



Springtide

RESEARCH INSTITUTE®



WE ARE SPRINGTIDE

Compelled by the urgent desire to listen and attend to the lives of young people (ages 13 to 25), Springtide Research Institute is committed to understanding the distinct ways new generations experience and express community, identity, and meaning.

We exist at the intersection of religious and human experience in the lives of young people. And we're here to listen.

We combine quantitative and qualitative research to reflect and amplify the lived realities of young people as they navigate shifting social, cultural, and religious landscapes. Delivering fresh data and actionable insights, we equip those who care about young people to care better.

WHO YOU'LL HEAR FROM TODAY



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**Springtide
Ambassadors Program**

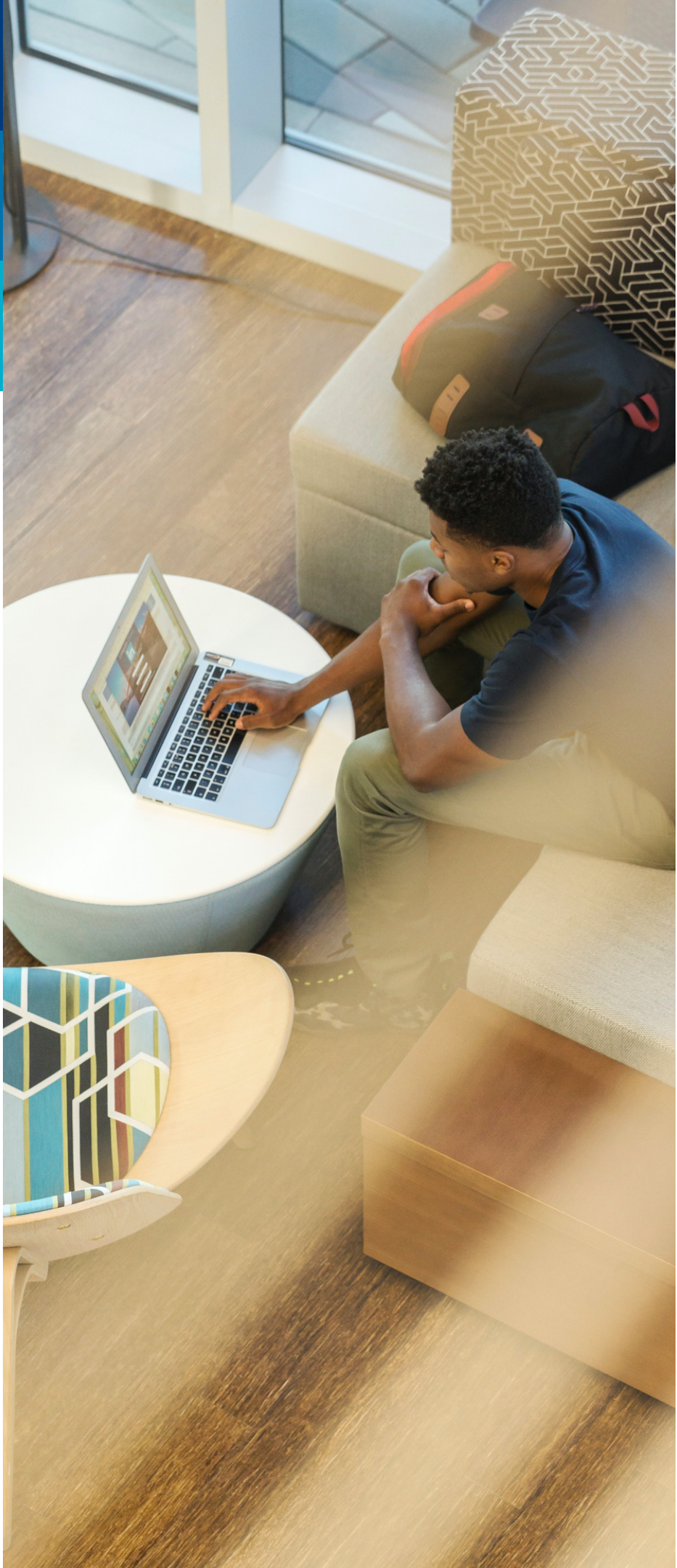
AGENDA

Gen Z Profile

Gen Z's Religious/Spiritual Lives

Gen Z & Mental Health

GEN Z PROFILE



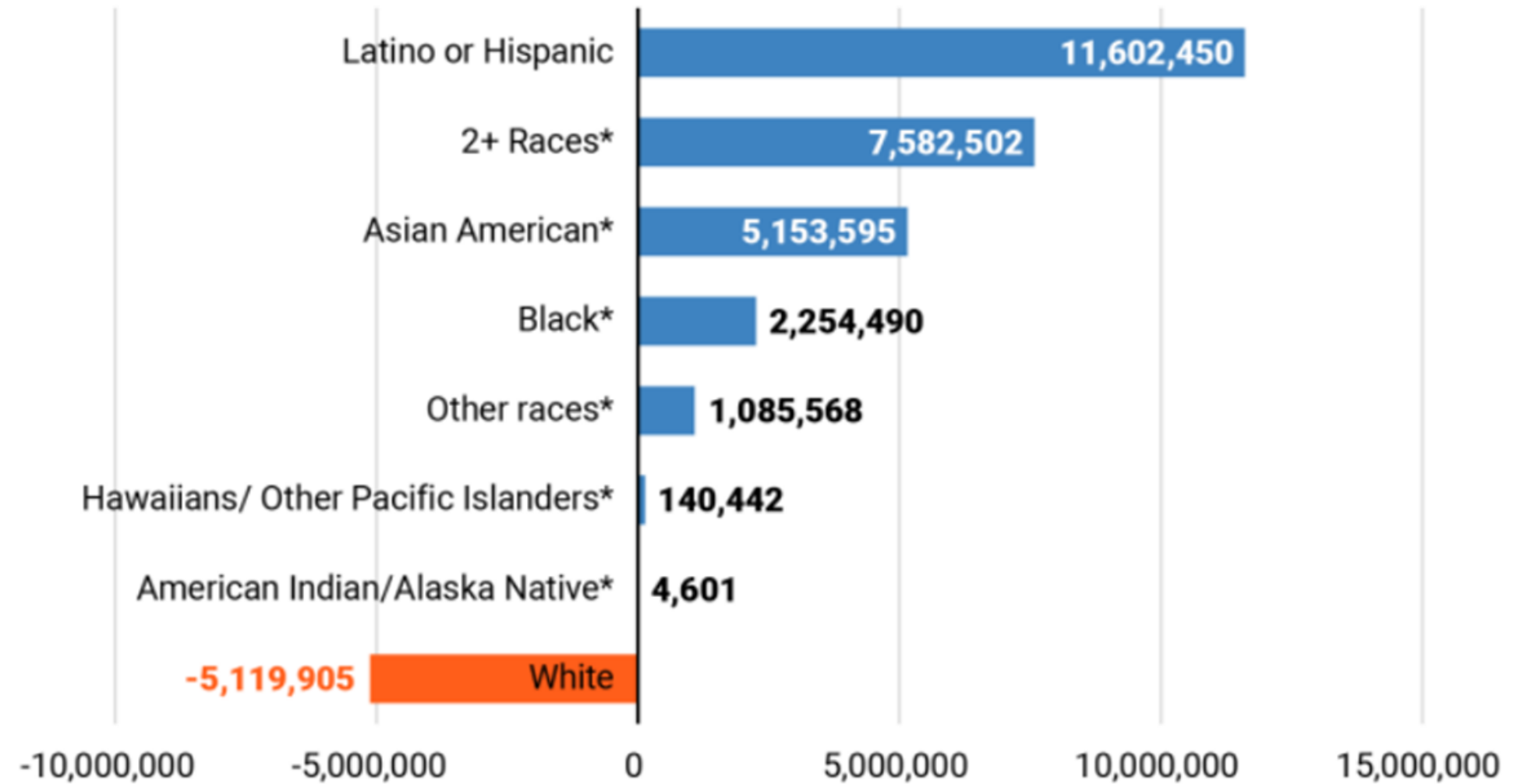
What it is and what it is not

GEN Z IS NOT HOMOGENOUS



GEN Z IS DIVERSE

Figure 2. Change in US population for race and ethnic groups, 2010-2020

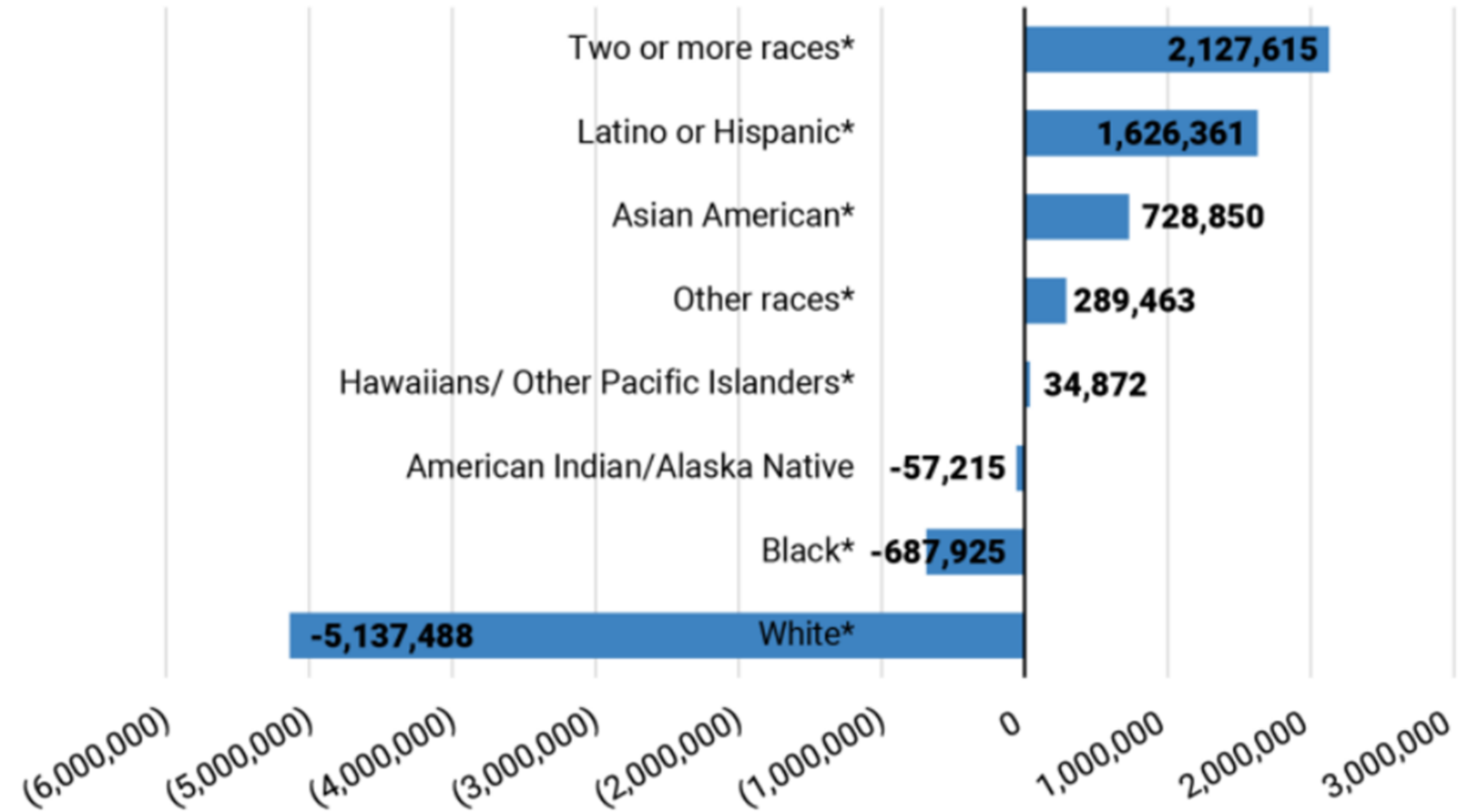


* non-Latino or Hispanic members of racial group

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2010 and 2020 U.S. decennial censuses.

GEN Z IS DIVERSE

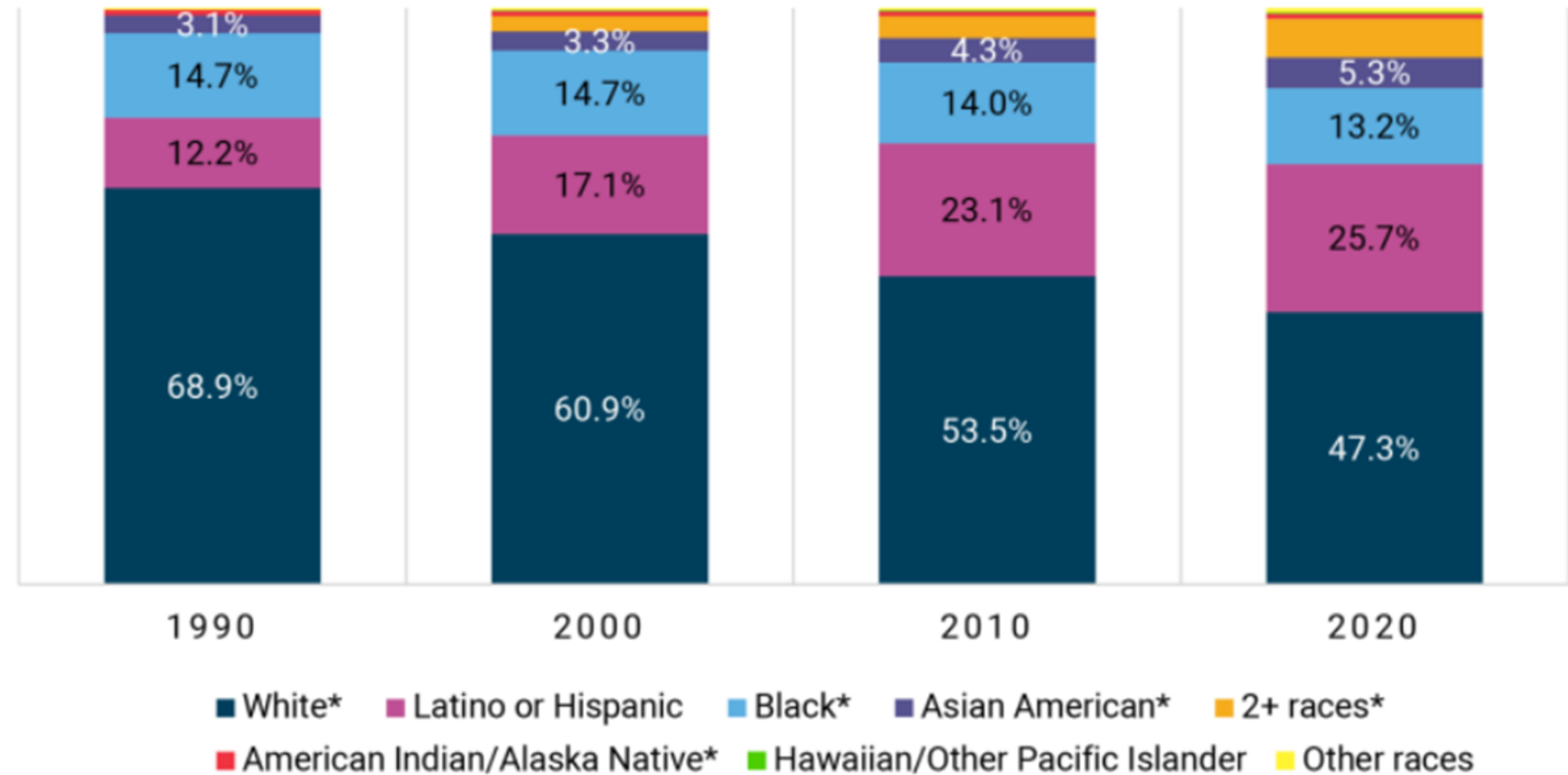
Figure 6. Under-age-18 population change for race and ethnic groups, 2010-2020



Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2010 and 2020 U.S. decennial censuses.

GEN Z IS DIVERSE

Figure 7. Population under age 18: Race-ethnic profiles, 1990-2020



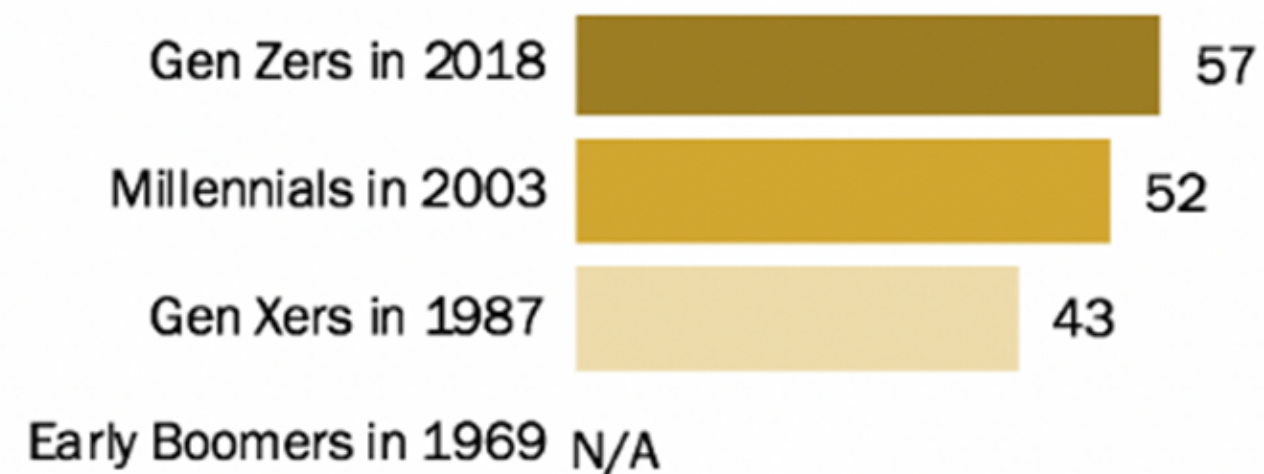
*non-Latino or Hispanic members of race group

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 1980-2020 US decennial censuses.
Note: For 1990, category 2+ races did not exist and Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders were included as part of Asian Americans.

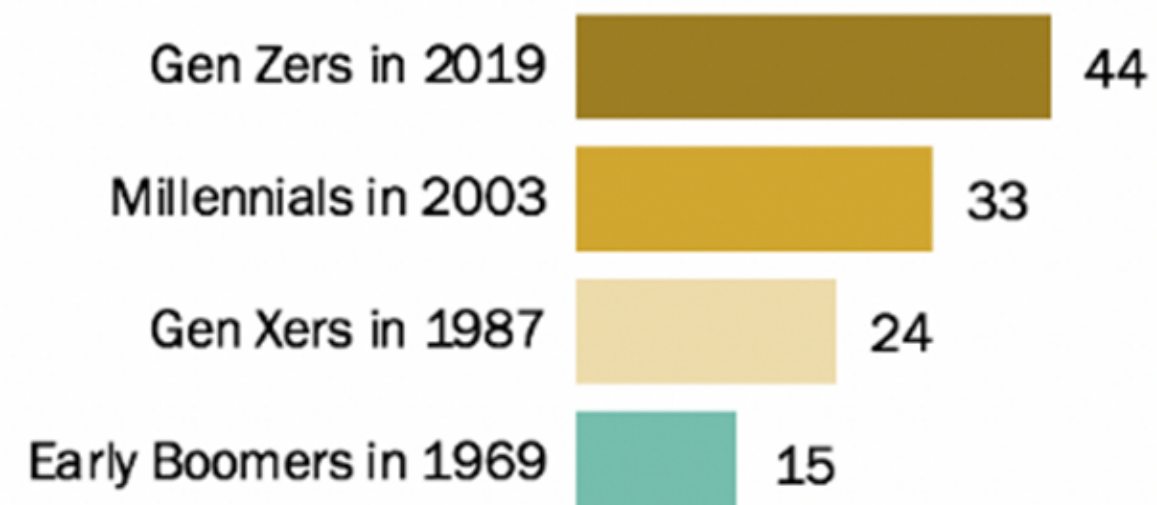
GEN Z IS EDUCATED

Gen Zers more likely to be enrolled in college and to have a college-educated parent than Millennials, Gen Xers at a comparable age

Among 18- to 21-year-olds no longer in high school, % enrolled in college



% of 7- to 17-year-olds living with a parent who has at least a bachelor's degree



Note: Share living with a parent who has at least a bachelor's degree is limited to 7- to 17-year-olds living with at least one parent. Those without a parent in the household are excluded.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1987, 2003 and 2018 Current Population Survey October supplement and 1969, 1987, 2003 and 2019 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (IPUMS).

"On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Generation Z So Far"



GEN Z IS SHAPED BY A HYBRID EXISTENCE

GEN Z VALUES AUTHENTICITY



Fifty-five percent of respondents agree that it is **important to be their authentic selves** when participating in an organization.



Nearly 40% of young people say they will only join an organization if it values inclusion among its highest priorities.



Over 60%

of the young people we surveyed agree that **people should be treated equally no matter what** it takes to do so.



of young people surveyed say it is important that the organizations they join **create spaces where everyone is safe, welcome, and has equal access to resources.**

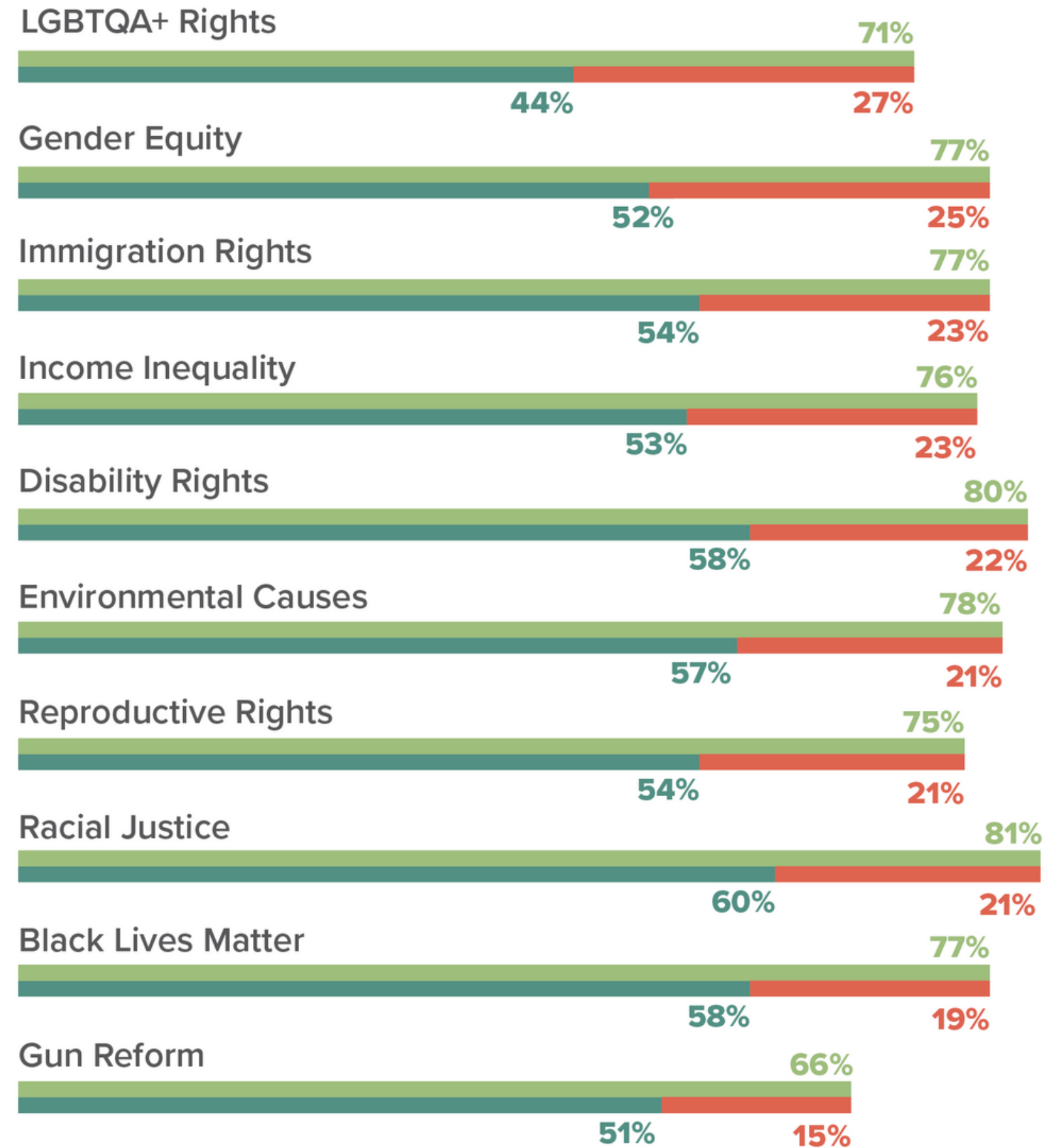
THE VALUES GAP

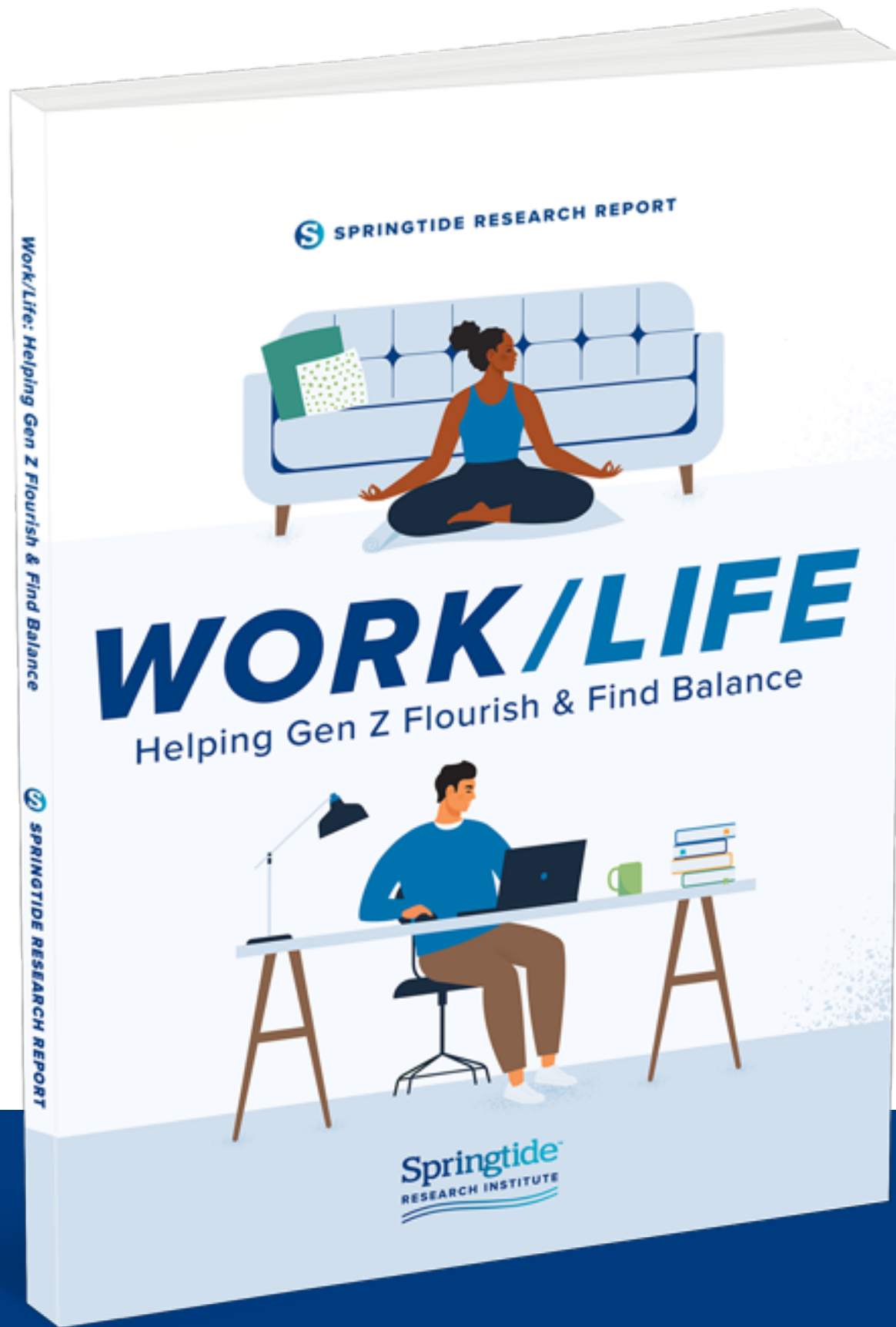
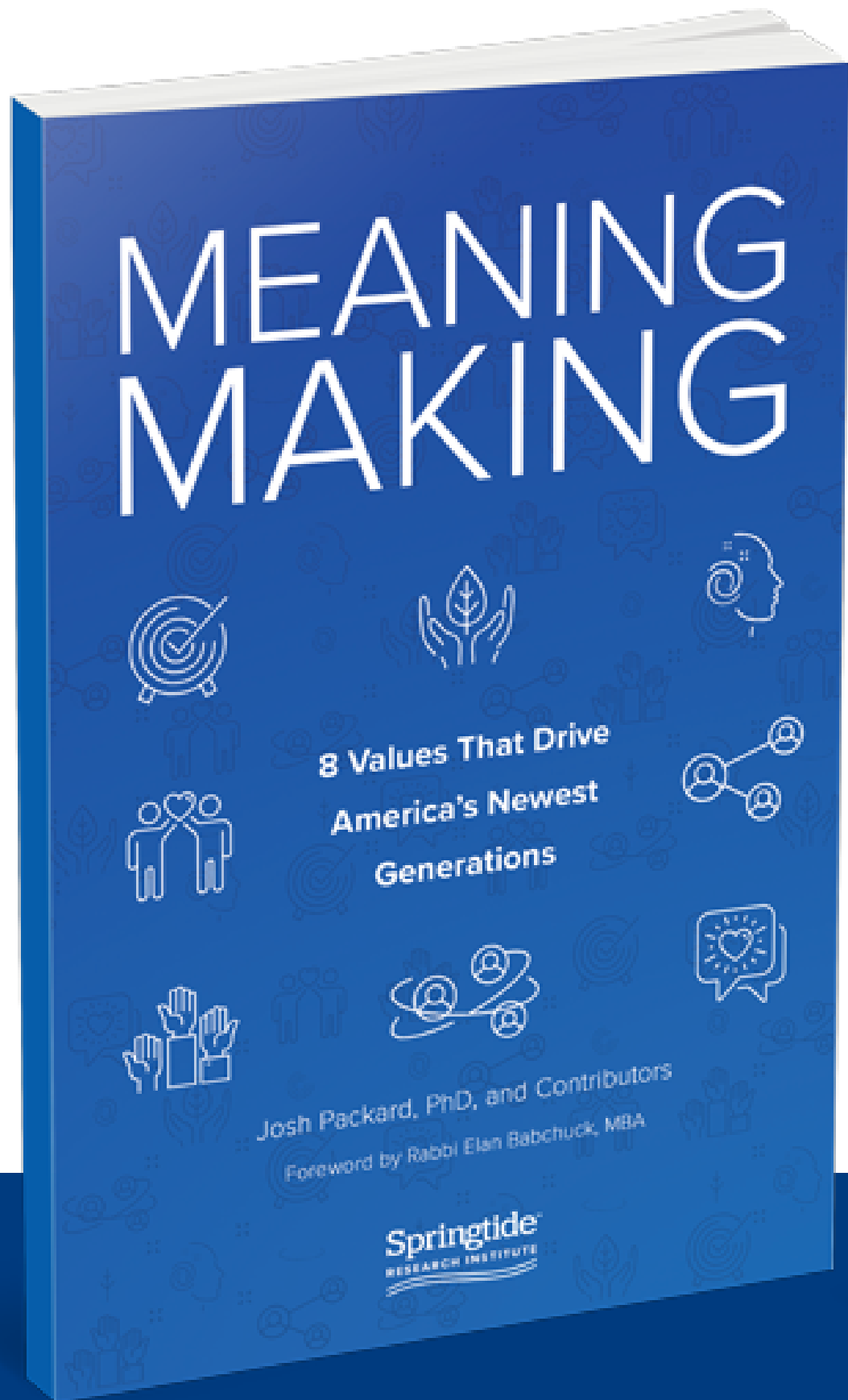
Young people don't think religious institutions care about the things that matter most to them.

ISSUES I CARE ABOUT...

The Values Gap

● I care ● They care ● Disparity

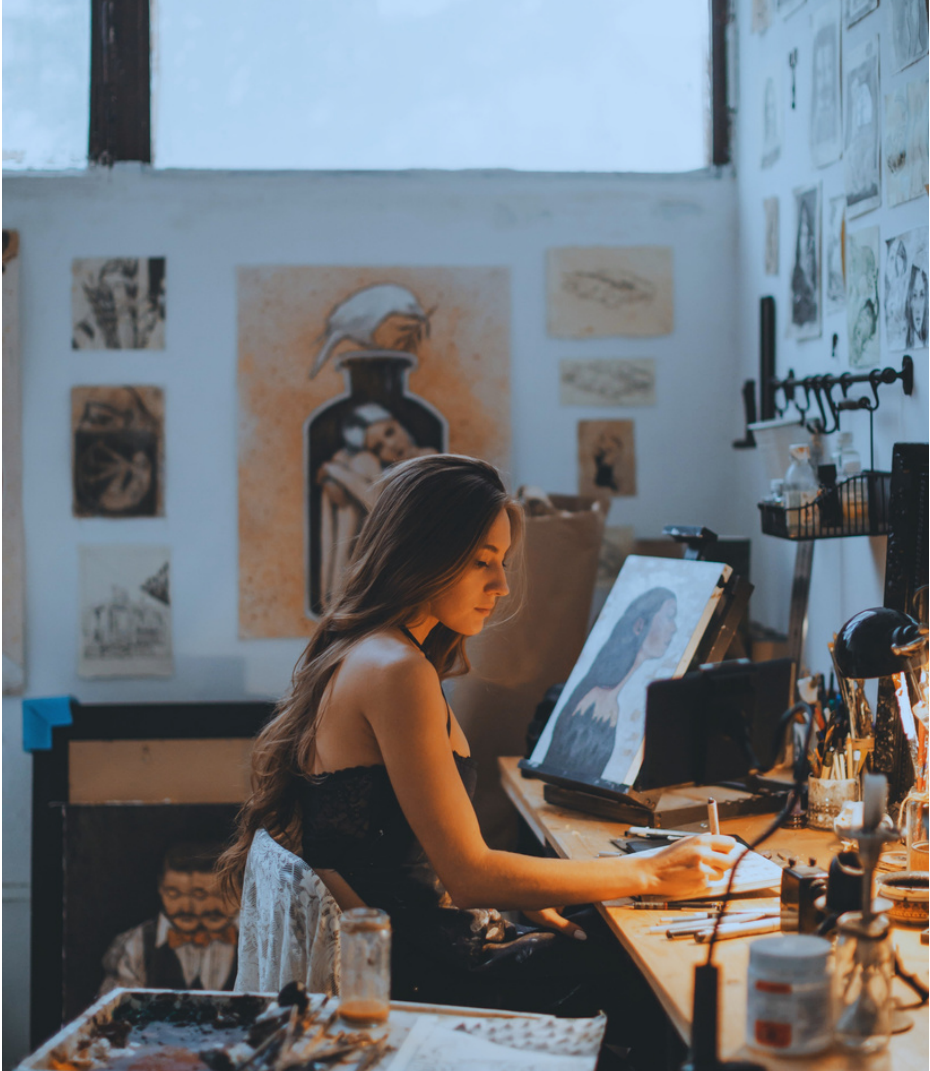




SCAN ME



GEN Z'S RELIGIOUS/ SPIRITUAL LIVES



What it is and what it is not



**BELONGING
PRECEDES
BELIEVING**

BELONGING PRECEDES BELIEVING FOR GEN Z

BELONGING IS . . .

[a] place that's open and where you can be known even in the complicated times . . . a place where all of that can be on the table and yet you're loved.

—Ophelia, 20

THE LANDSCAPE OF LONELINESS

LONELINESS IS . . .

**a persistent state of being
in which a person feels
isolated, unsupported,
and without close friends.**

THE LANDSCAPE OF LONELINESS

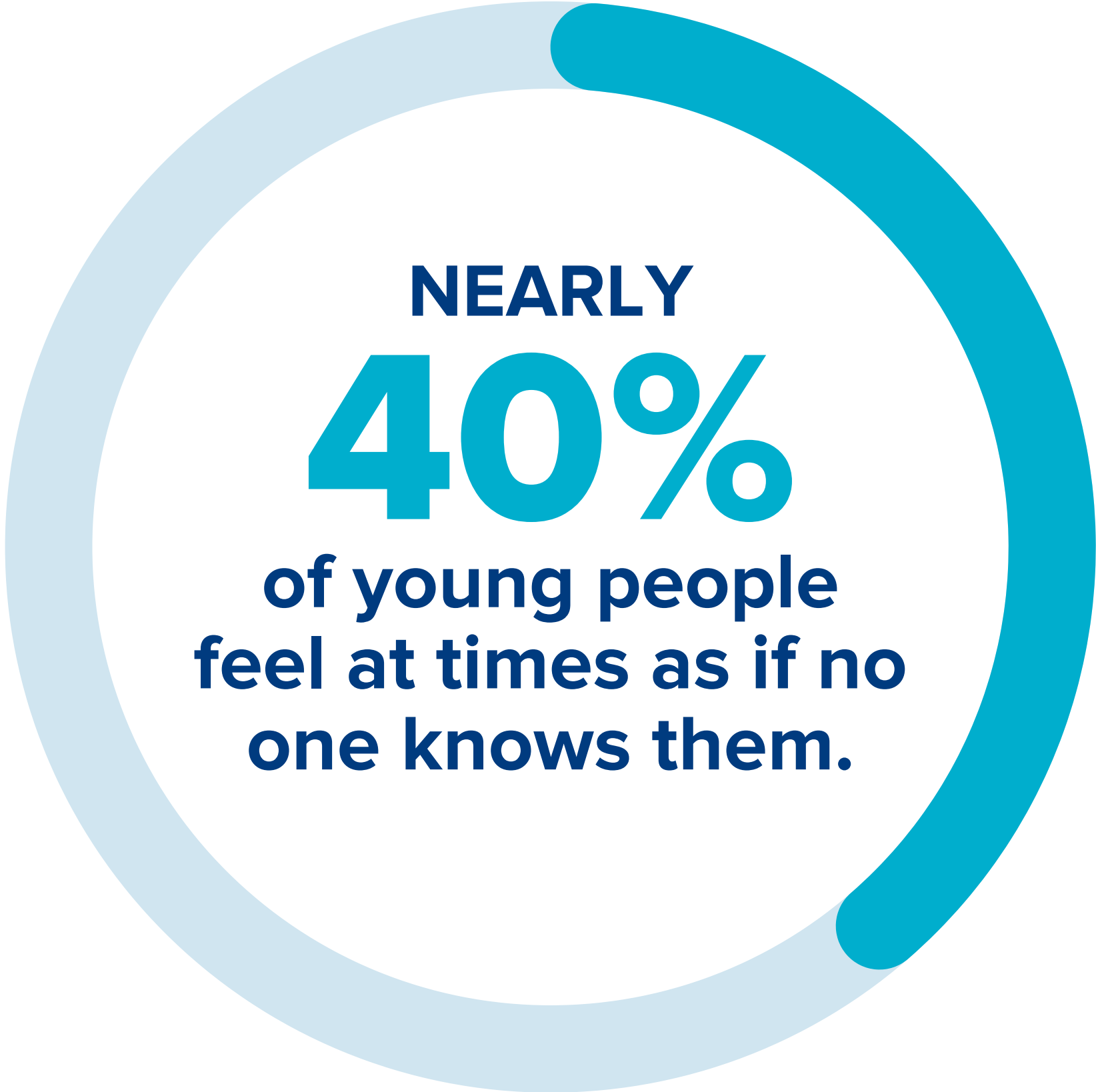


**One
in three**
of our young people
feel completely alone
much of the time.



Nearly 40%
have no one to talk
to and feel left out.

THE LANDSCAPE OF LONELINESS



NEARLY
40%
of young people
feel at times as if no
one knows them.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER MOST

● **Feel completely alone**

Youth with more trusted adults in their lives have decreased feelings of loneliness.

● **No one understands me**

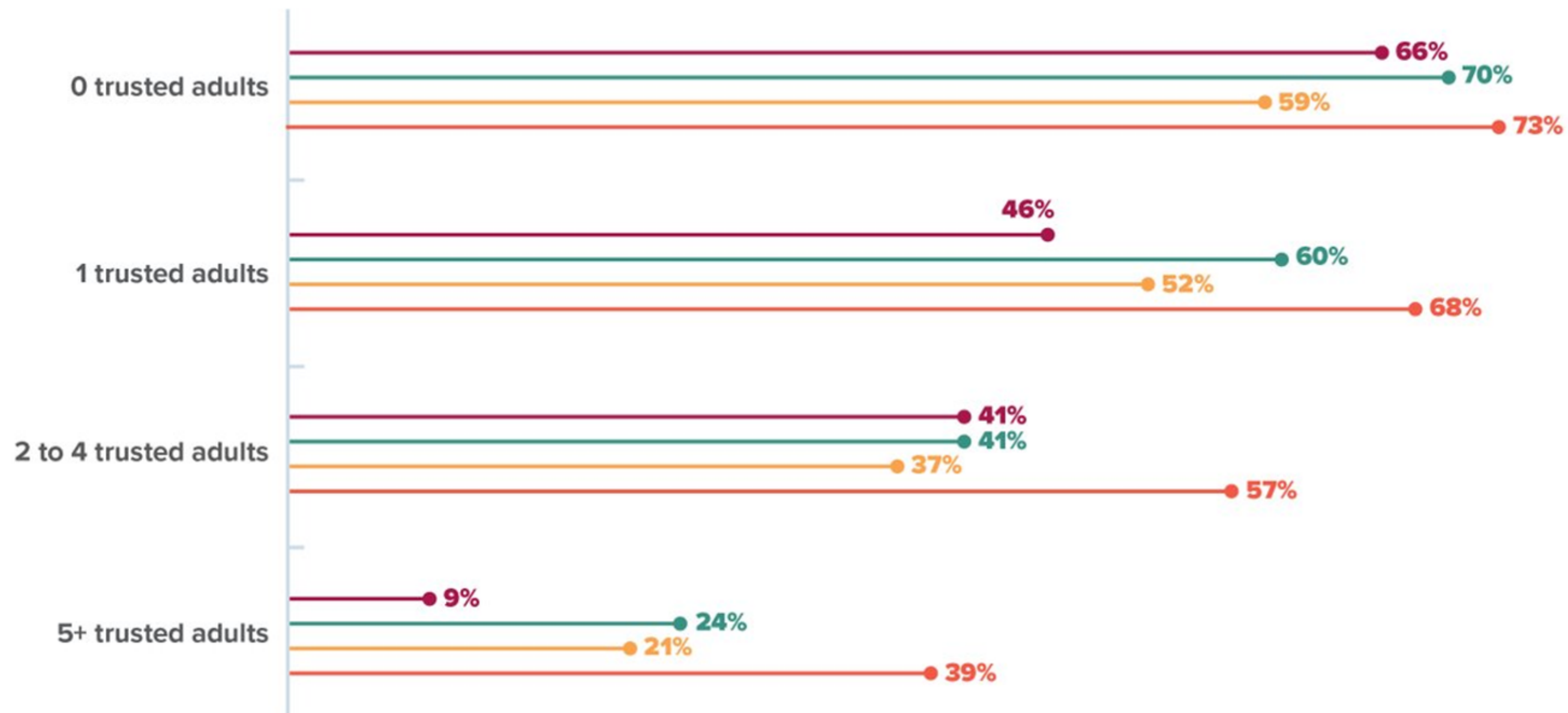
Youth with more trusted adults in their lives have decreased feelings of not being understood.

● **I feel left out**

Youth with more trusted adults in their lives have decreased feelings of being left out.

● **I feel stressed and overwhelmed**

Youth with more trusted adults in their lives have decreased feelings of being stressed.





“The reason I stayed at my church is because of my mentor. She’s very hospitable, very loving, very forgiving, nonjudgmental, and she has been so gracious.”

—Alex, 22

**Belonging relationships
have certain qualities:**

welcome, warmth, supportiveness,
authenticity, vulnerability, honesty, curiosity,
invitation, openness, accountability

As the number of trusted adults in a young person's life increases, their reported feelings of loneliness, social isolation, and stress decrease.

Percentages of 13-to-25-year-olds who AGREE with each statement.

● 0 Trusted Adults ● 5+ Trusted Adults

I feel completely alone.



I feel as if no one understands me.



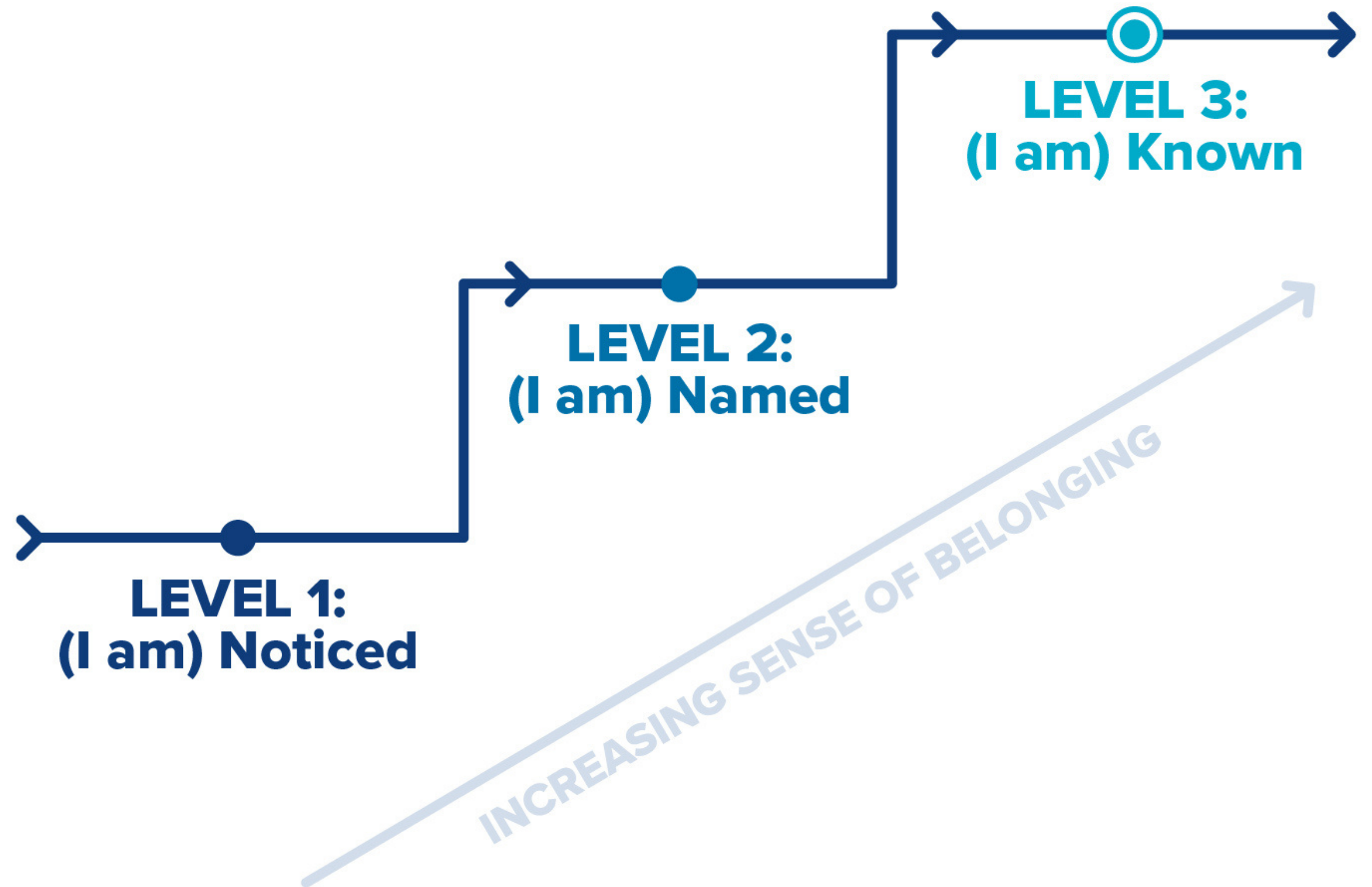
I feel left out.



I feel stressed and overwhelmed.



THE BELONGINGNESS PROCESS



CURIOSITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

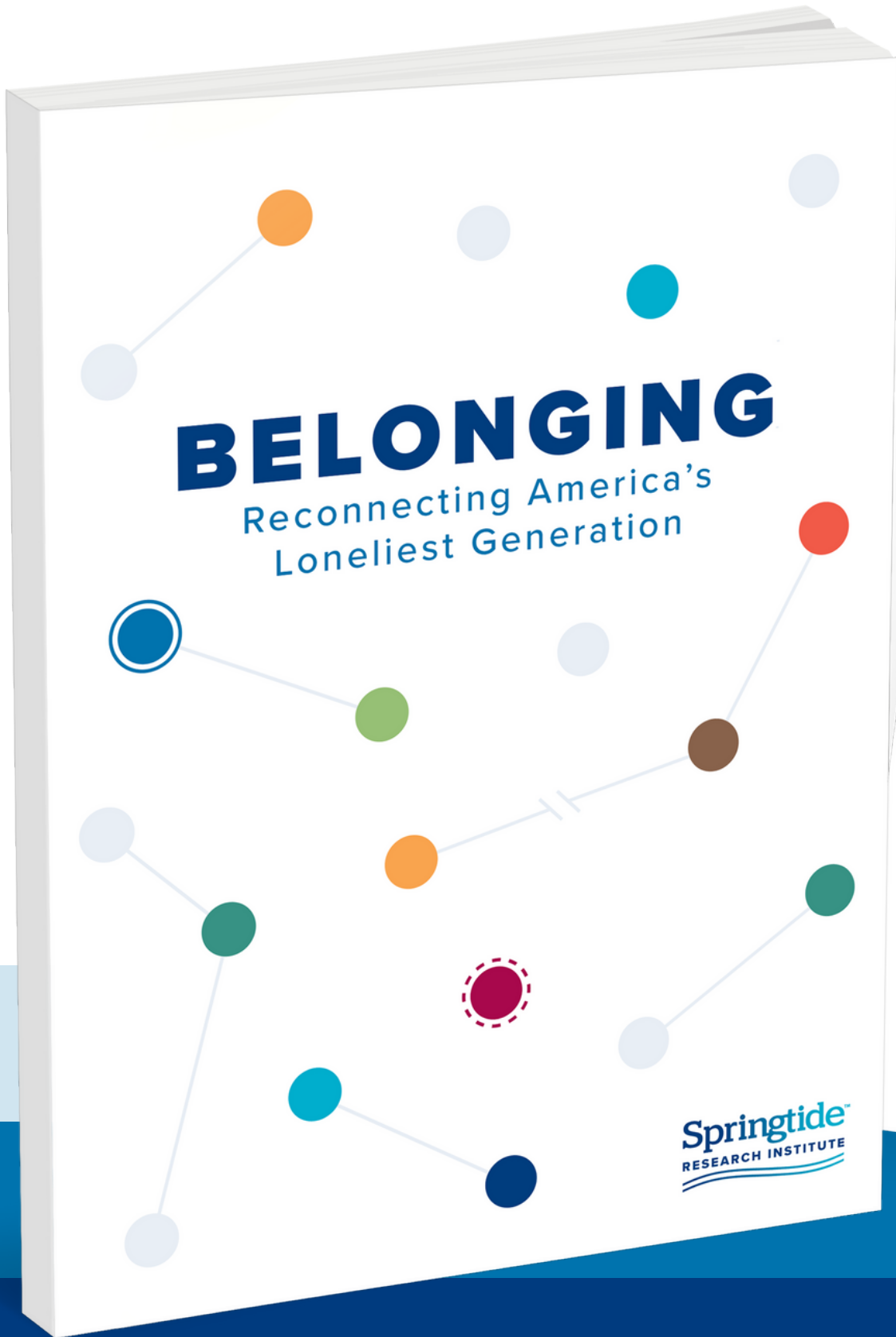
81%

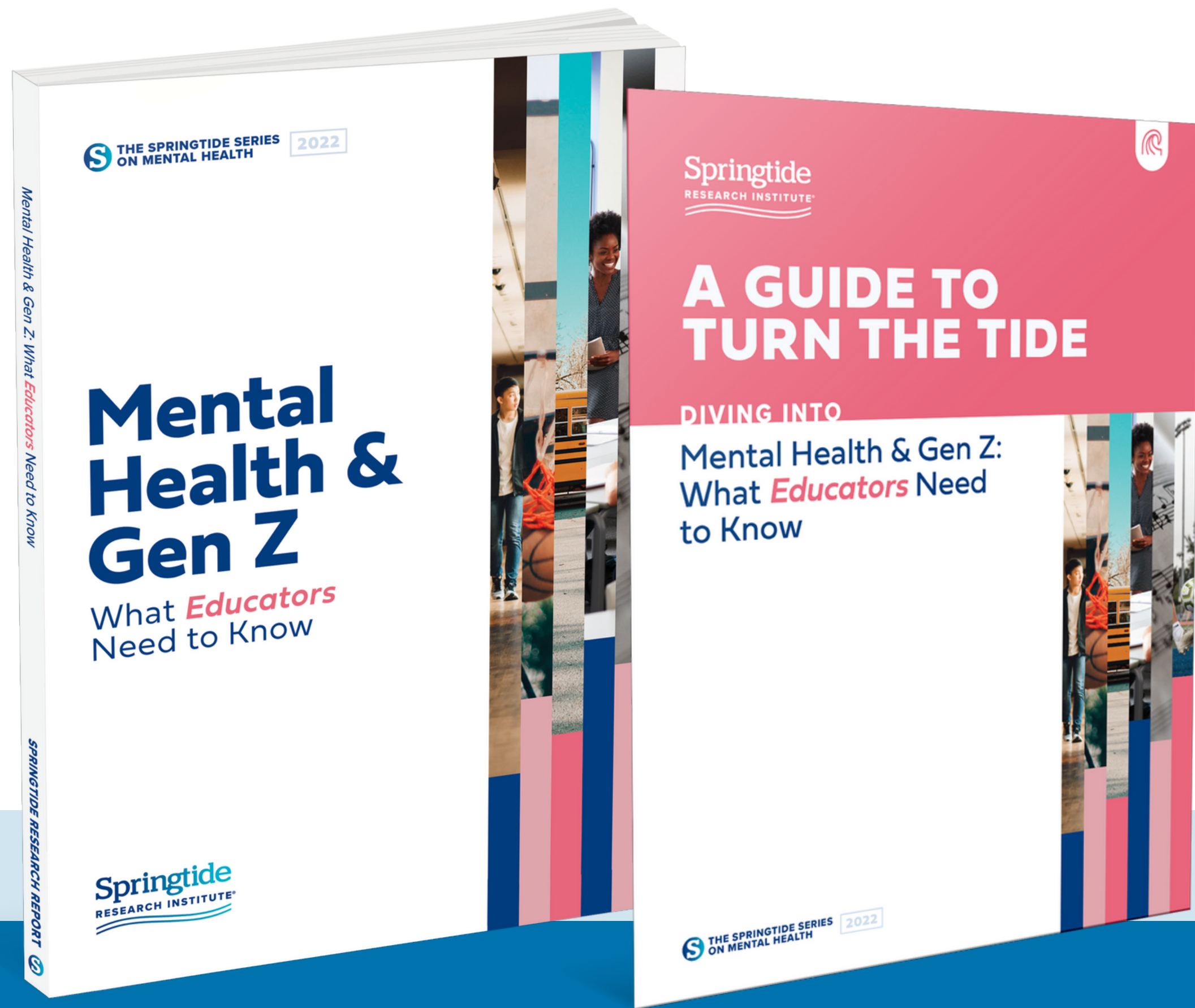
of young people say they feel listened to when people seem genuinely curious about what they have to say.

73%

say they feel listened to when people ask questions about what they've said.

SCAN ME

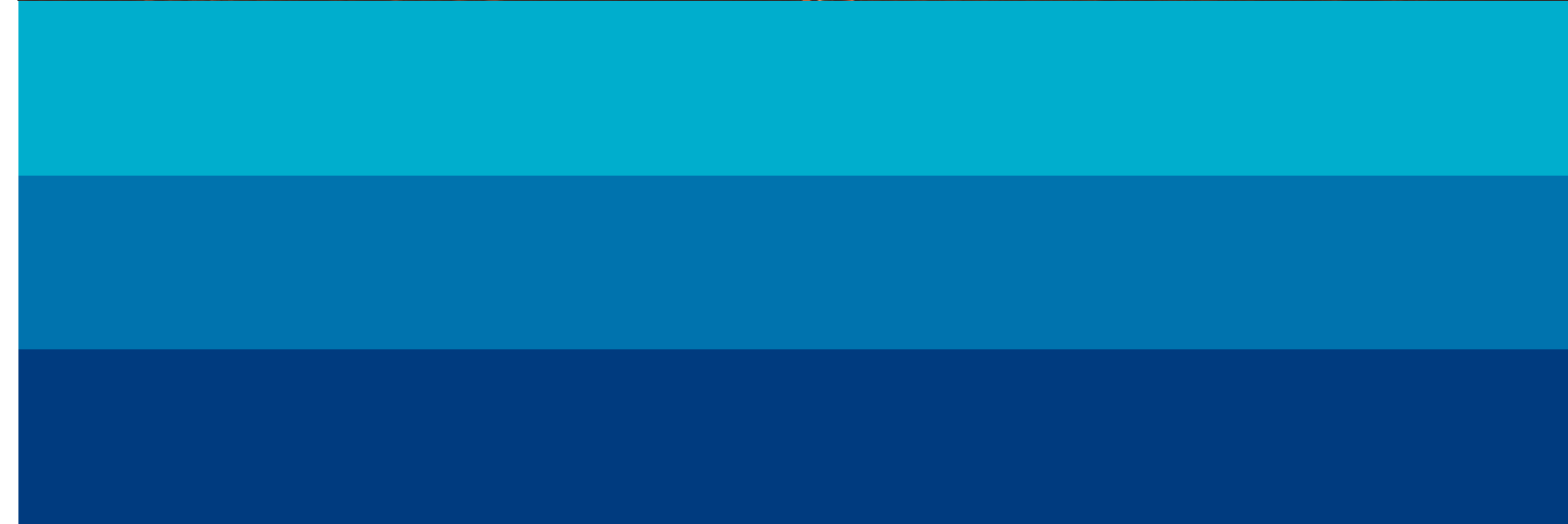




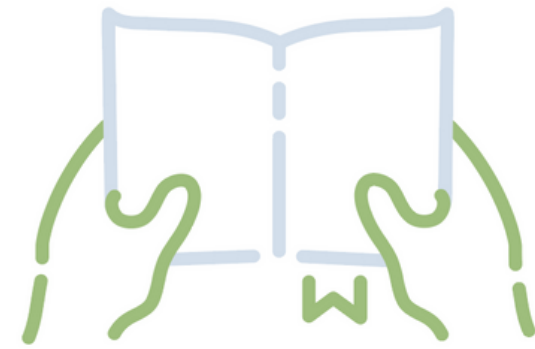
SCAN ME



RELIGIOUS/ SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION OF GEN Z

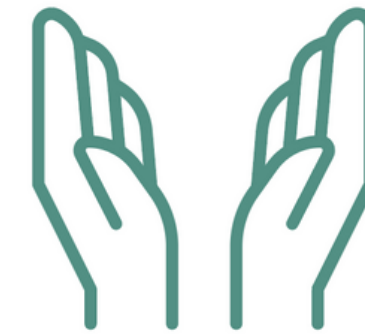


GEN Z IDENTIFIES AS RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL



71%

of young people say
they are **religious**.

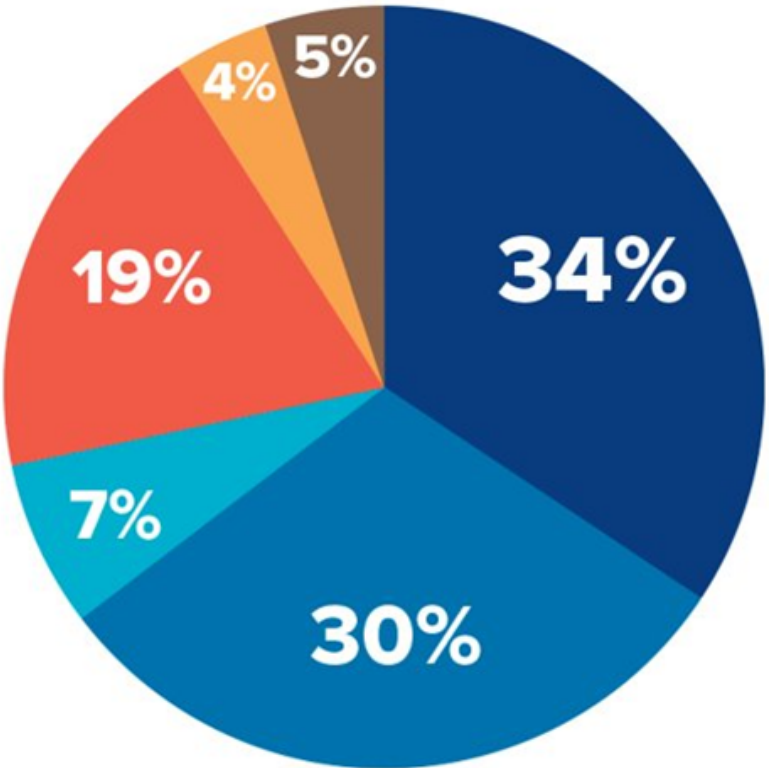


78%

of young people say
they are **spiritual**.

ATTENDANCE DOESN'T TELL THE WHOLE STORY

How often do you attend religious services, either in person or virtually?

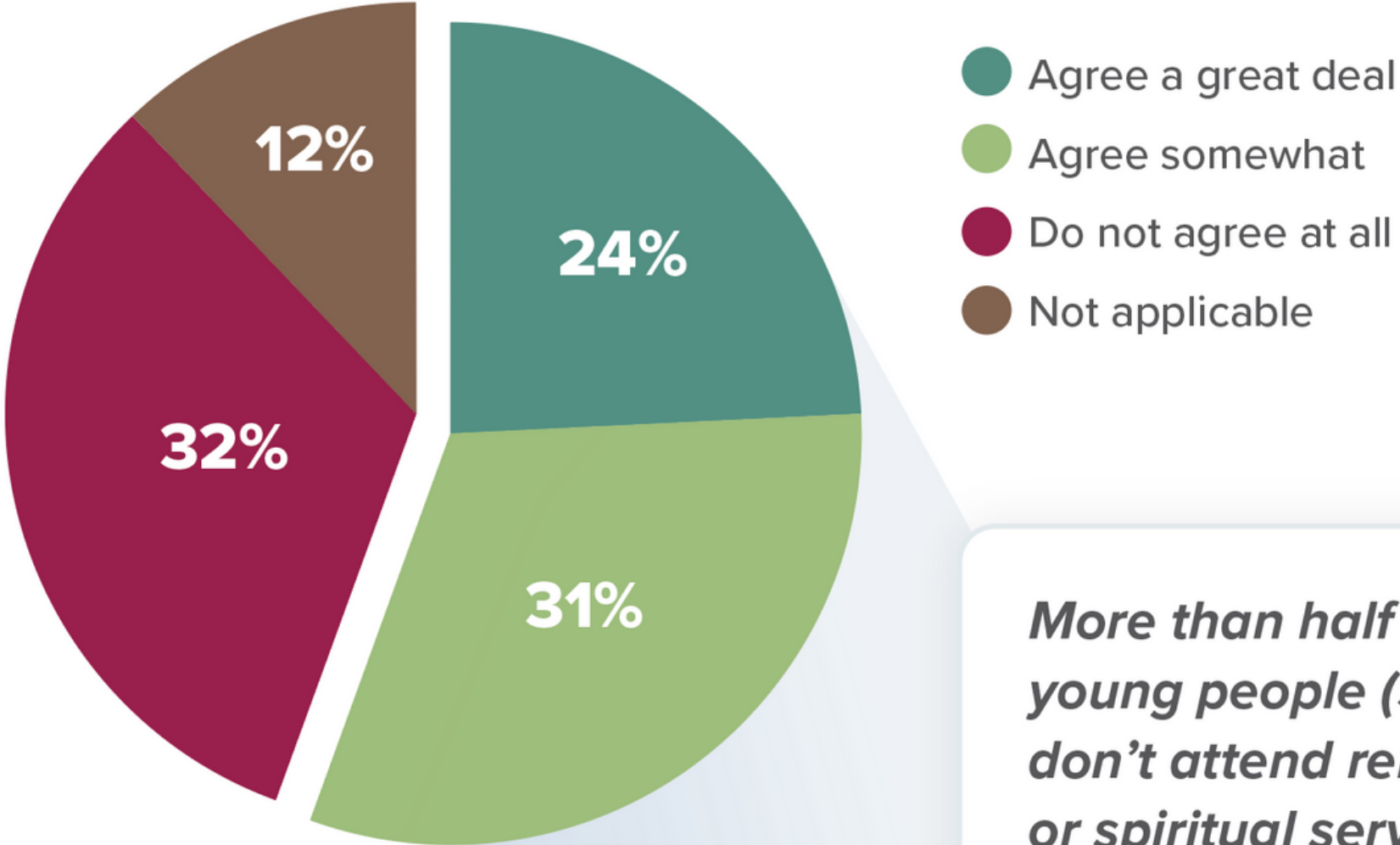


- Attend never
- Attend, but only once per year or less
- Attend once per month
- Attend weekly or nearly every week
- Attend more than once per week
- Don't know, or not applicable

Percentages are approximate due to rounding.

AGAIN, AUTHENTICITY MATTERS

“I do not attend religious or spiritual services because I am not free to be who I am at religious gatherings or worship services.”

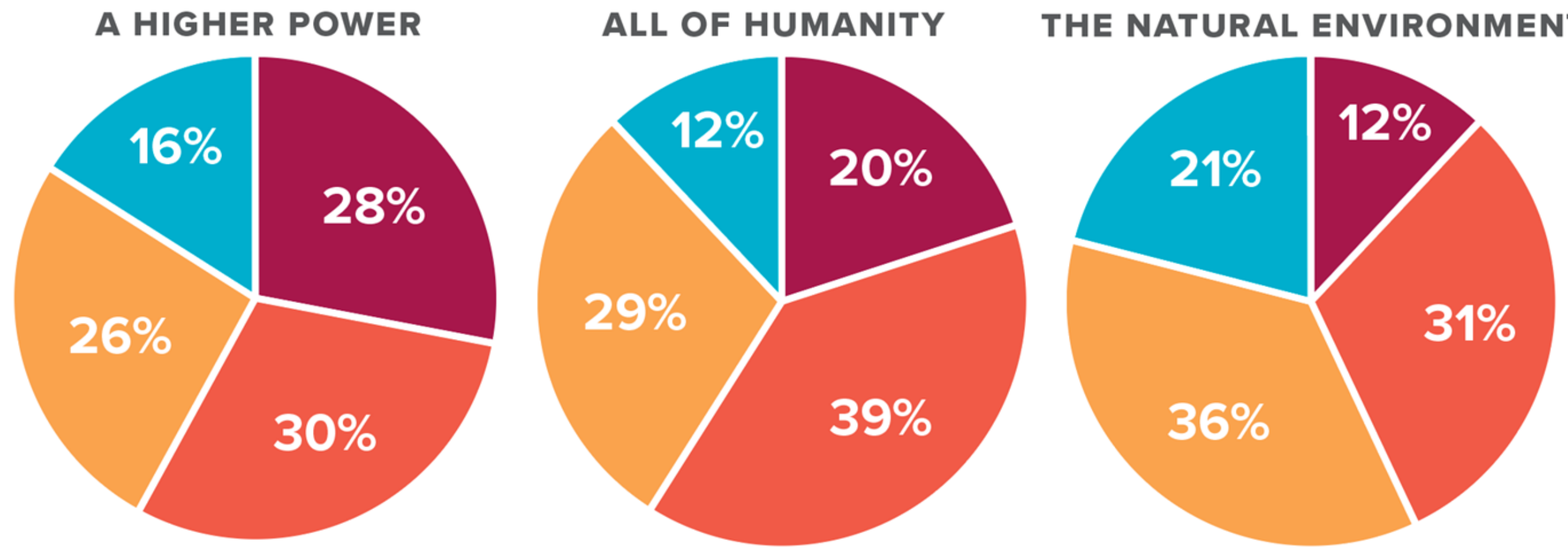


More than half of young people (55%) don't attend religious or spiritual services because they don't feel free to be who they are at those kinds of gatherings.

GEN Z'S RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION IS MARKED BY CURIOSITY & OPENNESS

To what extent do you feel connected to the following?

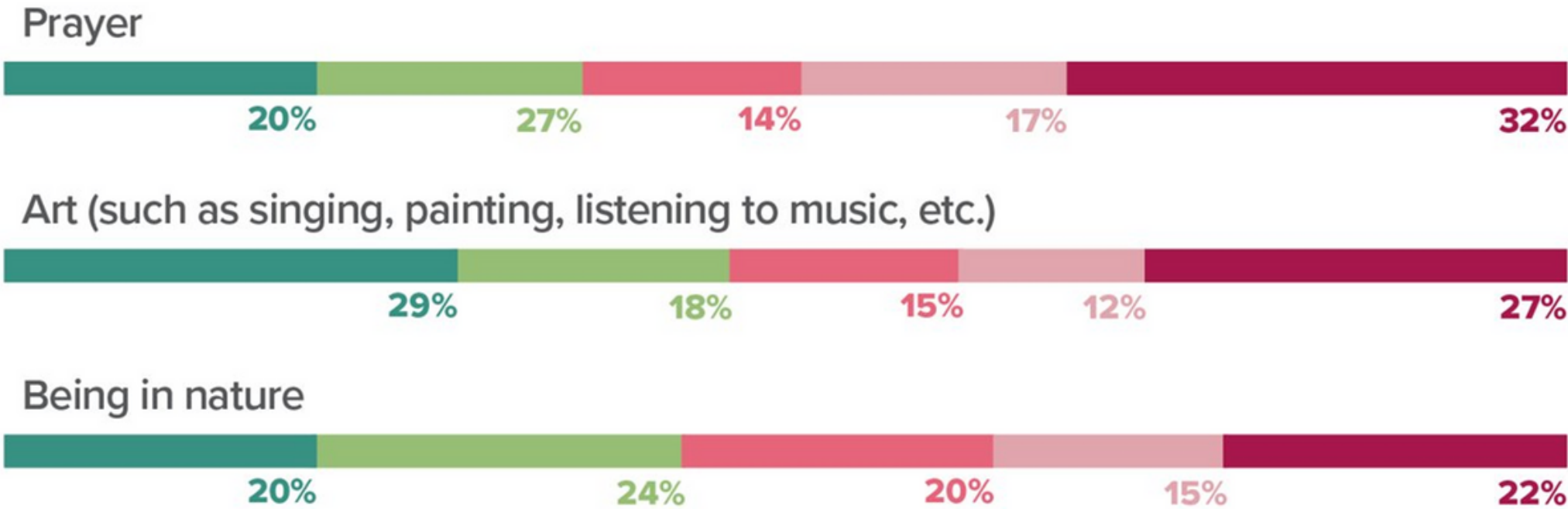
● Not connected at all ● Slightly connected ● Moderately connected ● Highly connected



IT IS DIVERSE & EXPLORATORY

How often do you engage in the following as religious or spiritual practices?

● Daily ● Weekly ● Monthly ● Less than once a month ● Never

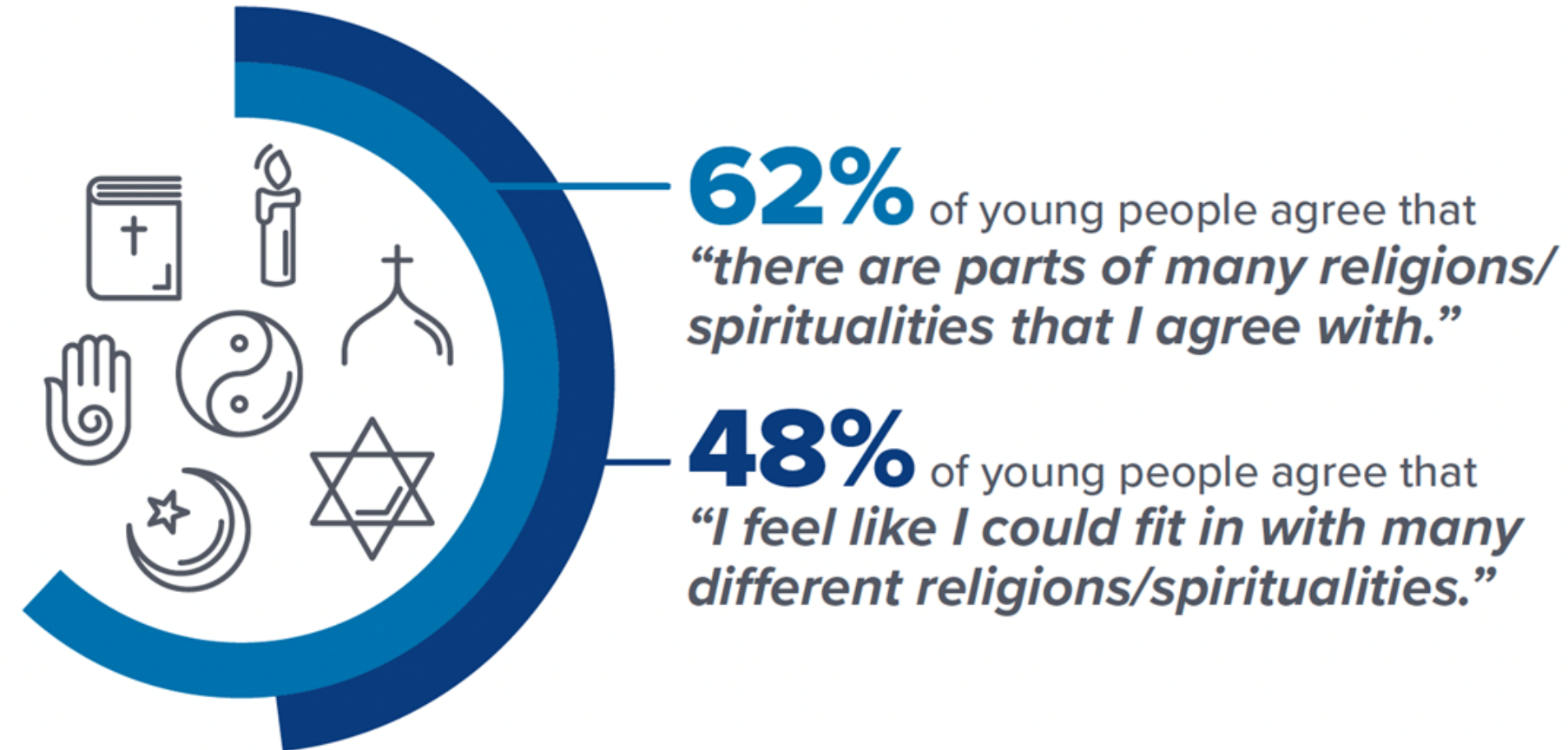


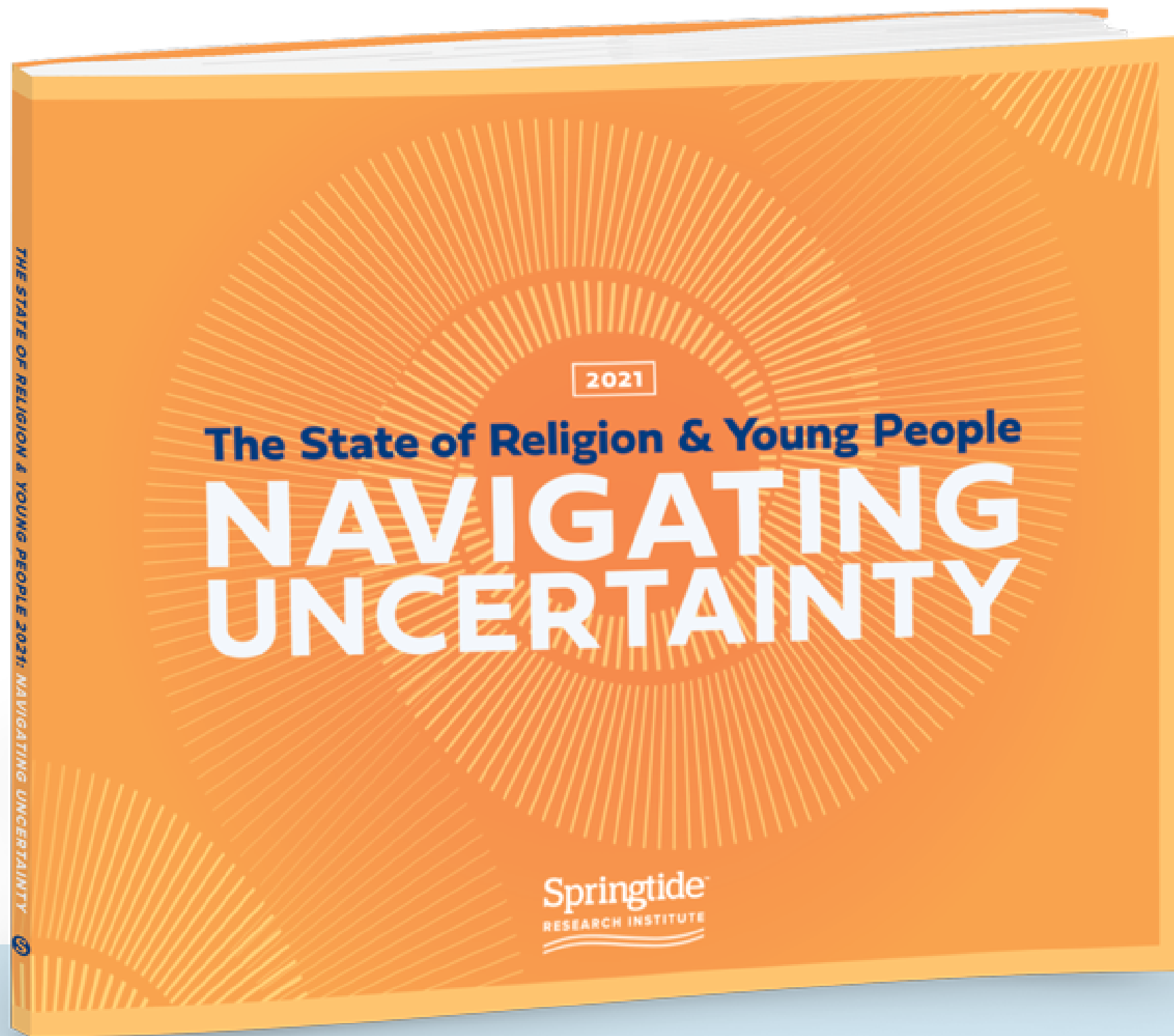
**IT IS NOT
EXCLUSIVE**



GEN Z'S UNBUNDLING & REBUNDLING OF FAITH

Instead of strict affiliation, young people see the value of many religious traditions.





A SHIFT TO RELATIONAL AUTHORITY



RELATIONAL AUTHORITY IS WHAT MATTERS TODAY

83%

of young people say they are **more likely to take advice** from someone they know cares about them.

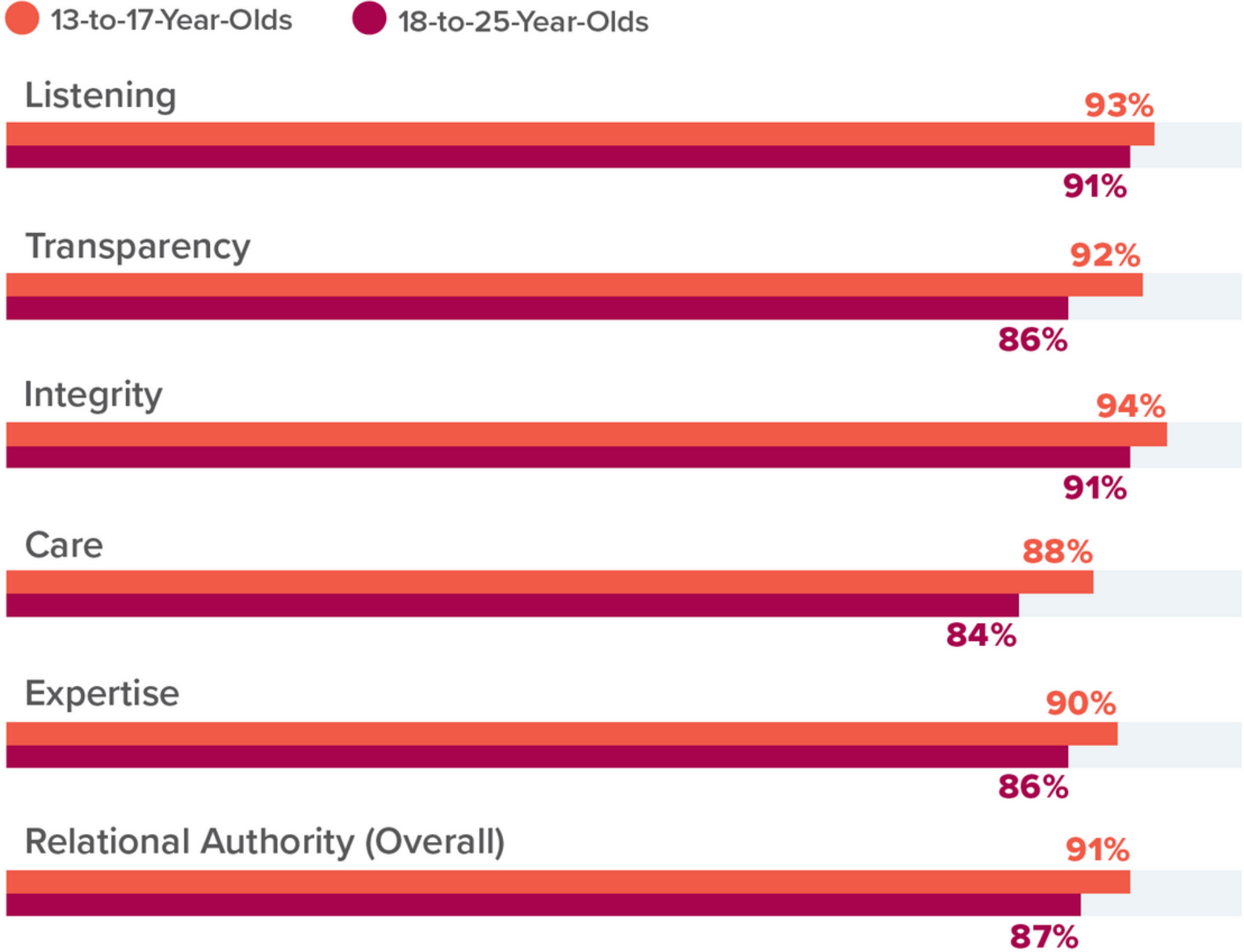
79%

say they are **more likely to listen** to adults in their life if they know those adults care for them.

FIVE DIMENSIONS OF RELATIONAL AUTHORITY

Young People Trust Adults Who Practice Five Dimensions of Relational Authority

A closer look at how young people of various ages indicate trust based on the five dimensions of Relational Authority



IMPORTANCE OF ADULTS WHO LISTEN

84%

of young people ages 13–25
say they will **trust someone**
who remembers things
they've shared.

82%

say they will **trust someone**
who takes the time to hear
what they have to say.

78%

of young people say they
feel listened to when people
show they understand what
they've been through.

80%

say they feel listened to
when people **show they**
care about them.



Young people need relationships with caring adults, especially in times of uncertainty.

Who did you turn to for help when you felt overwhelmed and didn't know what to do about something?

Respondents could select more than one answer.

My friends



Someone from my family



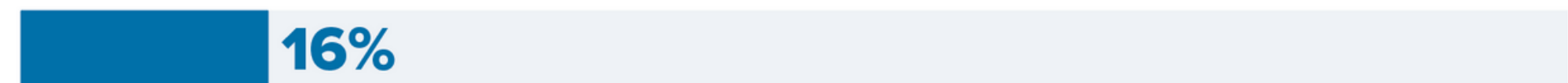
Someone from school



No one

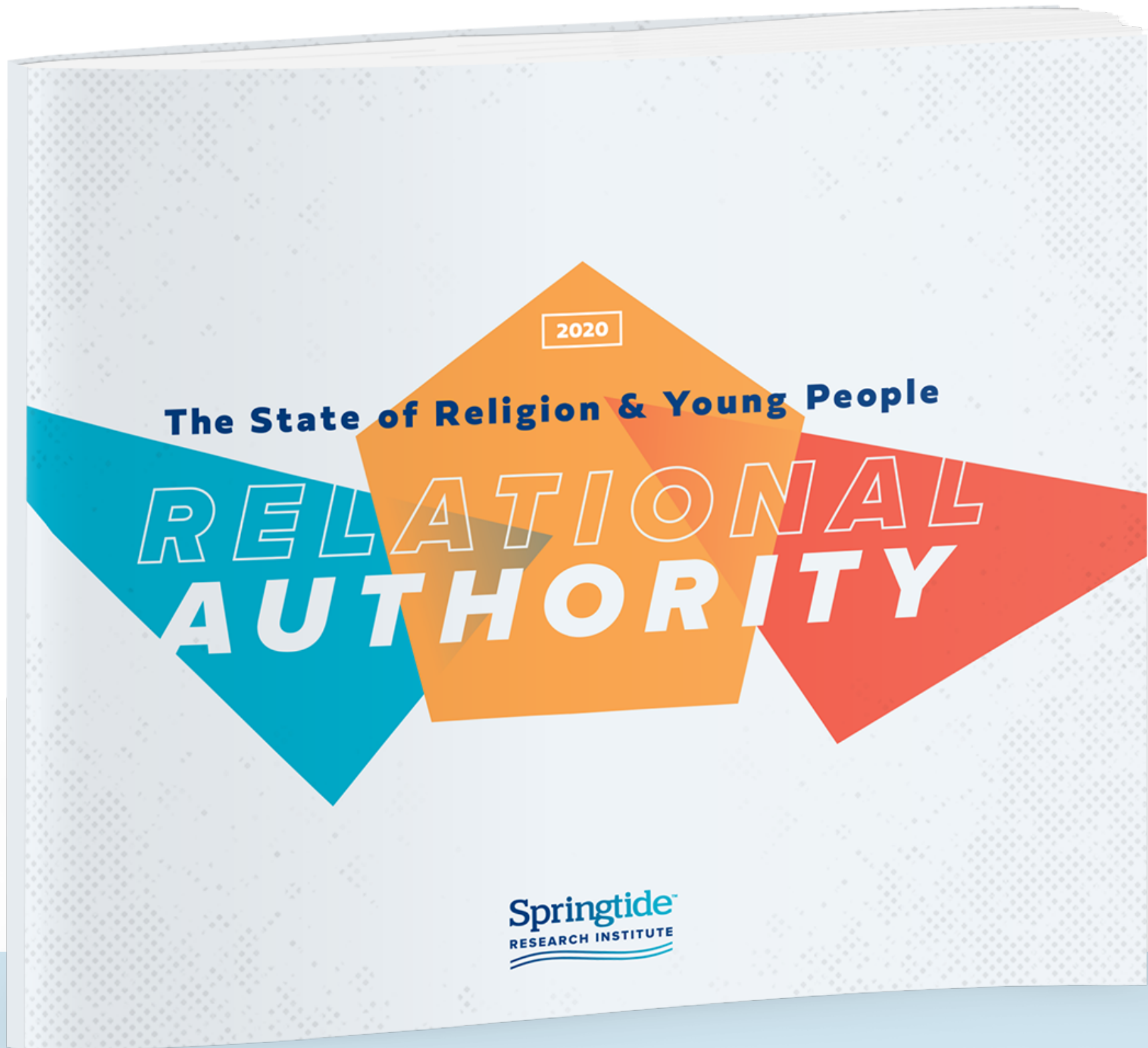


Someone from my faith community



FIVE DIMENSIONS OF RELATIONAL AUTHORITY





GEN Z & MENTAL HEALTH



What it is and what it is not

**THIS IS NOT
YOUR “TYPICAL”
ADOLESCENCE**



IT CONTAINS SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL STRESS

57%

of young people say they are **moderately or extremely stressed.**

55%

of young people say they are **moderately or extremely anxious.**

47%

of young people say they are **moderately or extremely depressed.**

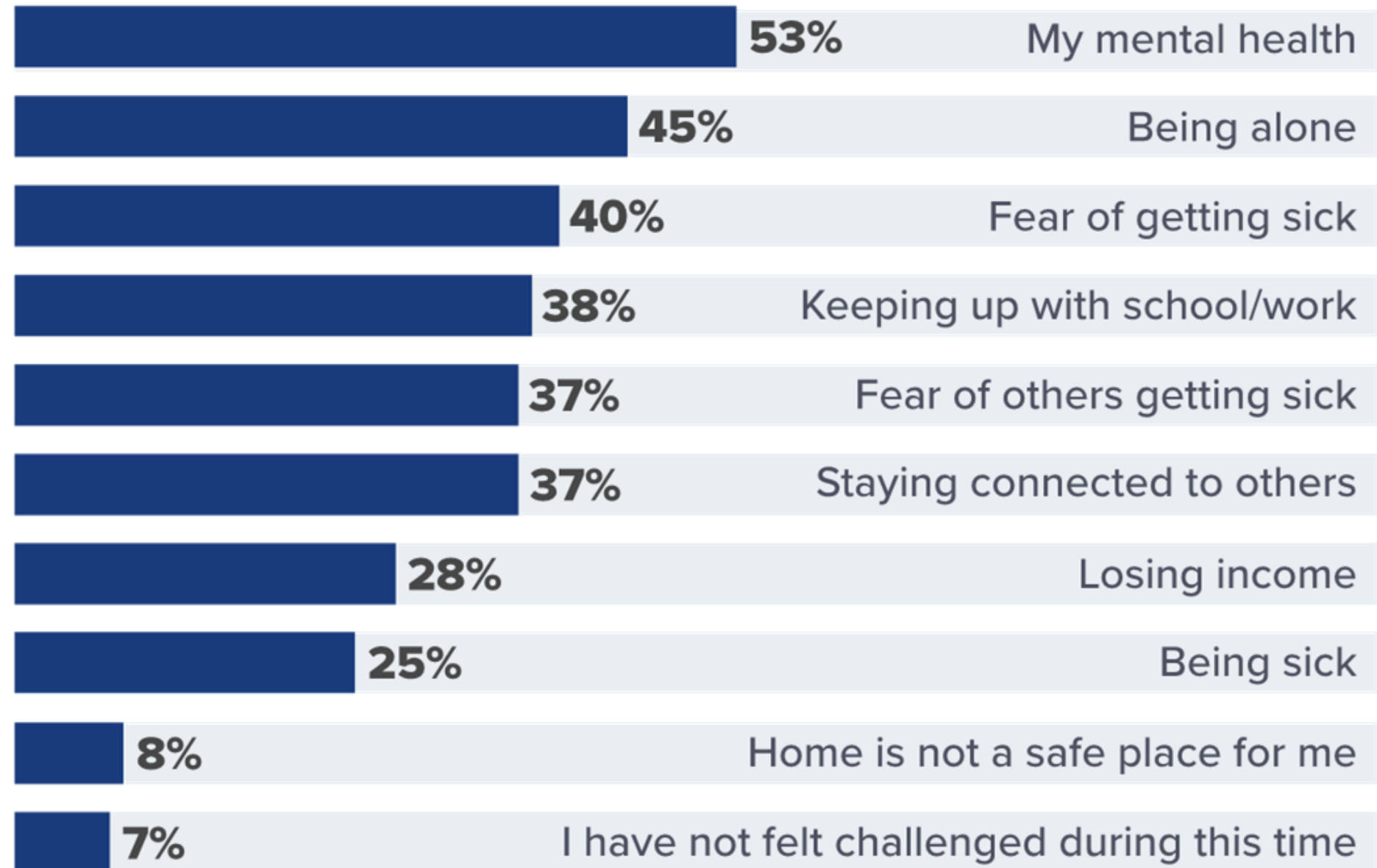
45%

of young people say they are **moderately or extremely lonely.**

IT CONTAINS SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL STRESS

During the pandemic, which of the following have been the biggest challenges for you?

(Young people could select more than one answer.)

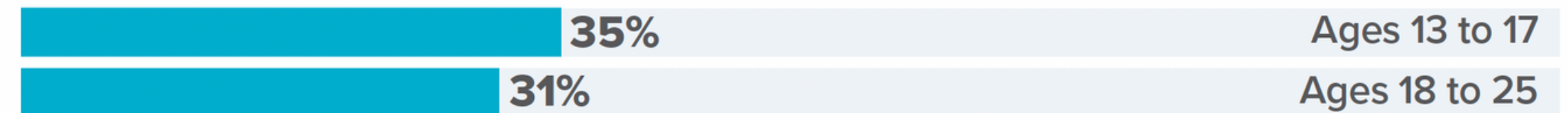


YOUNG PEOPLE & MENTAL HEALTH

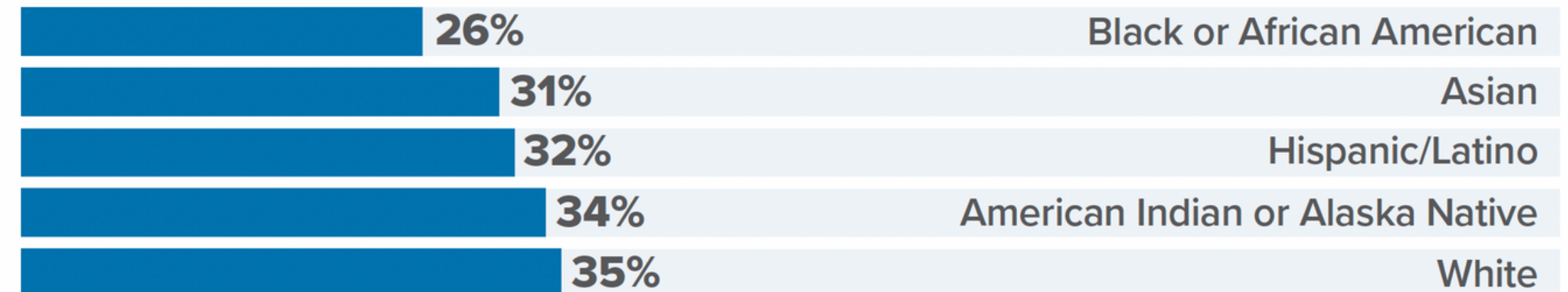
A third of young people say they are not flourishing in their mental and emotional health.

THIS INCLUDES . . .

Young people who told us they are “not flourishing,” by age:



Young people who told us they are “not flourishing,” by race:



Young people who told us they are “not flourishing,” by gender:



YOUNG PEOPLE & MENTAL HEALTH

61%

of young people agree
*“The adults in my life don’t truly
know how much I am struggling
with my mental health.”*



**THEY ARE NOT
UNAWARE OR
DISMISSIVE OF THEIR
MENTAL HEALTH**



THEY ARE AWARE OF IT AND NOT AFRAID TO TALK ABOUT IT

“I've heard a lot of stories of adults just dismissing kids, mental health as, oh, they're just teenagers. They're already whining and complaining. They're going to be fine. . . . [For example,] we have had some people who have really severe anxiety. One time before we were going on the stage, one girl was having an anxiety attack, but she was one of the older ones on the team and the coach was just like, you're supposed to be a leader. You're supposed to be a role model. You can't be doing this right now. And it just didn't make her feel better at all. It almost made things worse.”

—Misty, 17

**THEY ARE
AWARE OF IT
AND NOT
AFRAID TO
TALK ABOUT IT**

“I think our generation has sort of grown up with the idea that mental health is very important and that you should be accepting of other people. And I think even in situations where people aren’t as knowledgeable about things, they’re generally more accepting, but I’ve noticed with some of the older generations, like our parents and stuff like that, they have this idea that you should just go through things. Sometimes things hurt and you just have to suffer through and push through things, even though it’s not good for you. And I don’t, I don’t really think that’s a good mindset.”

—Paisley, 18

**RELIGION/
SPIRITUALITY
DOESN'T HELP**



RELIGION/ SPIRITUALITY DOES HELP



55%
of young people agree
that their spirituality/religion
matters for their mental health.

57%
of young people agree that
their spiritual/religious practices
positively impact their mental health.

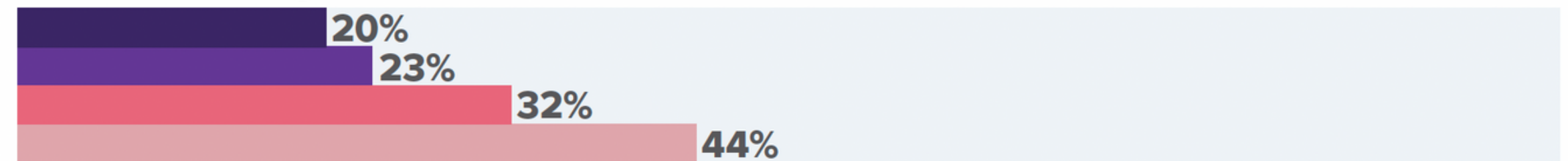
RELIGION/ SPIRITUALITY DOES HELP

Religious young people say they are flourishing more than their non-religious counterparts.

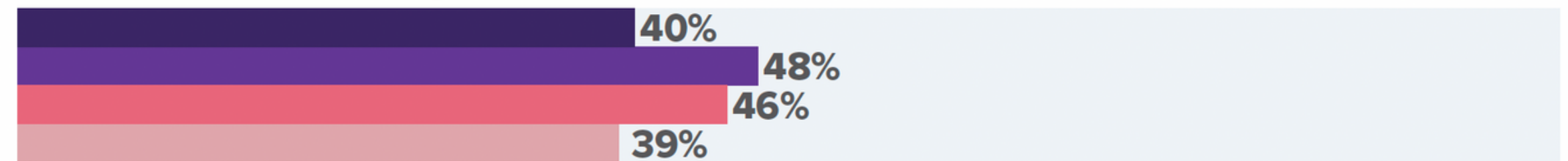
“I am flourishing in my emotional or mental well-being”

● Very religious ● Moderately religious ● Slightly religious ● Not religious

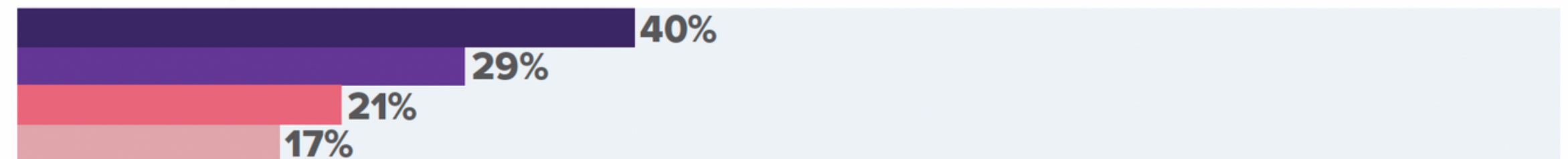
Not flourishing



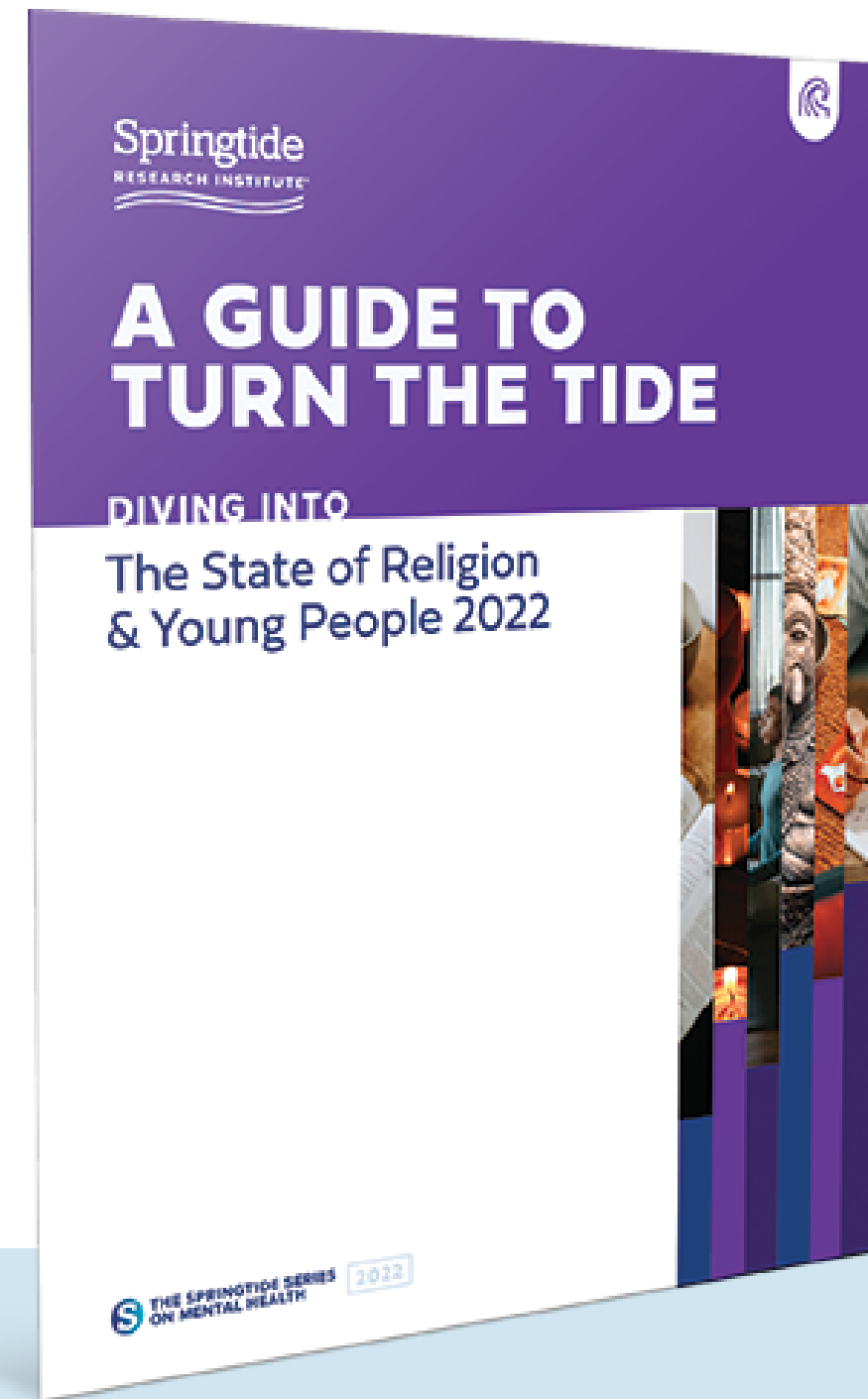
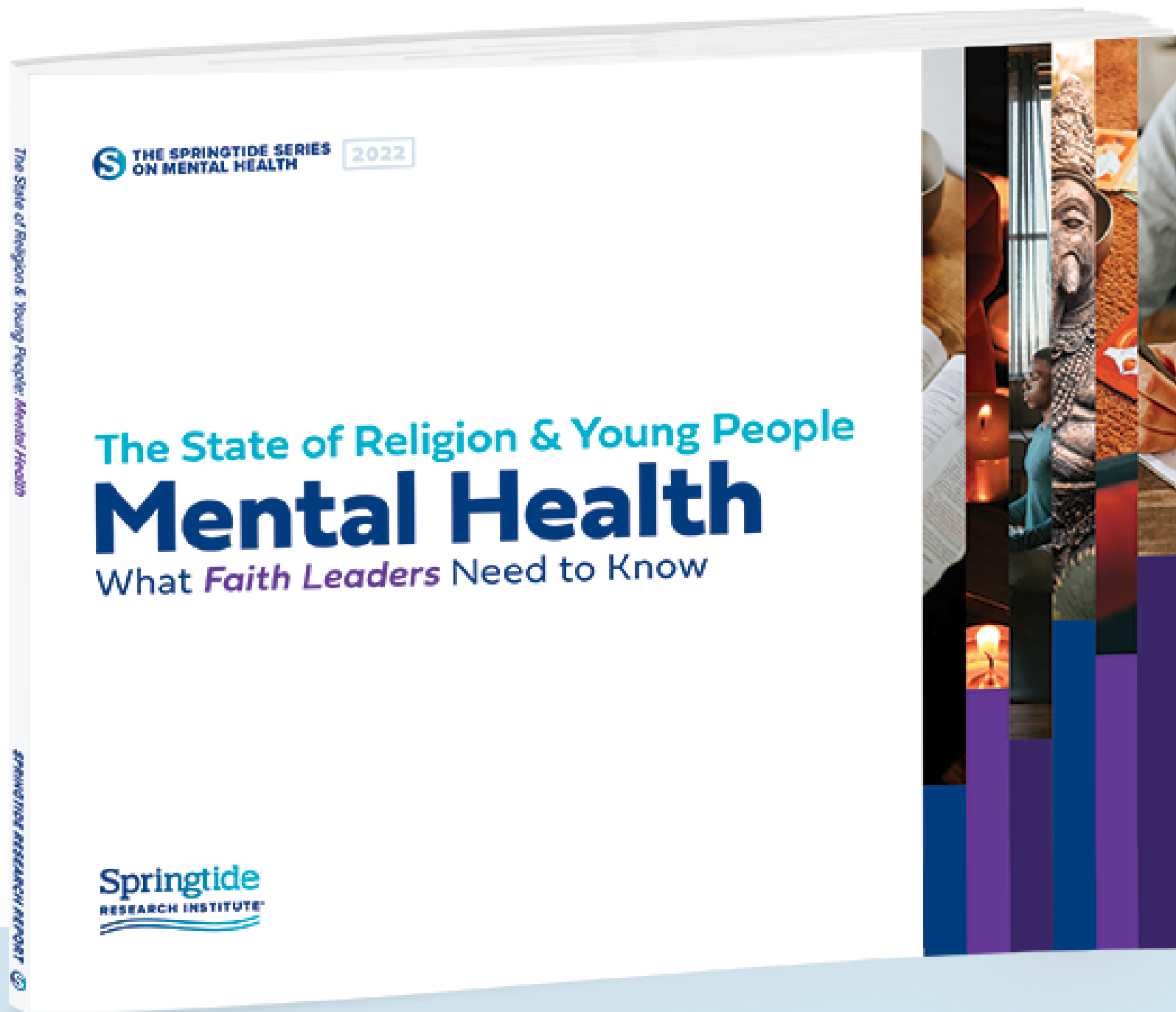
Somewhat flourishing



Flourishing a lot



Percentages are approximate due to rounding.



SCAN ME



NAVIGATING INJUSTICE

We cannot paint a portrait of Gen Z, the most diverse generation ever, without addressing the distinct ways in which young BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) are deeply and often negatively impacted by racial injustice.

YOUNG BIPOC ARE FLOURISHING

● BIPOC ● White

Young BIPOC are almost as anxious (74% versus 77%) and depressed (61% versus 64%) as their White peers.

Anxious



Depressed



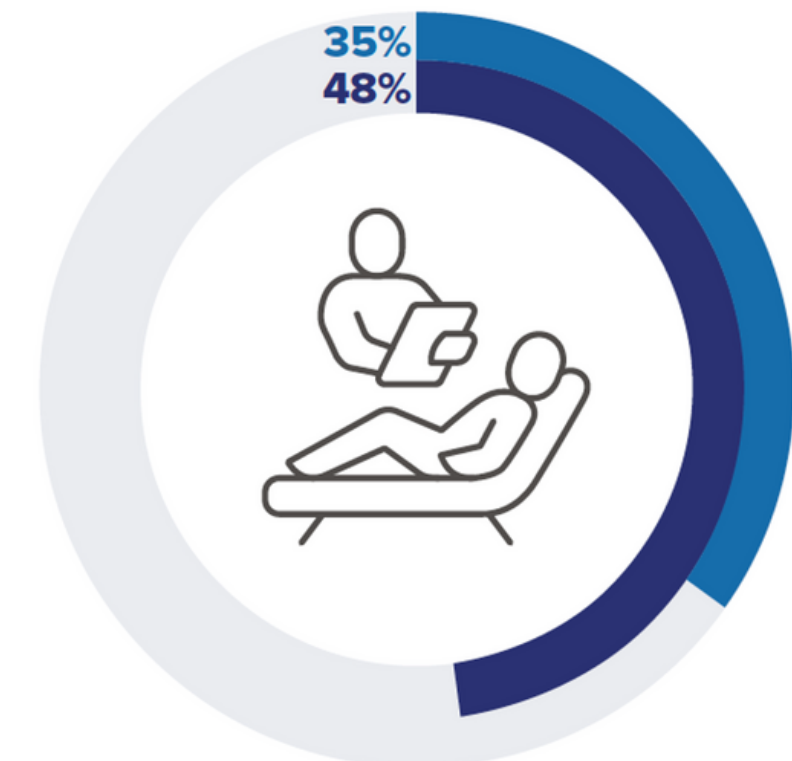
Young BIPOC say they are flourishing in their mental and emotional well-being at slightly higher rates than their White peers (70% versus 65%).

Young BIPOC report **similar levels of life satisfaction** (62% versus 60%), **confidence** (60% versus 56%), and **joy** (64% versus 62%) as their White peers.



A quarter of young BIPOC (25%) have been medicated or hospitalized for mental-health issues.

Young BIPOC are less likely than White young people to see a mental-health professional.



SOCIAL IDENTITY . . .

the part of a person's understanding of self that comes from their membership in social groups or categories.

A person's social identities are developed by a wide range of factors, including parental or peer socialization, experiences of social inclusion or exclusion, and cultural messages about the bounds of belonging within and between different social groups.

IDENTITY IS LINKED TO WELL-BEING

“My faith community brought me a lot of confidence and less anxiety [regarding] who I am and where I come from. So, they influenced me in a positive way by honoring my culture, my identity. Understanding my identity just takes all the pressure off, you know? I was more proud to be Latino. I didn’t feel inferior. So, yeah, I just love who I am, and I love where I come from. My faith community has given me the confidence that I belong in this community and with Christ.”

—Isabella, Hispanic/Latino, 23

ACKNOWLEDGE & CELEBRATE ETHNIC-RACIAL IDENTITY

“Race is what makes you you. So, if your religion wants to separate race, if they’re not making you want to embrace your ethnicity, I feel like they haven’t really seen who you are.”

—Lauren, Asian American, 15



SCAN ME

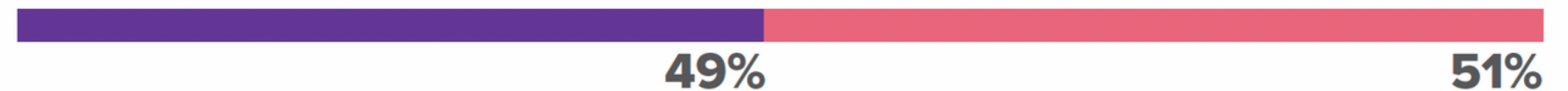


BELONGING PRECEDES BELIEF

“Community,” notes international religious leader Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, is that place “where they know who you are and where they miss you when you are gone.” **But over half of young people say they’re not missed when they’re gone.**

When I have not been there for some reason, I am missed at my place of worship or spiritual community.

● Agree ● Disagree



WHAT CAN WE DO?

Five Actions for Impact on the Lives of Gen Z

- 1 Intentionally focus on building and deepening **belonging**.
- 2 Increase the number of **trusted adults** in a young person's life.
- 3 **Create spaces** where young people feel safe to explore and discover their spiritual yearnings and curiosities, judgment-free zones where they can express themselves openly and honestly—authentically.
- 4 **Invest in** young people's **mental health** through a pastoral framework and ongoing presence.
- 5 **Acknowledge** and **embrace the ethnic-racial identity of young BIPOC**.
They don't leave their ethnic-racial identity at the door when they walk into their places of worship.



Let's turn the
tide for young
people, together.

SCAN ME



**The insights you need,
right when you need them**

springtideresearch.org