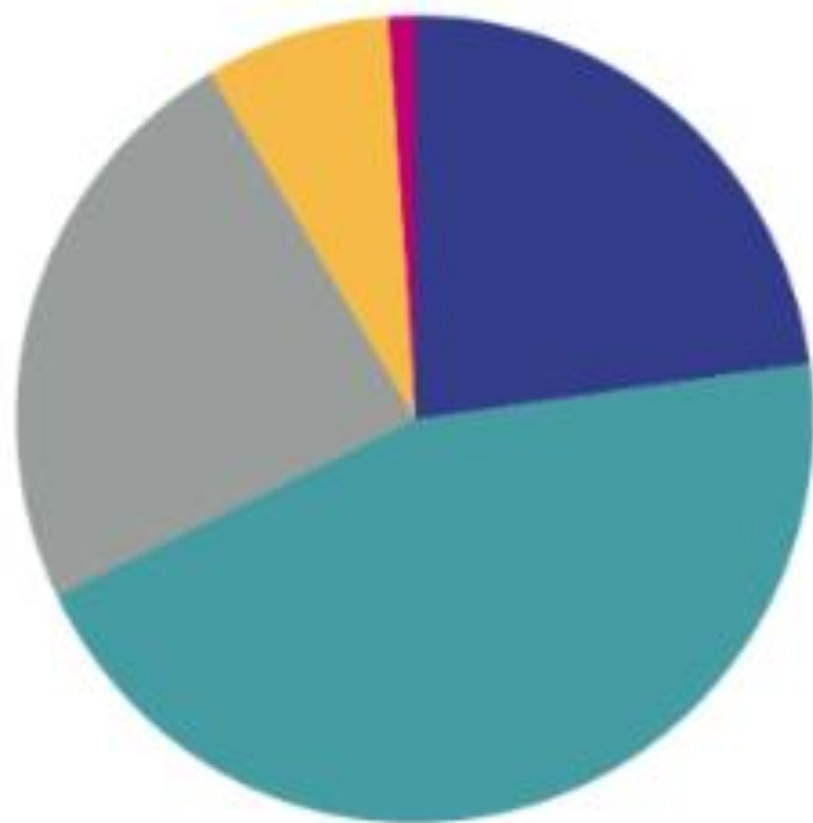
FINDINGS - OVERALL

Drugs Used



FINDINGS - OVERALL

Effects on Student Life



37.3% Somewhat Negative

19.1% Extremely Negative

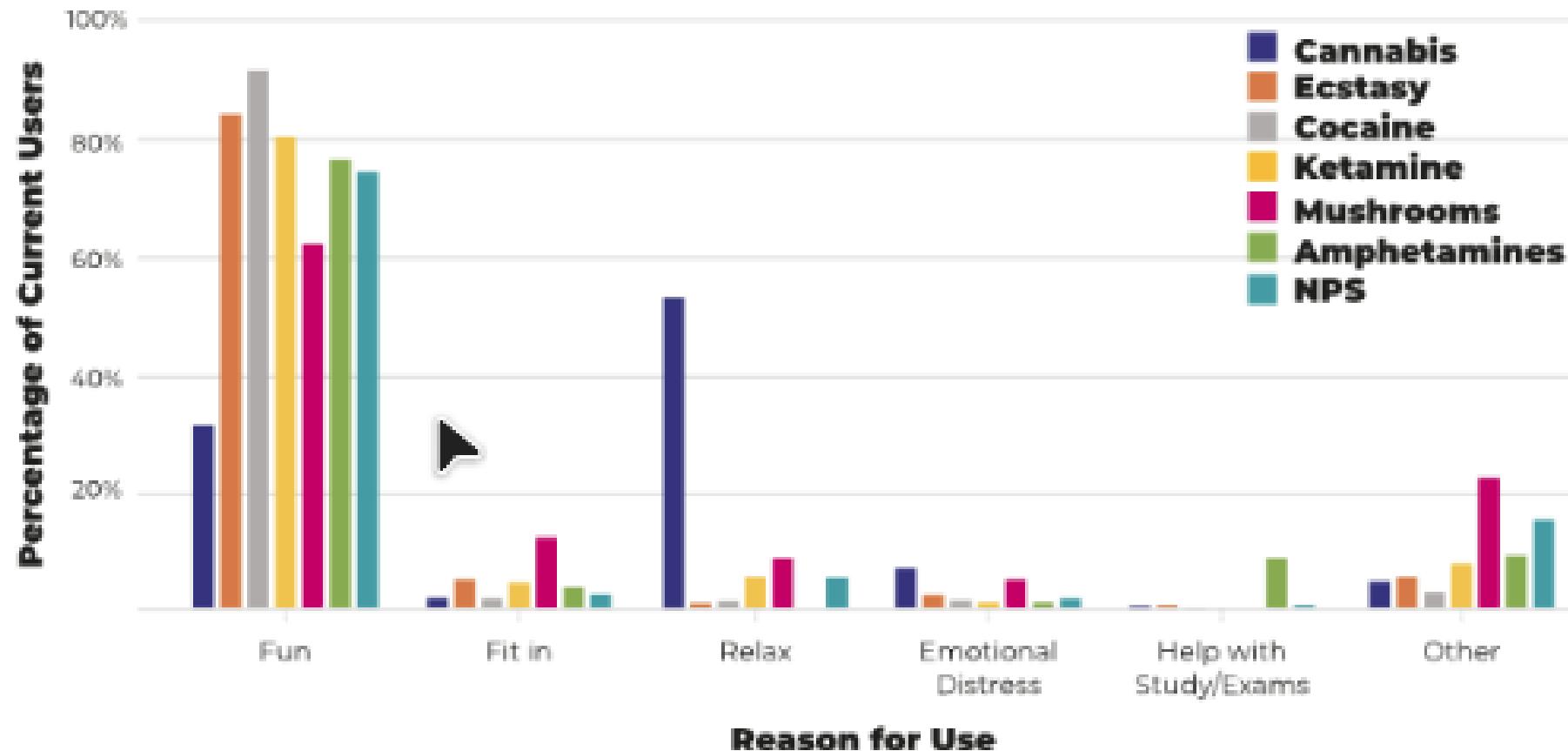
19.7% Neither

6.2% Somewhat Positive

0.9% Extremely Positive

FINDINGS – CURRENT USERS

Main Reason for Use



FINDINGS – CURRENT USERS

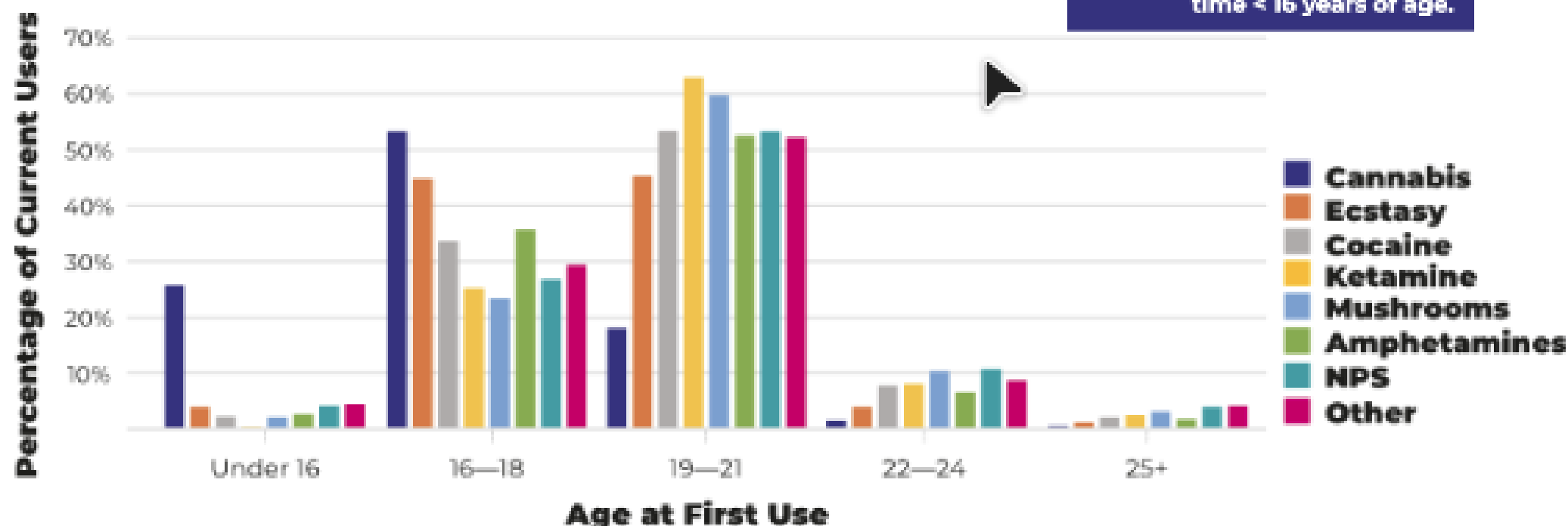
DUHE Survey

Age at First Use



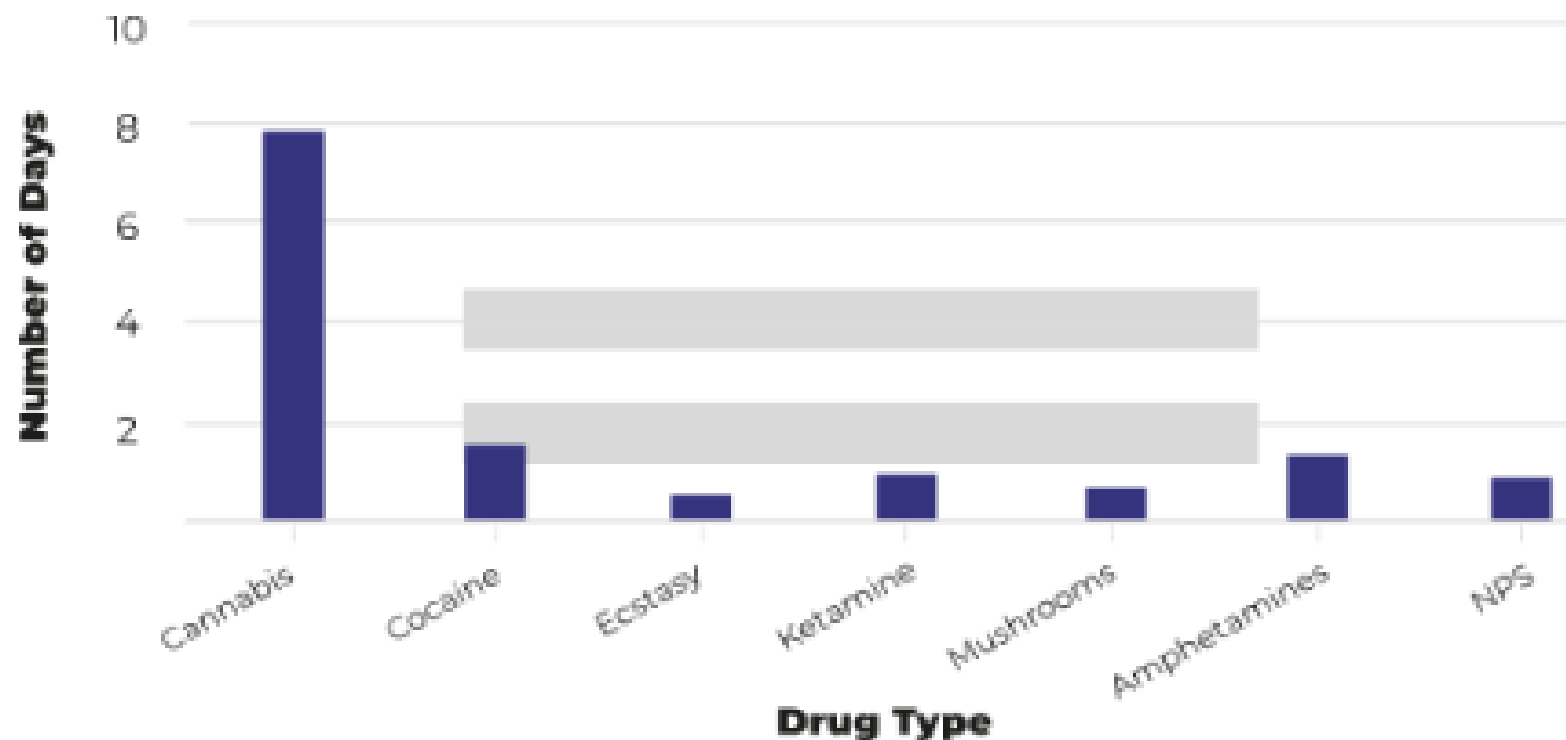
25.9%

of current users
reported using
cannabis for the first
time < 16 years of age.



FINDINGS – CURRENT USERS

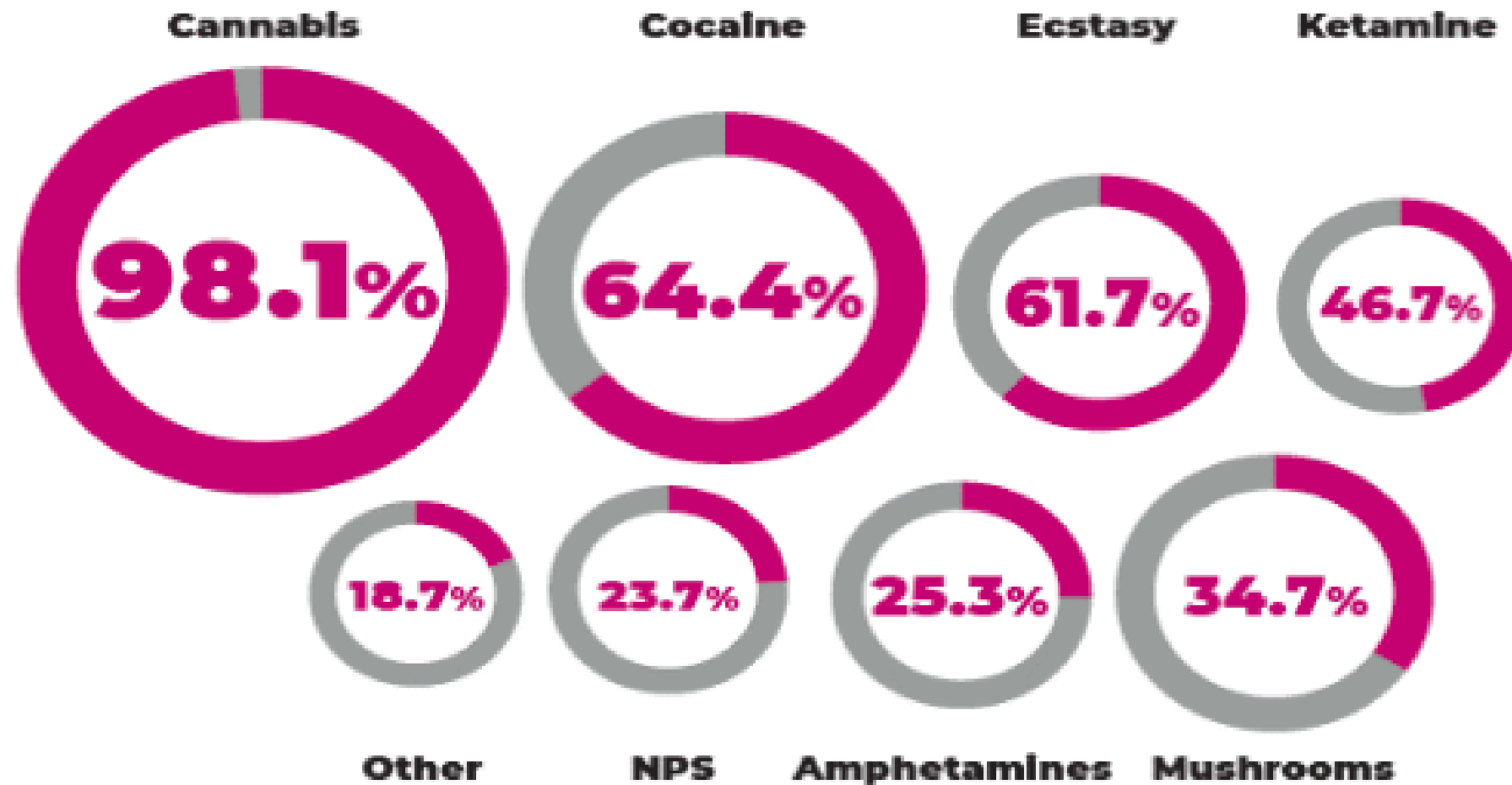
Frequency of Use in Last 30 Days



This represents a frequency of **cannabis use twice weekly**, versus **cocaine, ketamine, and amphetamine use once monthly**.

FINDINGS – CURRENT USERS

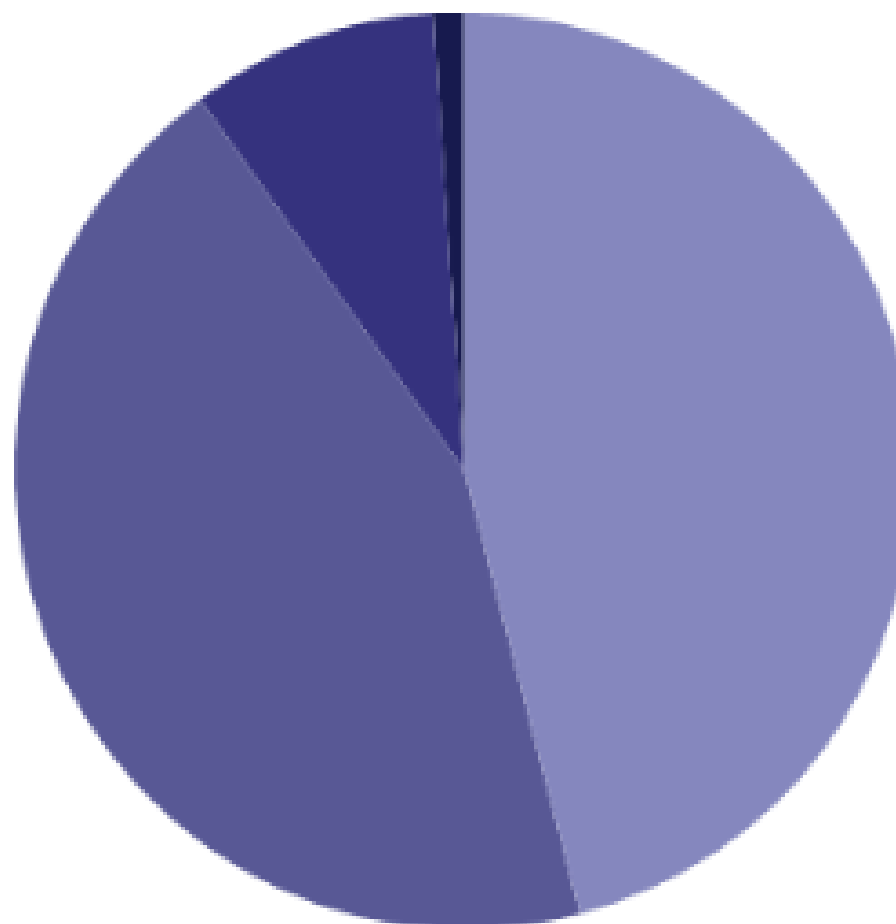
Drugs Used



FINDINGS – CURRENT USERS

Level of Risk of Drug Use Harm (DAST-10)

46% Low
44% Moderate
9% Substantial
1% Severe

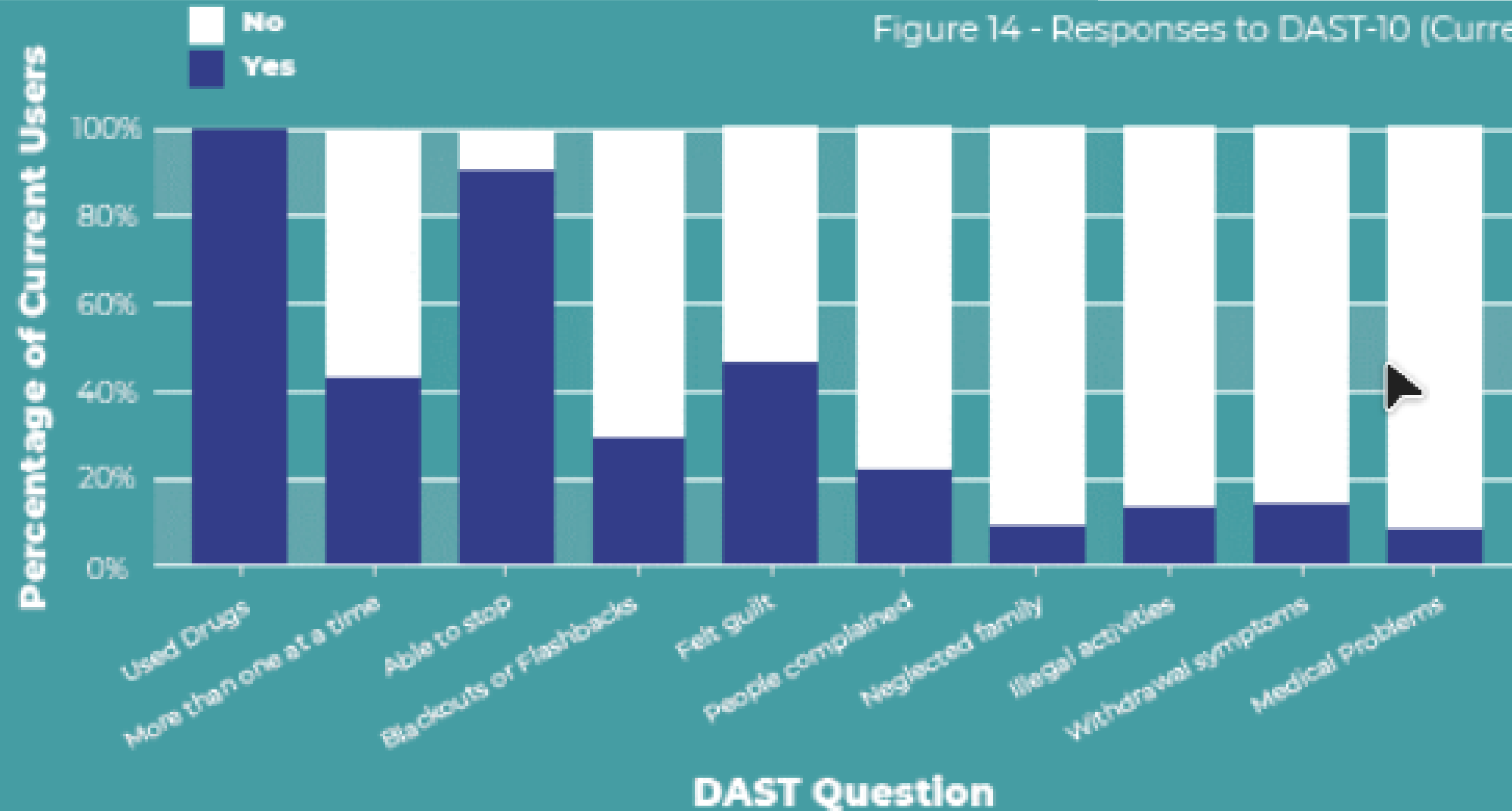


52.9%

of current users at
moderate or substantial
risk of drug use harm

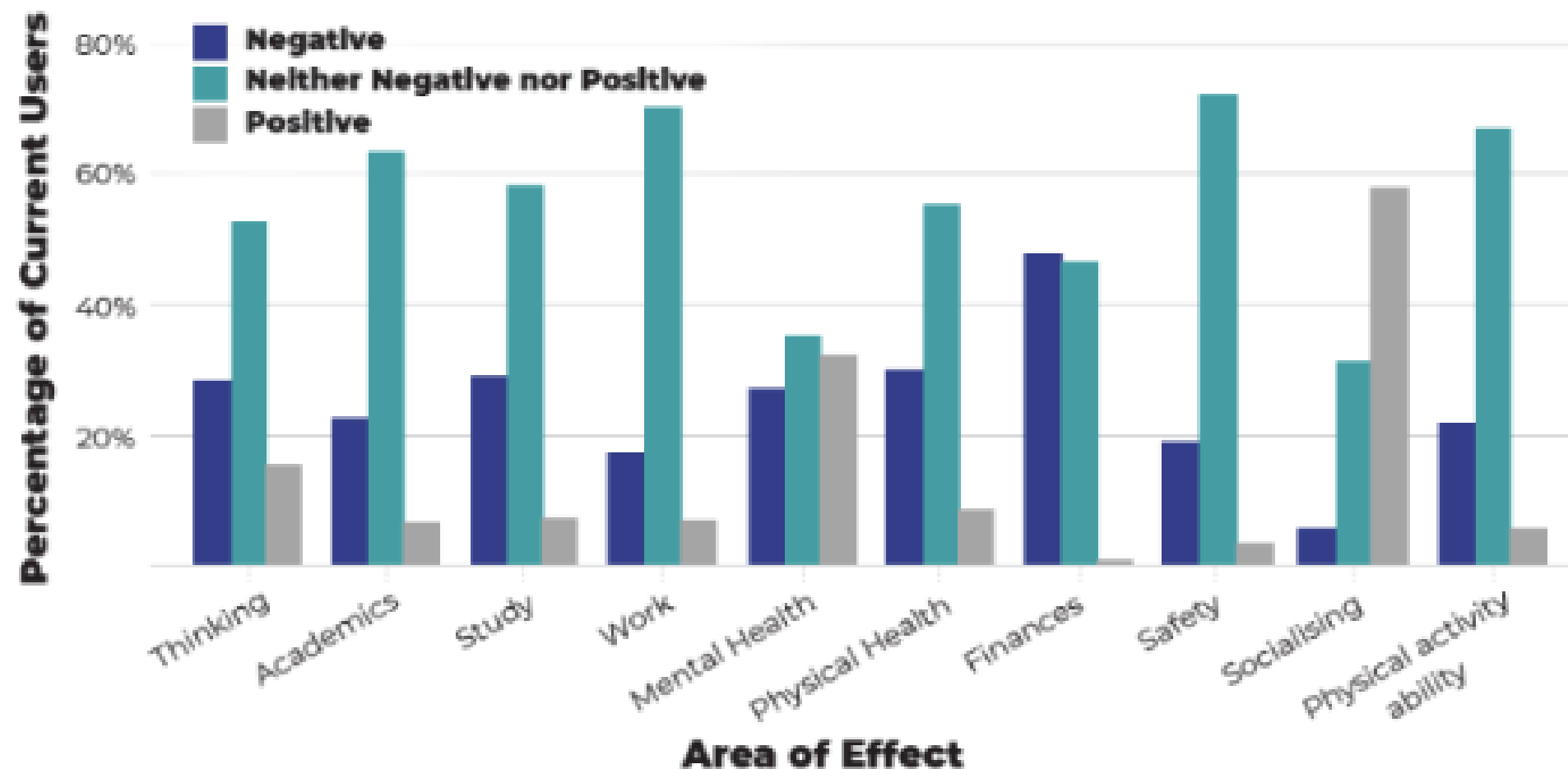
FINDINGS – CURRENT USERS

Level of Risk of Drug Use Harm (DAST-10 Answers)



FINDINGS – CURRENT USERS

Effects on Various Domains of Life



DUHEI DATA 2021 v CLAN DATA 2002

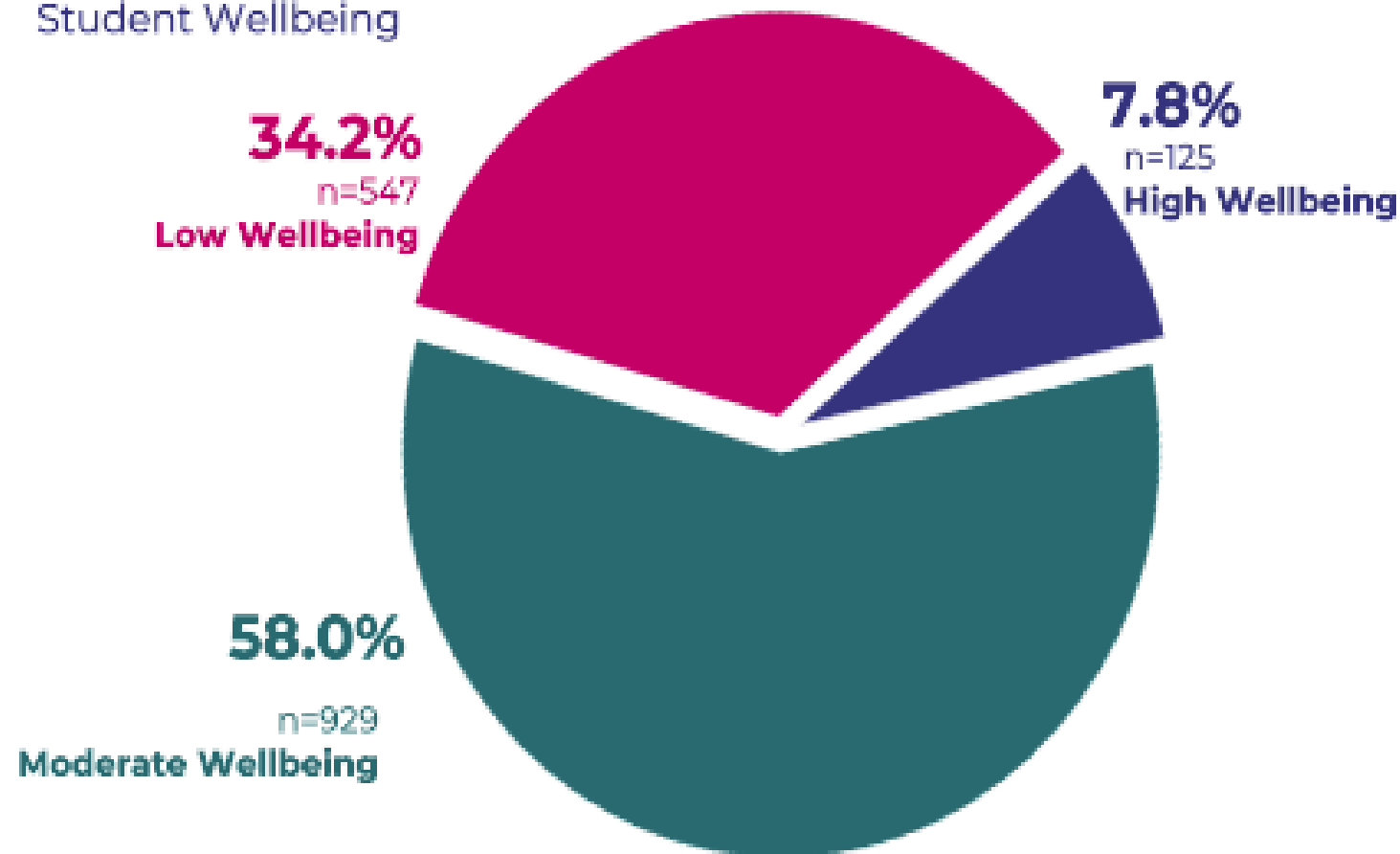
DUHEI Survey

Table 7 - Comparison of Drug Use Prevalence:
CLAN (2002–2003) v DUHEI (2021)

Drug or Drug Type Use	CLAN (2002–2003)	DUHEI (2021)
Cannabis Past 12-Month	37.3%	30.2%
Cannabis Past 30-Day	20.0%	16.3%
Cocaine Past 12-Month	5.8%	15.7%
Ecstasy Past 12-Month	8.0%	11.3%
Ketamine Past 12-Month	-	9.5%
Magic Mushrooms Past 12-Month	4.9%	5.2%
NPS Past 12-Month	-	3.1%

CURRENT USERS

Student Wellbeing



Example Items.

I've been feeling optimistic about the future.

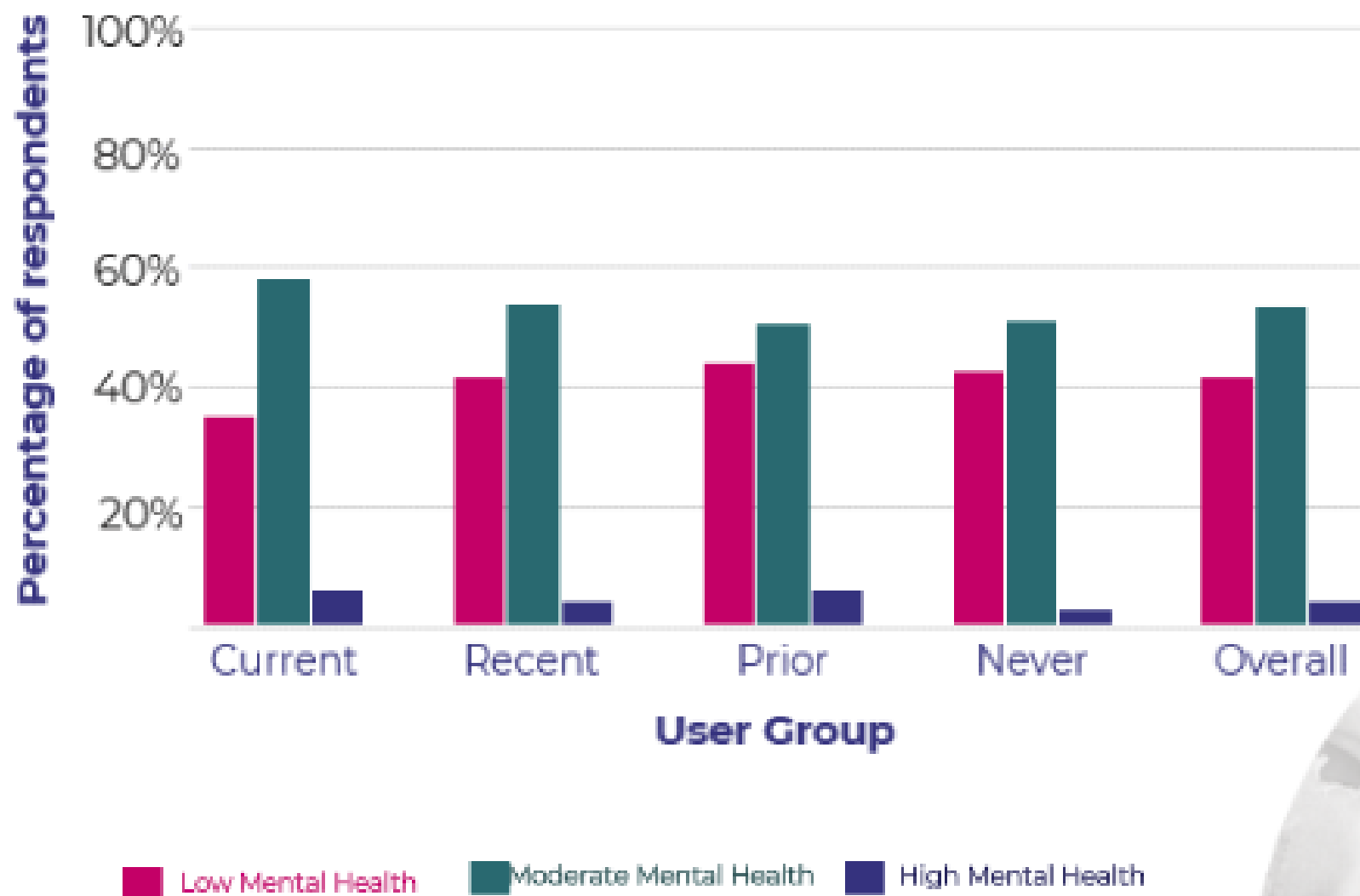
I've been dealing with problems well.

I've been thinking clearly.

1601 current users completed all 7 questions
>2000 chose not to respond to these questions

All Respondents

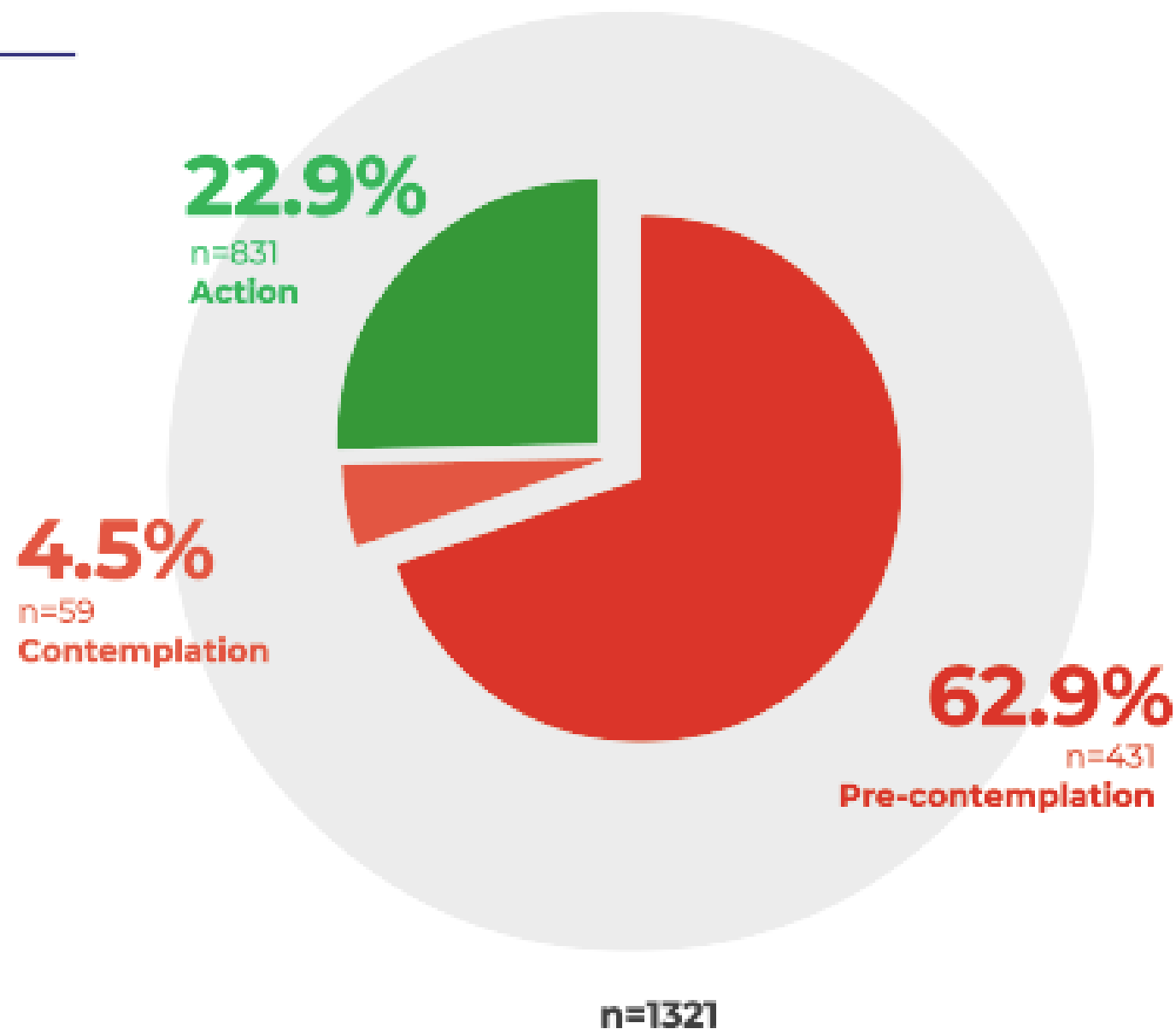
Student Wellbeing



CURRENT USERS

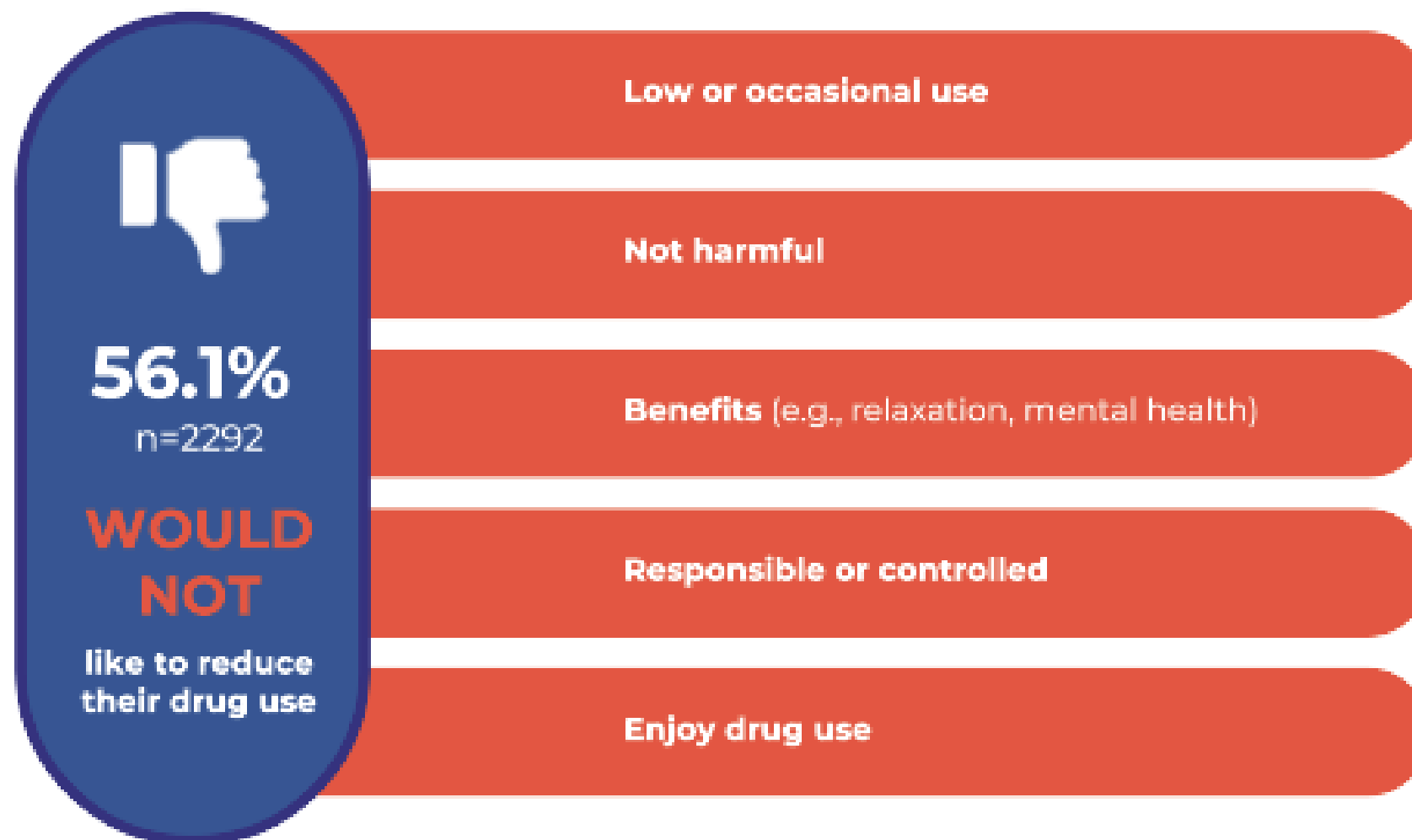
Readiness to Change

READINESS SCALE



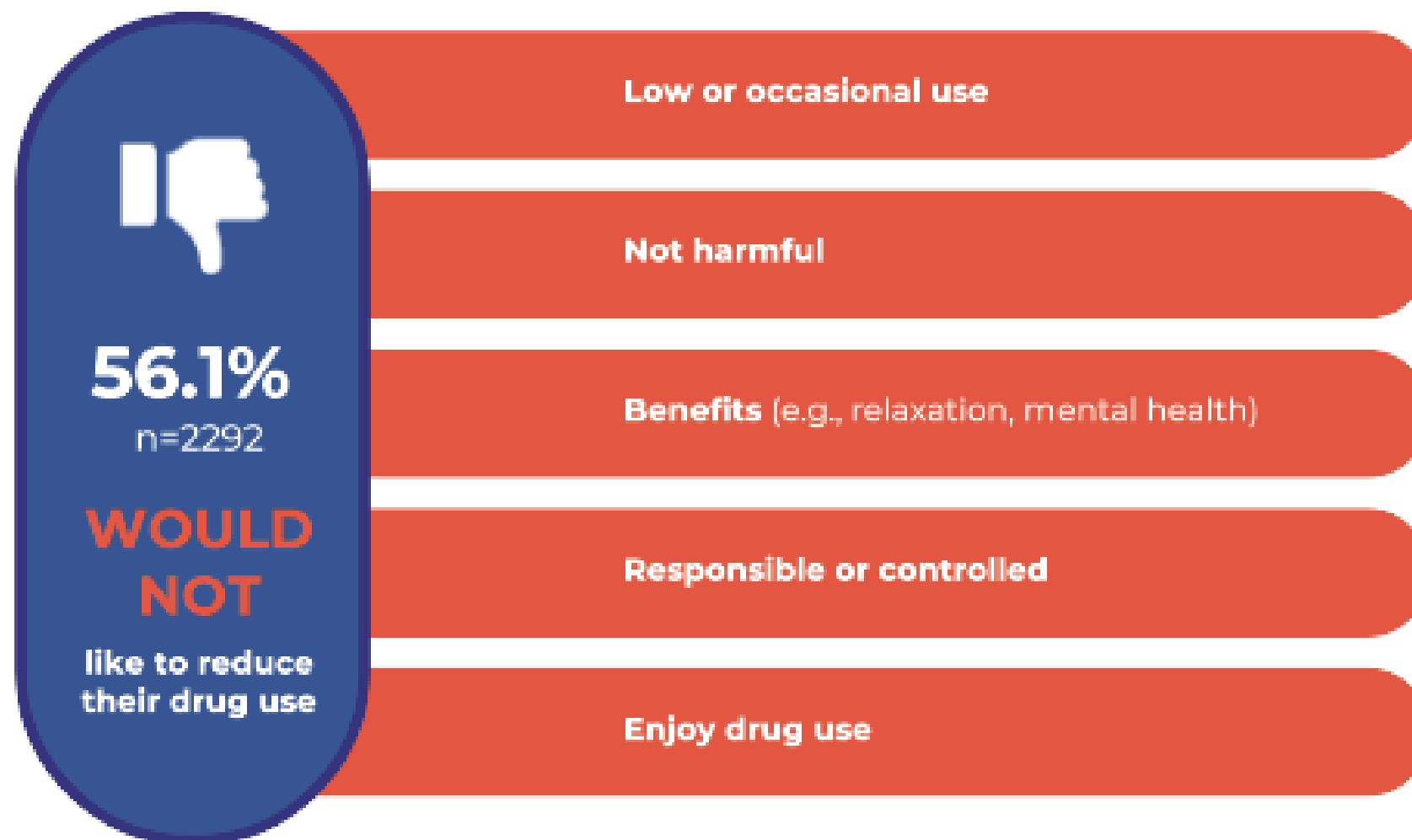
CURRENT & RECENT USERS

Why are they not interested in changing behaviour?



CURRENT & RECENT USERS

Why are they not interested in changing behaviour?



CURRENT USERS

Only 1/3 indicated they have a desire to reduce drug use



32.7%

n=724

**Would like
to reduce their
drug use**

64.0%

n=463

Concern about impacts on **physical
health & wellbeing**

62.4%

n=452

Concern about **mental health &
wellbeing**

57.0%

n=413

Concern about impact on **finances**

50.7%

n=367

Concern about impact on **academic
progress or performance**

48.1%

n=348

Concern about impact on **future career
prospects**

47.0%

n=340

Concern about **legal implications**



56.7%

n=1252

**Would not like
to reduce their
drug use**

CURRENT USERS

Very few reported an awareness of friends/family worries about drug use

+1 year ago



208
reported
that this had
happened
previously,
but **more
than a year
ago.**

Within past year



201
students
reported that
a relative,
friend or
medical
professional
had been
worried
about their
drug use in
the last
year.



71.2%
(n=1,292)
reported that
they had **not
experienced
this**

RECENT USERS

Very few reported an awareness of friends/family worries about drug use

+1 year ago



106
reported
that this had
happened
previously,
but **more
than a year
ago.**

Within past year



46
students
reported that
a relative,
friend or
medical
professional
had been
worried
about their
drug **use in
the last
year.**



68.7%
(n=1,292)
reported that
they had **not
experienced
this**

Attempts at Behaviour Change

36.7%

(n=1499)

reported that they
had
attempted to change
their drug use

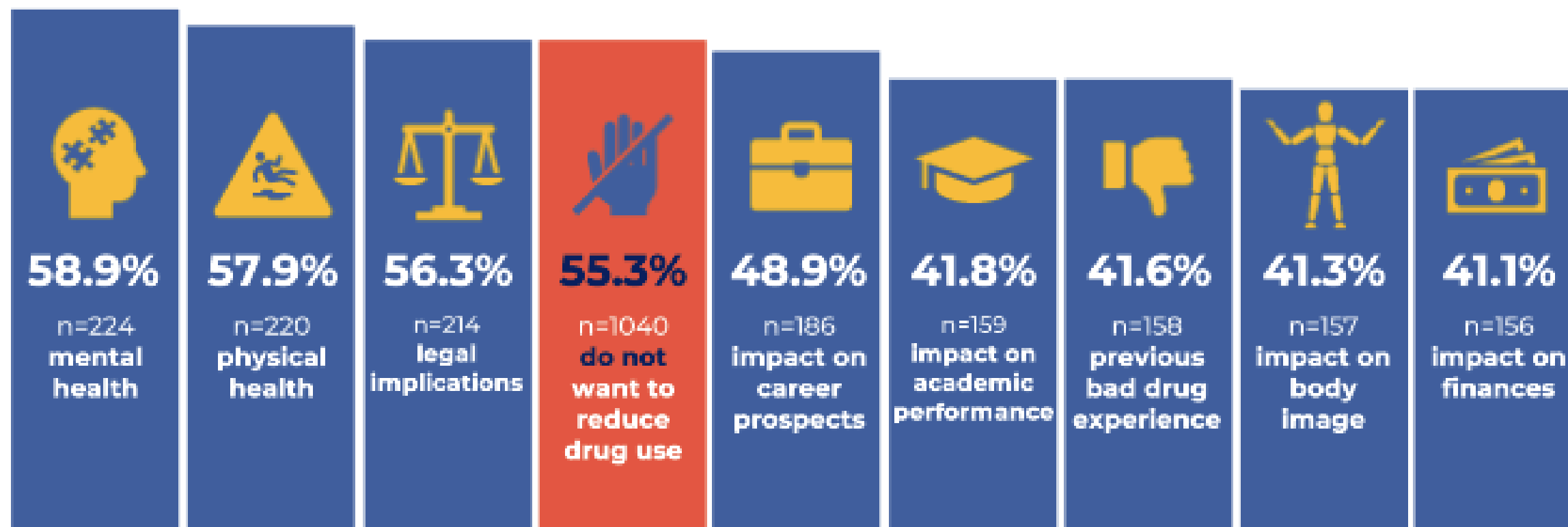
40.5%

(n=1656)

reported that they
had not
attempted to change
their drug use

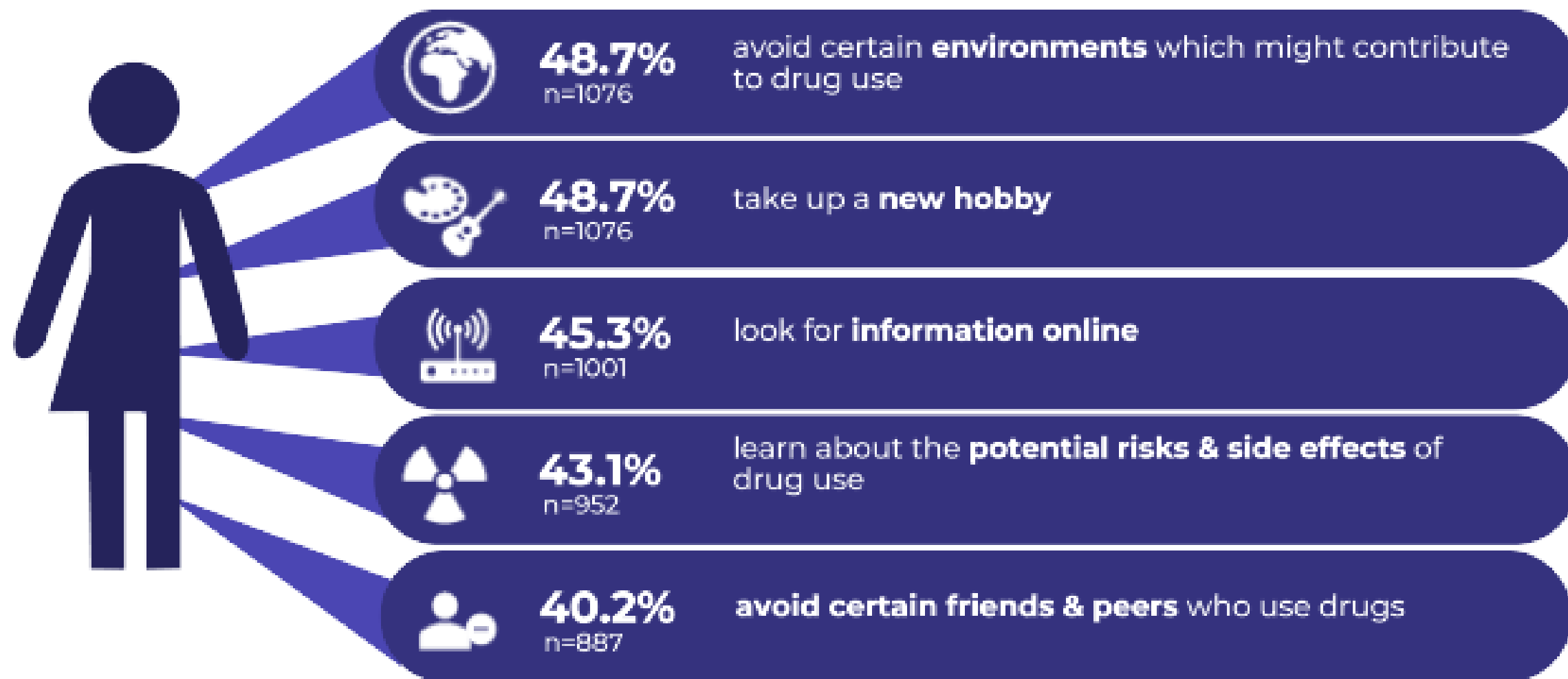
CURRENT USERS

What concerns might prompt you to consider reducing drug use?



CURRENT USERS

55% had given thought to how they might change drug use, saying **IF** they did they would



CURRENT & RECENT USERS

Attempting to change behaviour



FINDINGS

Behaviour Change

over a third
(36.7%)
(n=1499)

reported that they **had**
attempted to change
their drug use



of those who
had
attempted

43.6%
(n=653) **avoided environments** which
contributed to drug use

37.0%
(n=554) **avoided friends or peers**
who frequently used drugs

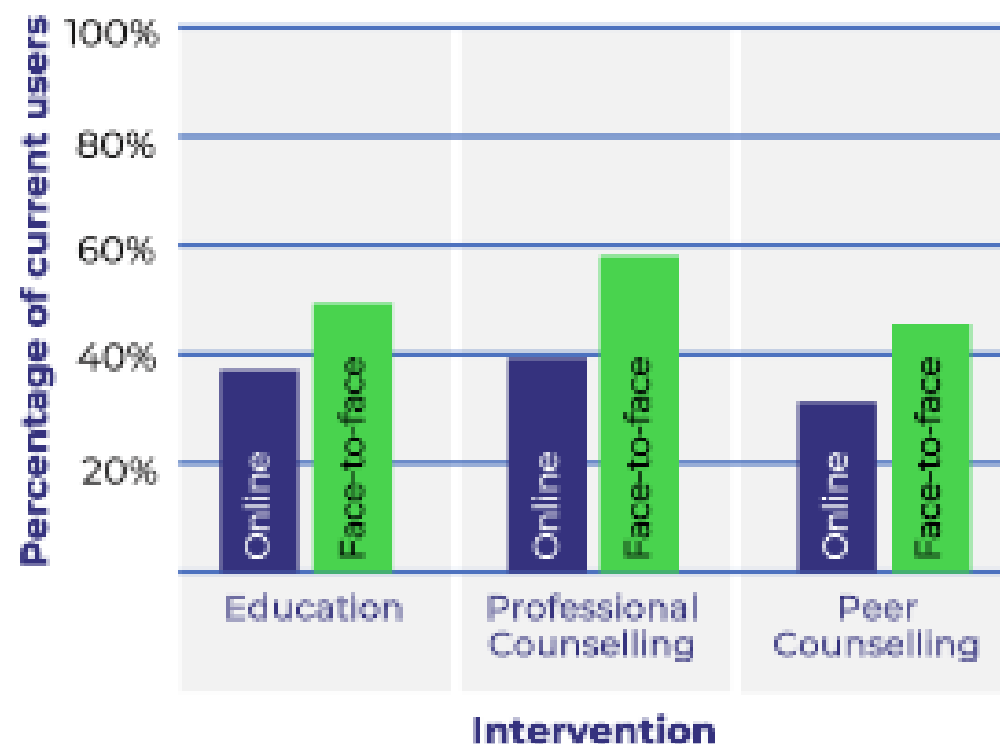
23.1%
(n=346) took up a **new hobby**

12.3%
(n=184) **just stopped** or chose not to
take drugs

2.5%
(n=37) **goal setting**

CURRENT USERS

Perceptions of intervention efficacy

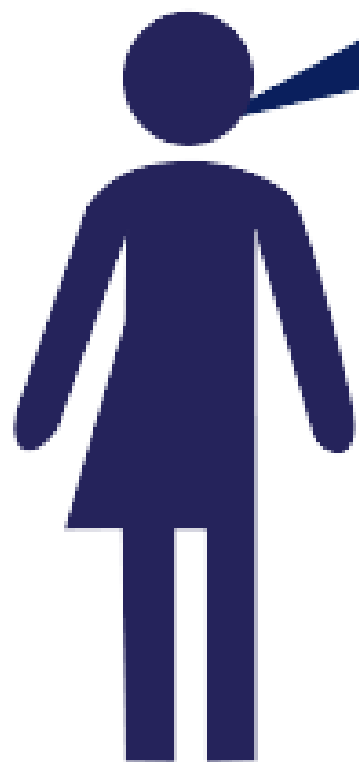


Current users perceived face-to-face interventions to be more effective than online interventions in reducing harm from drug use.

Education was perceived as being the least effective intervention.

Professional counselling was perceived as being the most effective intervention.

Beliefs and Behaviour



'Most students use drugs; drug use is a normal part of student life.'

'I don't want to stop

but I haven't ever given it much thought'

'If I wanted to stop, I could easily do that

but I've never tested this belief.'

'I think face-to-face counselling is effective

but I'd look for information and education online.'

'If I tried to stop, I'd need to change my friends, my social life and my environment'

RECOMMENDATIONS

HEIs should begin to implement the suite of actions contained in the “**Framework for Response to the Use of Illicit Substances within Higher Education**”, in partnership with students and their representatives.

HEIs should embed actions on drugs and alcohol within the new **Healthy Campus Framework**, as part of the Healthy Campus initiative.

HEIs should benefit from the **expertise and support of the Health Service Executive** in implementing actions on drugs and alcohol.

This DUHEI survey should be **repeated at 5-yearly intervals** to monitor trends in drug use prevalence, attitudes, and behaviours amongst students in Ireland.