



connecticut state
innovation model

CT SIM CAB ASTHMA LISTENING SESSION REPORT

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN: DECEMBER 2, 2017

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EVENT OVERVIEW

On Saturday December 2, 2017 – The State Innovation Model Consumer Advisory Board (SIM CAB), in partnership with the North Central Regional Mental Health Board (NCRMHB) and Middlesex Community College, organized an asthma forum. The forum offered opportunities for participants to share their experiences with asthma, to learn from each other, and to identify healthcare resources in the community. Dr. Srinivasan, an allergist, and Rose-Ann Wanczyck, LCSW attended and played an active role in sharing resources and helping people identify how to best address their concerns with asthma. SIM CAB member Steve Karp shared his personal struggles with asthma and led a lively discussion about people’s individual experiences with the chronic illness. The event occurred at Middlesex Community College in Middletown, CT.



The asthma forum engaged 10 participants. Attendees ranged from a college student to a doctor who practices functional medicine. Members of the SIM CAB also participated in the conversations. The event kicked off with registration and snacks. The event organizer Steve Karp discussed his personal struggles with asthma. A woman shared her personal experiences with asthma and her stories working with youth at a school-based health center to address their asthma. The group then discussed the social determinants of health and how they affect certain communities more than others. For example, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) can affect young people’s prognosis for asthma.

Environmental triggers were also discussed. Allergens in the air and in water spurred people’s asthma attacks. Avoiding chlorine in water while showering was helpful for one person. Overusing the ER to address asthma attacks was a systemic issue that was debated. One advocate shared that problems with patient-physician communication is the biggest cost driver of healthcare and with addressing asthma effectively. Another discussed how addressing the root causes of asthma via functional medicine rather than through traditional pharmaceuticals could help address problems. Since Connecticut has the oldest housing stock in the country, the group discussed how air filtration systems in buildings could impact asthma.

Allergist Dr. Srinivasan discussed different types of asthma and different ways that his office treats the chronic condition. Dr. Srinivasan spoke about how asthma is impacted by longer seasons. In the past, people primarily sought treatment in April to June and September to October. Now, a constant flow of people seek asthma help from his office regardless of the season. Dr. Srinivasan also discussed non-medical ways to manage asthma, including improving living environments with air filters and regular dusting and cleaning to

prevent mold. He also recommended regular exercise, healthy eating, and adequate rest and sleep. He agreed we need to educate people about problems with overtreatment in medical care, and educate doctors about disparities in terms of healthcare access. The asthma forum wrapped up with a breathing exercise and mindfulness to remind the group about holistic ways to address asthma.

KEY FINDINGS:

1) INFLUENCE SYSTEMS CHANGE:

- Allergens in the air and water can trigger asthma attacks.
 - Promote better air filtration systems in schools to help kids with asthma.
 - Ensure that chlorine water in public water is monitored to help prevent asthma issues.
 - Address the issue that Connecticut has the oldest housing stock in the country, and improve air filtration of all public buildings.
- Consider addressing the root causes of asthma with functional medicine - by looking at what we eat and looking at our environment rather than only relying on traditional pharmaceuticals.
- Address climate change to address people's seasonal allergies.
- Promote Community Health Workers (CHWs), who can visit people in their homes to help identify issues that trigger asthma, and who can help people manage their asthma attacks with preventive measures.
 - People knowledgeable about asthma can immediately identify ways to address children's asthma issues if they visited the child's home. One home visit from a CHW asthma expert would be more effective than multiple doctor's visits.

2) PROMOTE PROVIDER-CONSUMER PARTNERSHIPS:

- Improve provider-consumer relationships to reduce cost of healthcare and effectively address asthma.
- Educate people about problems with overtreatment in medical care. Encourage them to talk with their doctors to improve trust and build a relationship.
- Make it easy for people to access health coaches or CHWs, who are often easier to talk to than doctors.
- Doctors should be encouraged to check in with patients about their asthma management strategies. Doctors need to do more to understand the root of the issue.

3) ENGAGE AND EMPOWER CONSUMERS:

- Decrease overuse of Emergency Departments by promoting preventive care and teaching proper breathing exercises
- Help kids understand that having asthma doesn't stop you from achieving athletic or academic goals – put up inspiring posters of American heroes who have asthma.
- Make it easier for kids to access help rather than feel stigma from having asthma.
- Improve home environments with air filters and regular dusting/cleaning to prevent mold.
- The CHW model is helpful to people with asthma. If you have asthma regularly, a CHW can help you manage triggers. If you are someone who infrequently has asthma problems, you might forget what to do, so having access to someone that's up-to-date with asthma healthcare strategies, who can be a regular point of contact to help navigate the system once you do have an attack is helpful.
- Consumers need to self-educate. They need to know about triggers and new strategies to help address asthma issues.
- Consumers should also learn to teach others around them about their triggers. They can enlist the help of their community, and ask others to remind them about when to take their inhalers. For example, if

someone knows they have a headache before an asthma attack, they might ask co-workers to remind them to take their inhalers if they start complaining about a headache.

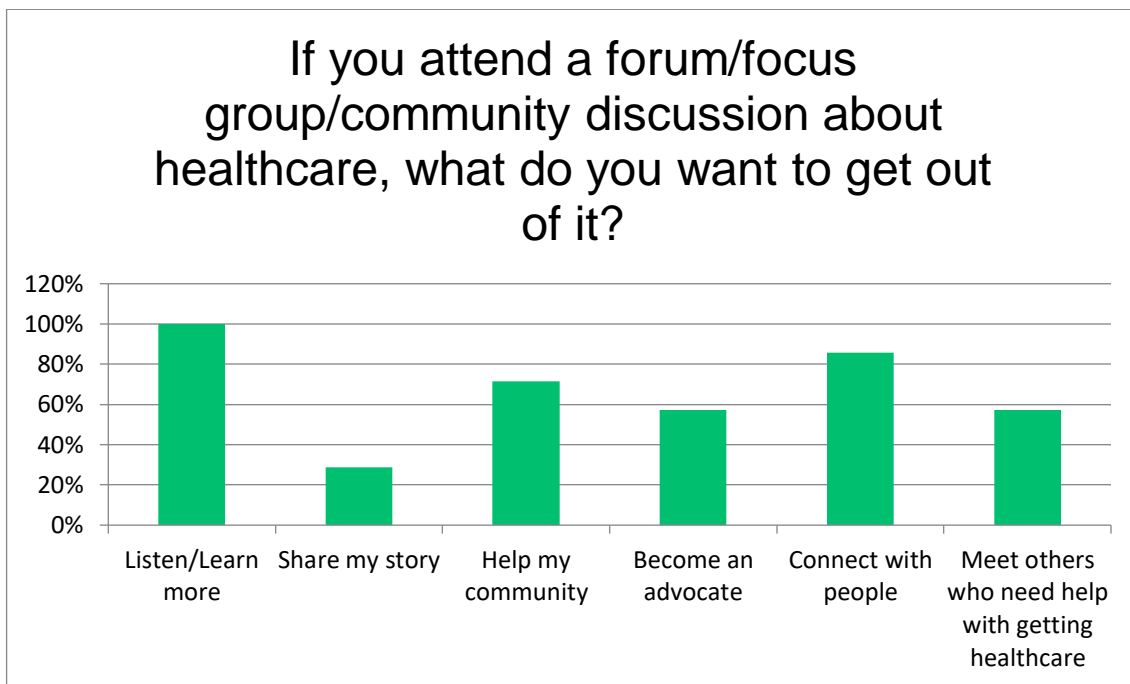
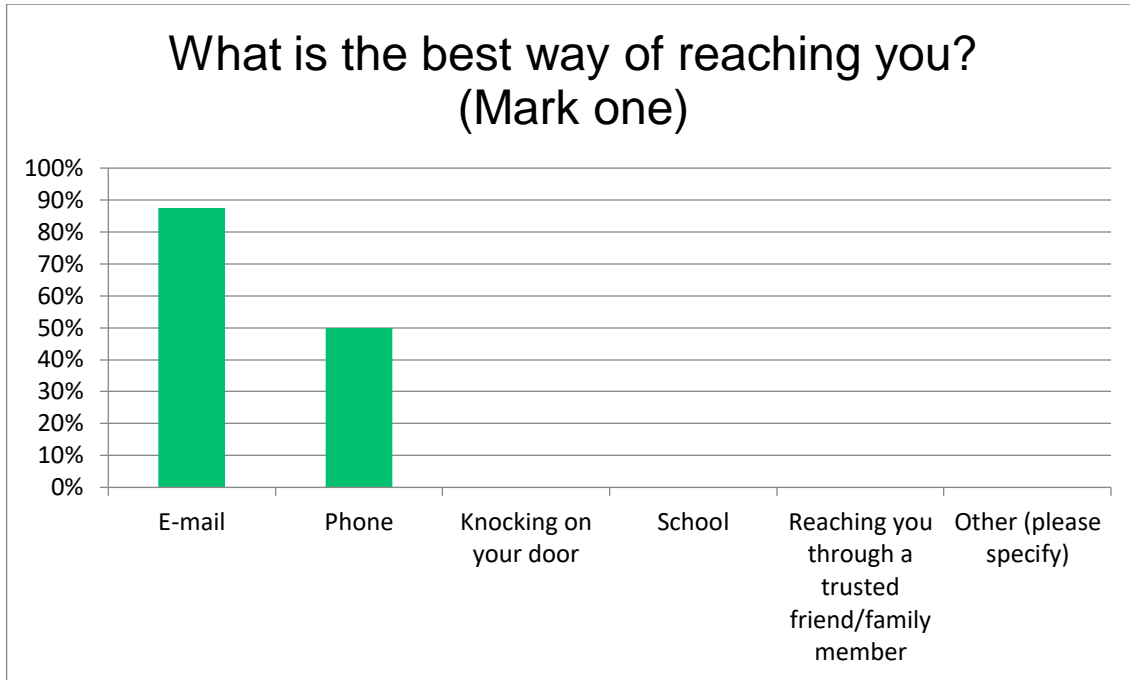
KEY MESSAGES:

- Eat healthy, nutritious meals.
- Get regular exercise.
- Make sure you get daily adequate rest and sleep.
- Breathing exercises and mindfulness are helpful holistic ways to address asthma.

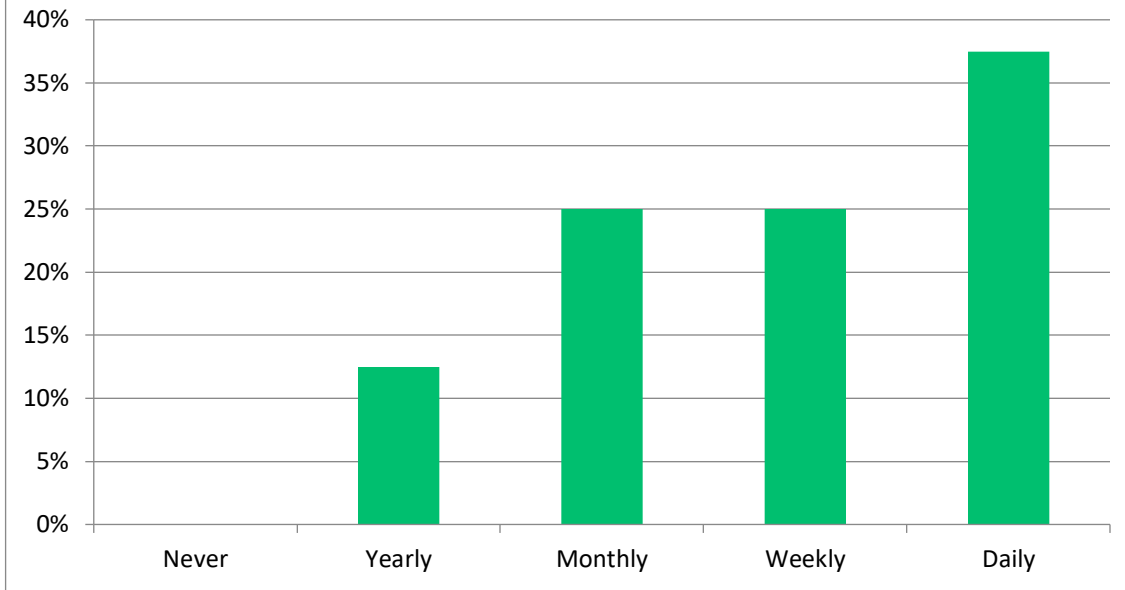
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Educate doctors about healthcare access disparities – so they understand why people skip medical appointments.
- Engage providers to help address transportation barriers or childcare issues or work schedules by offering phone appointments or video conferencing.

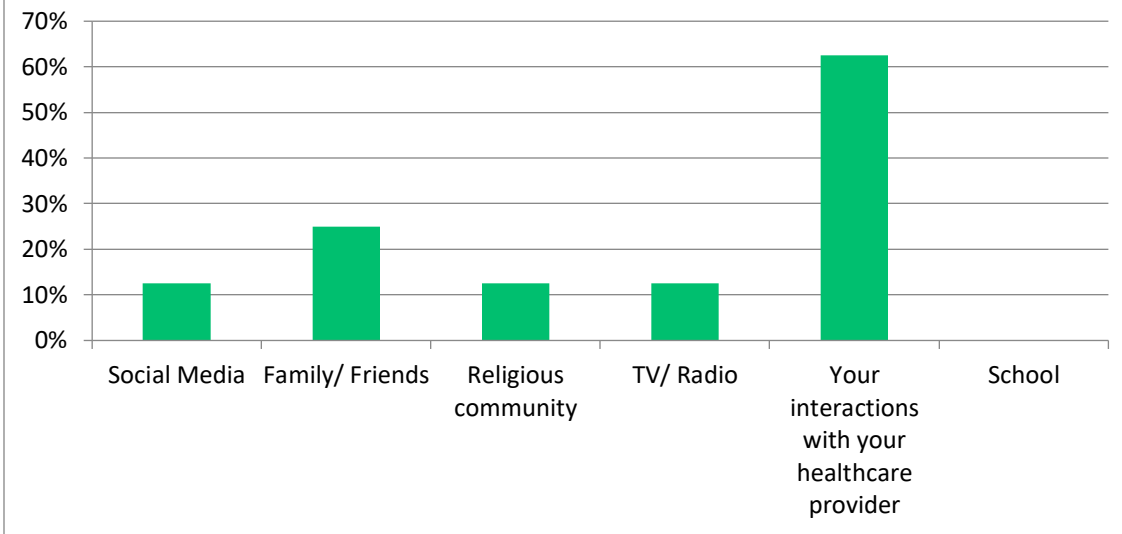
PRE SURVEY FEEDBACK



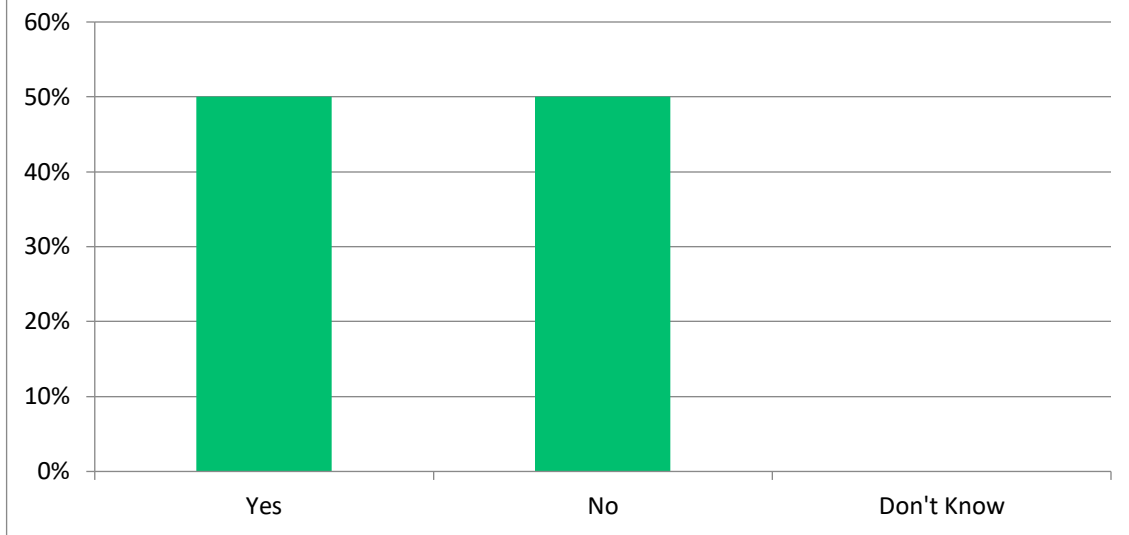
How often do you use social Media



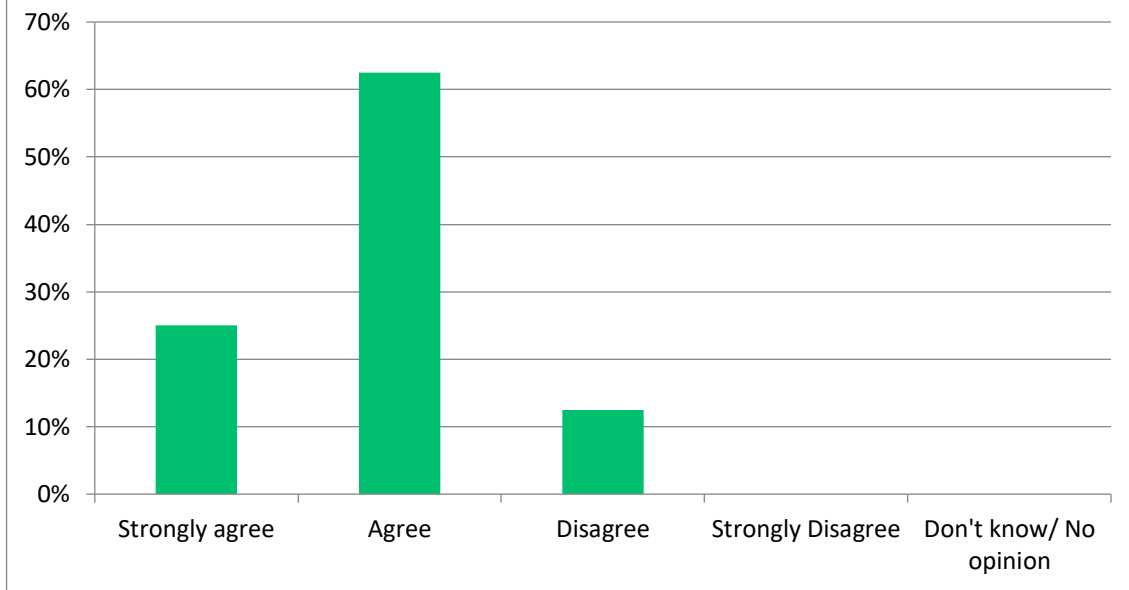
What affects your understanding of healthcare most?



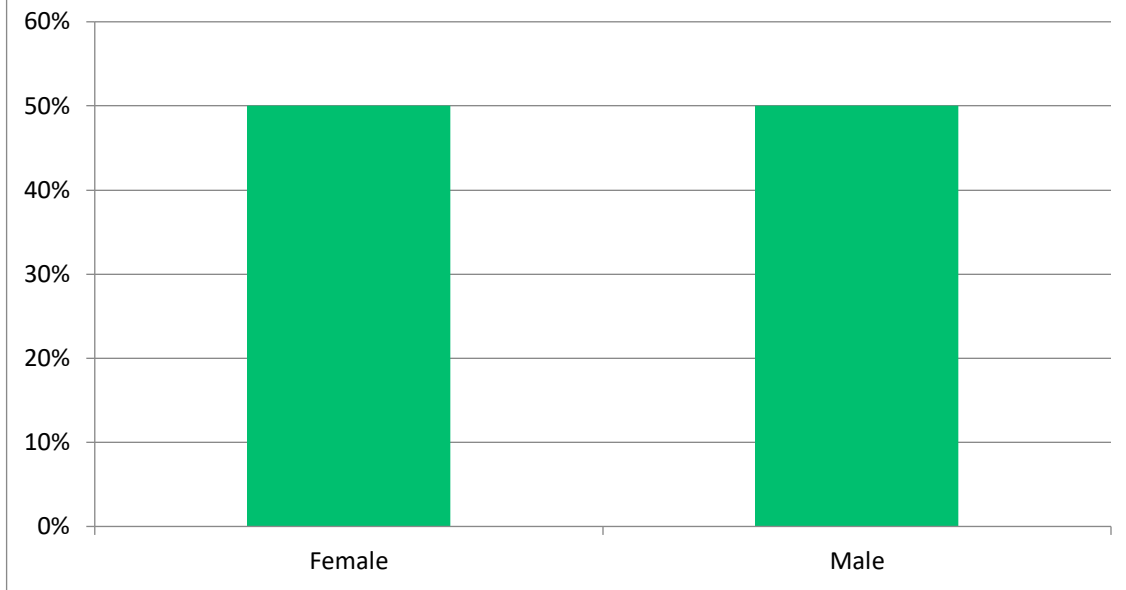
Did you know you can get a free interpreter for medical appointments?



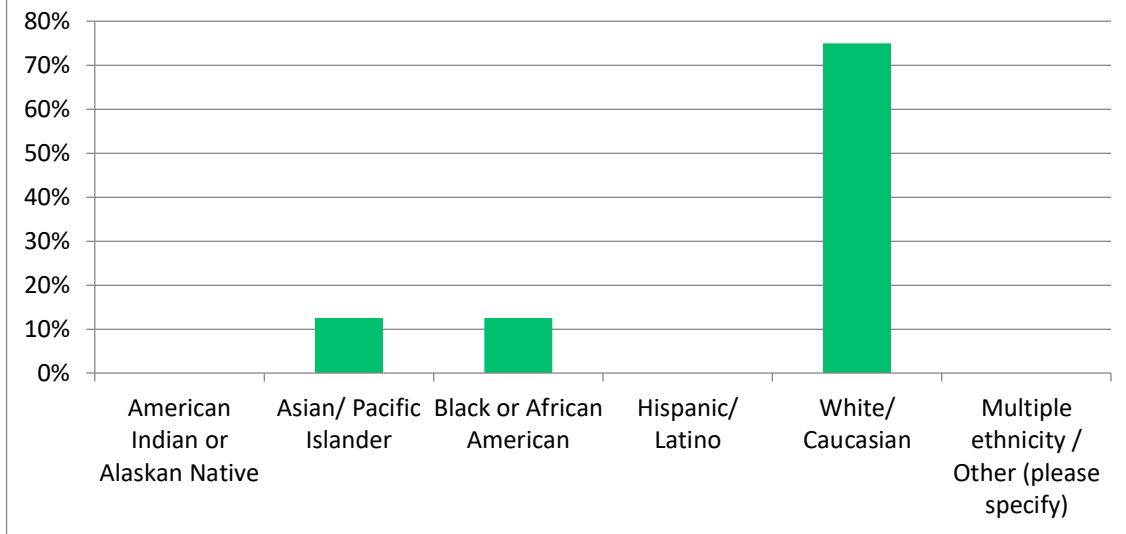
You know a lot about health care?



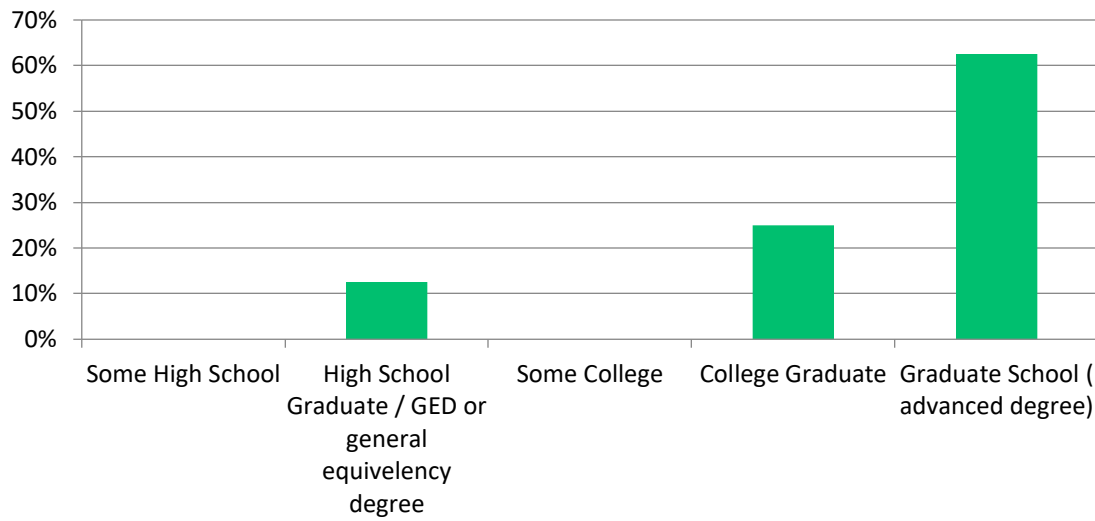
Gender:



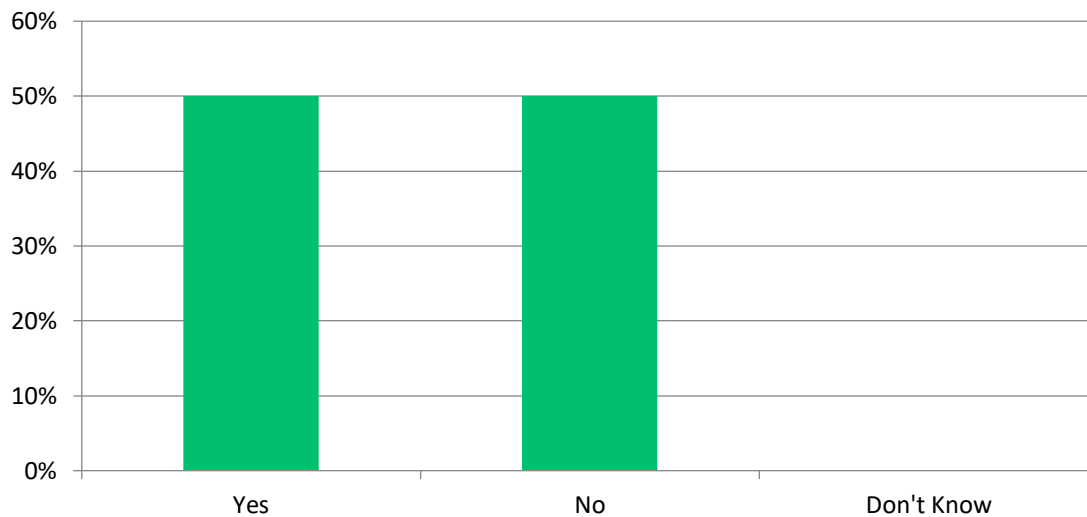
Which of the following best describes you?



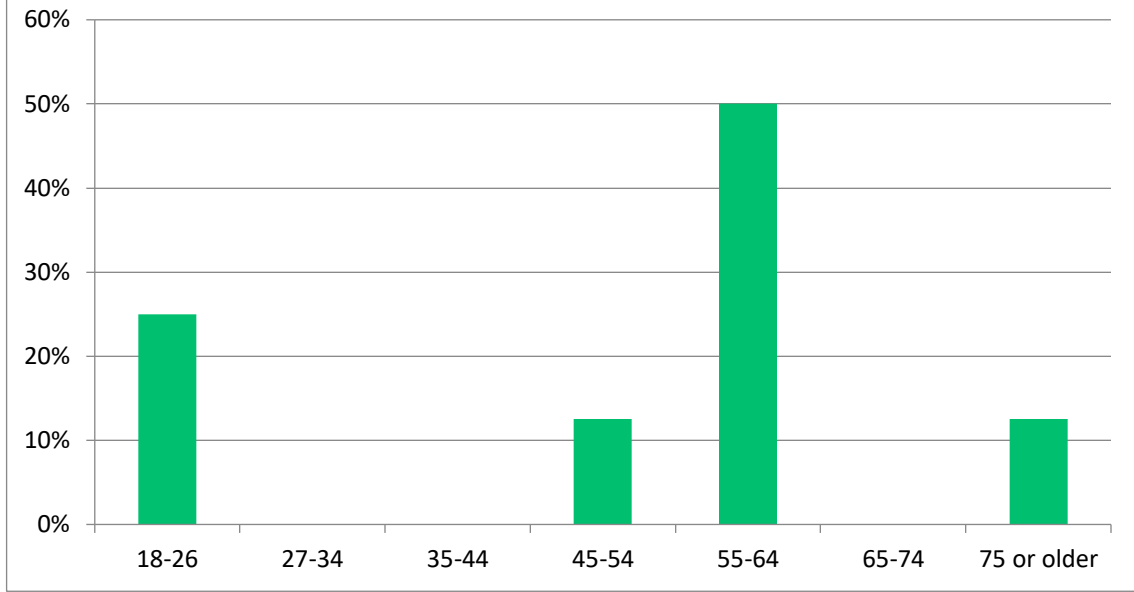
Which of the following best describes your level of education?



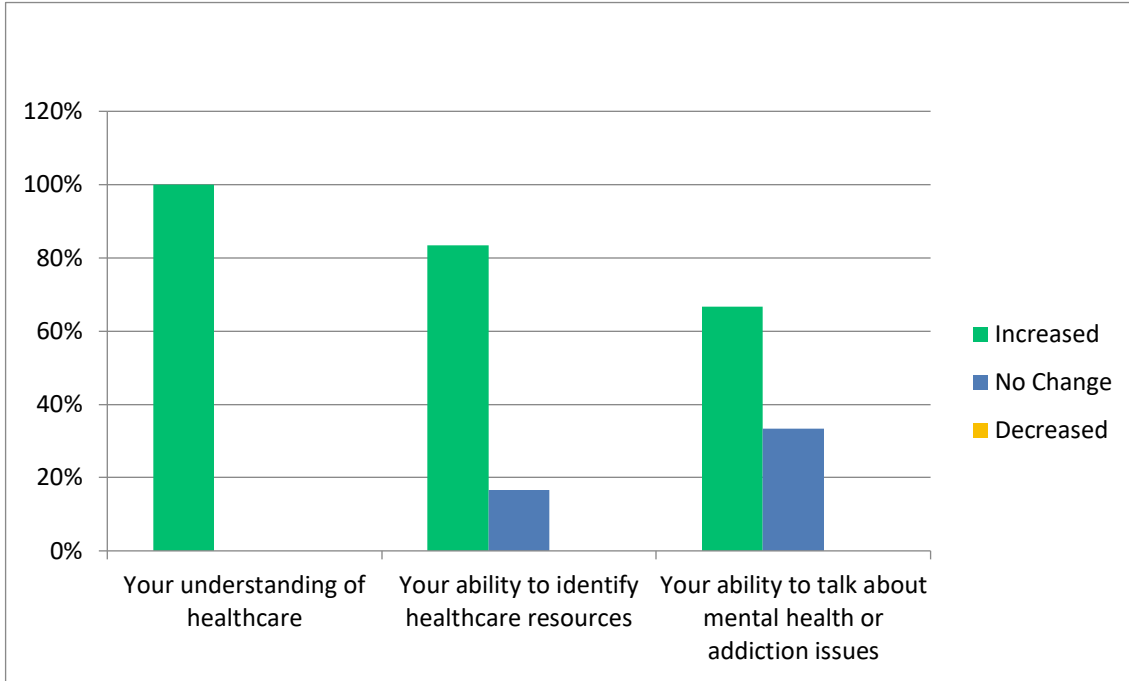
Do you think your religion affects how you view healthcare?



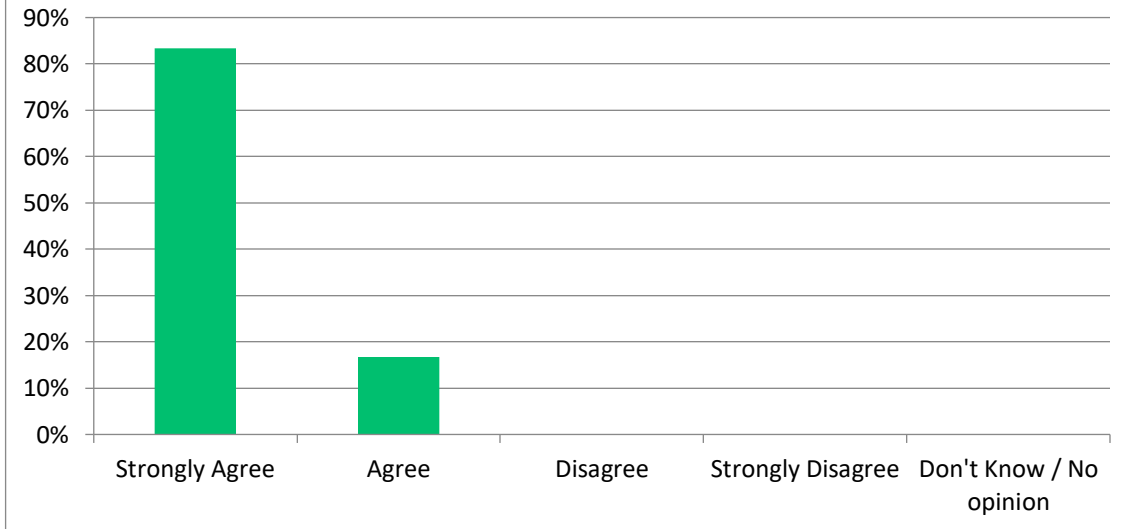
What is your age?



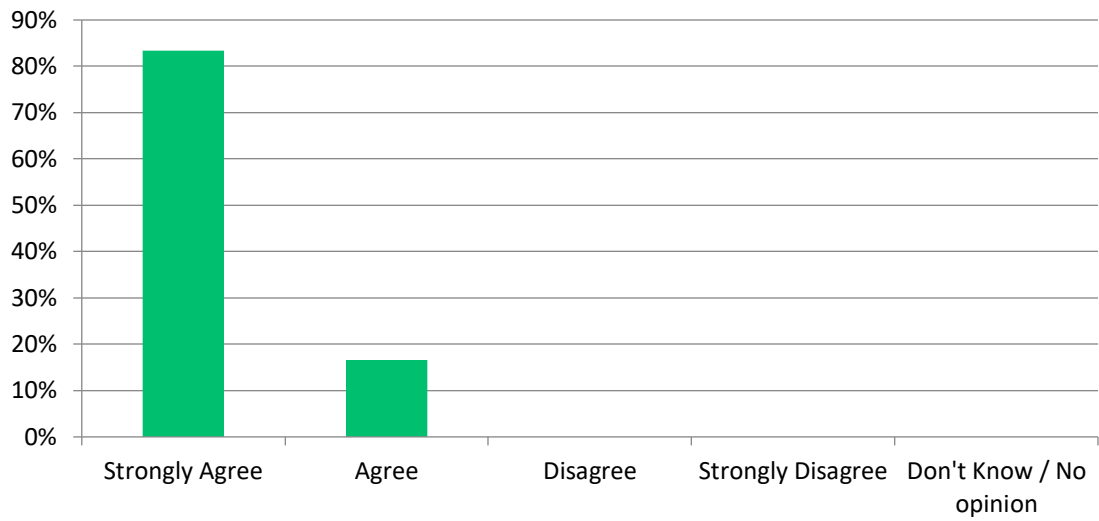
What effect, if any, has the listening session had upon the following? (Mark One)



The listening session was easy to understand



The listening session provided useful information about healthcare



Describe what you liked the most about the listening session? (Mark all that apply)

