

# NAMI 988 CRISIS RESPONSE RESEARCH

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June 2022

GAME CHANGERS



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# METHODOLOGY

This Ipsos poll was conducted May 20-23, 2022, on behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), using the KnowledgePanel®. This poll is based on a representative sample of 2,045 U.S. residents, age 18 or older. The study was conducted in English. The data were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race/ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status, household income and race/ethnicity. The demographic benchmarks came from the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) except for the metropolitan status, which is not available from the 1-year ACS data, were obtained from the 2020 March Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

- Gender (Male, Female) by Age (18–29, 30–44, 45–59, and 60+)
- Race/Hispanic Ethnicity (White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Other or 2+ Races Non-Hispanic, Hispanic)
- Education (Less than High School, High School, Some College, Bachelor or higher)
- Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West) by Metropolitan status (Metro, non-Metro)
- Household Income (Under \$25,000, \$25,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, \$100,000-\$149,999, \$150,000+)

The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, for results based on the entire sample of adults. The margin of error takes into account the design effect, which was 1.13 for all adults. In our reporting of the findings, percentage points are rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, percentages in a given table column may total slightly higher or lower than 100%. In questions that permit multiple responses, columns may total substantially more than 100%, depending on the number of different responses offered by each respondent.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

**When compared to our inaugural NAMI/Ipsos poll in fall 2021, public opinion around mental health care in the U.S. is unchanged. This is the case when looking at attitudes around mental health, familiarity with the system and the 988 number, and policies they would support.**

**Americans remain unhappy with the state of the mental health care system in the United States. There has been no significant sense of improvement in either responses or overall care since our initial survey.**

- More than three quarters of Americans (77%) say they are not content with the state of mental health care in this country, statistically unchanged since fall 2021 (75%).
  - Not surprisingly, those with a mental health condition continue to be more likely to say they are unhappy with mental health treatment (82%).
  - Discontent crosses party lines, with Democrats (81%), independents (81%), and Republicans (69%) all agreeing they are not content with the state of mental health care in the U.S. These findings are consistent with our survey in October 2021.
- Americans continue to say that significant improvement is needed for mental health or suicide crises responses at the local level (46%), which is unchanged from 2021. Like in 2021, the number of Americans reporting that improvement is needed for mental health or suicide crises responses is similar to those who say responses to violent crime needs improvement (48%).

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

**American discontent with the mental health care system is clearly seen in their desire to shift who responds in mental health and suicide crises, and strong support for making improvements in responses for minority populations.**

- Contrary to current practices, Americans believe that those experiencing a mental health or suicide crisis should receive a mental health response (86%) compared to a police response (13%). This is especially true among Democrats (92%), women (88%), Black Americans (90%), and those with a mental health condition (90%).
  - 85% of Black Americans say they would be afraid the police may hurt their loved ones or themselves while responding to a mental health crisis, an 11-point increase since 2021. This number is 21 percentage points higher than the general population (64%).
- At least seven in ten Americans believe mental health crisis responses must be improved for LGBTQ people (69%), people of color (73%), people experiencing homelessness (83%), and people with low income (82%).
- Nine in ten Americans believe that everyone, regardless of location or income, deserves access to quality mental health care (91%) and mental health crisis response (89%).
- Four in five Americans believe that more federal funding is needed to support mental health crisis services (79%), and mental health crisis services specifically for young people (76%).

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Americans remain largely unaware of the 988 emergency number, and just four percent report being familiar with it. Despite the forthcoming rollout in July, many are unaware of where to seek help in the event a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis.**

- Despite low awareness and familiarity, after more information is provided, 80% of Americans trust that 988 will provide help when needed. However, Americans are more likely to strongly trust 911 services than 988.
- A bare majority of Americans say that 988 services should be funded using federal dollars (51%), 41% say it should come from state funding, and 41% say it should come from monthly phone bill fees, similar to 911 services.
  - After messaging about 911 fees, 77% of Americans are willing to pay something to fund 988 services through their phone bill. After this same message, 41% are willing to pay up \$1 per month, up from 33% in 2021. This reflects a shift away from an amount greater than \$1 and more in line with the average people pay in 911 fees.
- Nearly half of Americans remain unaware of where to seek help in the event someone they love were having a mental health crisis (48%).

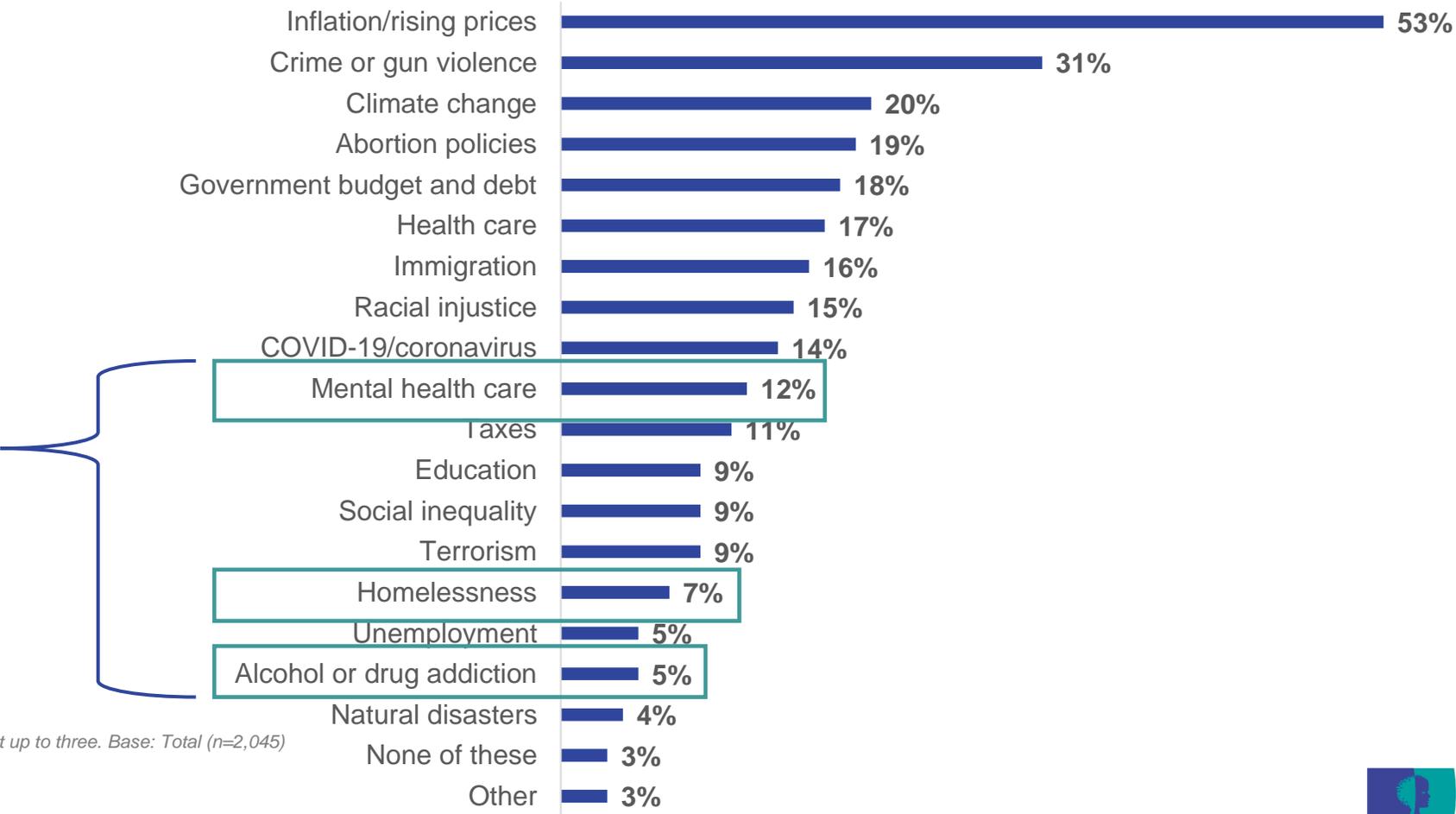
# GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

With inflation and economic issues taking center stage, concerns over issues related to mental health care dropped by 4 points since 2021.

### Which three of the following issues do you find most worrying?

**21%**

Say issues related to the complexities of mental health are top of mind concerns.



Q. Which three of the following issues do you find most worrying? Select up to three. Base: Total (n=2,045)



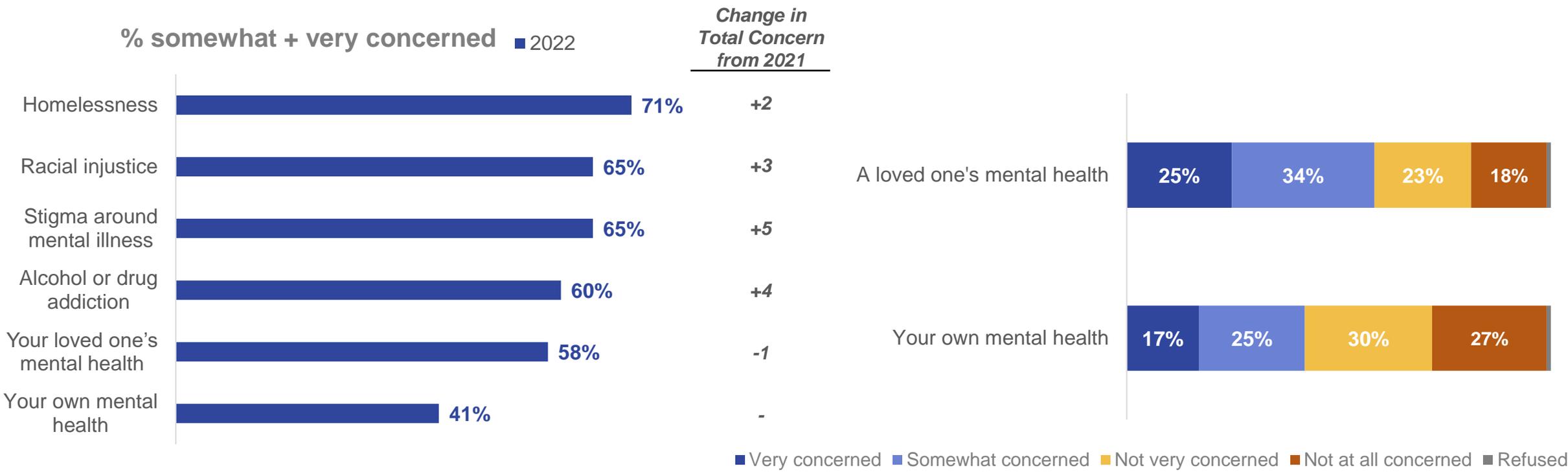
# 65%

**are concerned  
with the  
stigma around  
mental illness.**



Concerns around mental health issues remain largely stable from 2021; concerns around stigma and alcohol or drug addiction have slightly increased.

### How concerned are you, if at all, about the following issues?

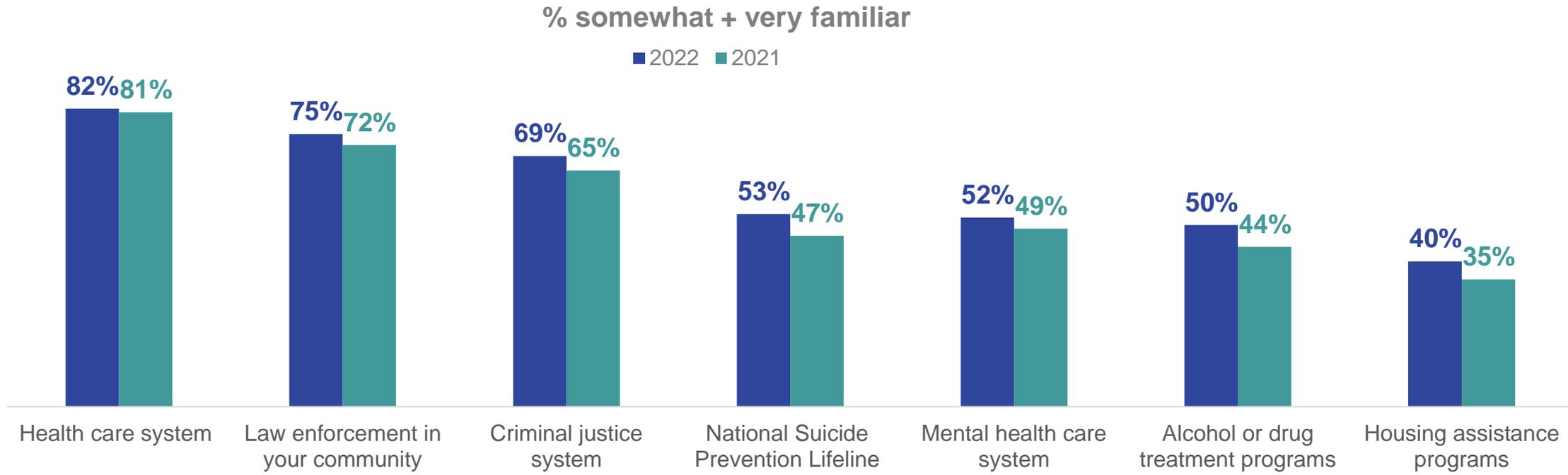


Q. How concerned are you, if at all, about the following issues? Base: Total (n=2,045)



Compared to last year, slightly more Americans are familiar with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

## How familiar are you with the following in the United States?

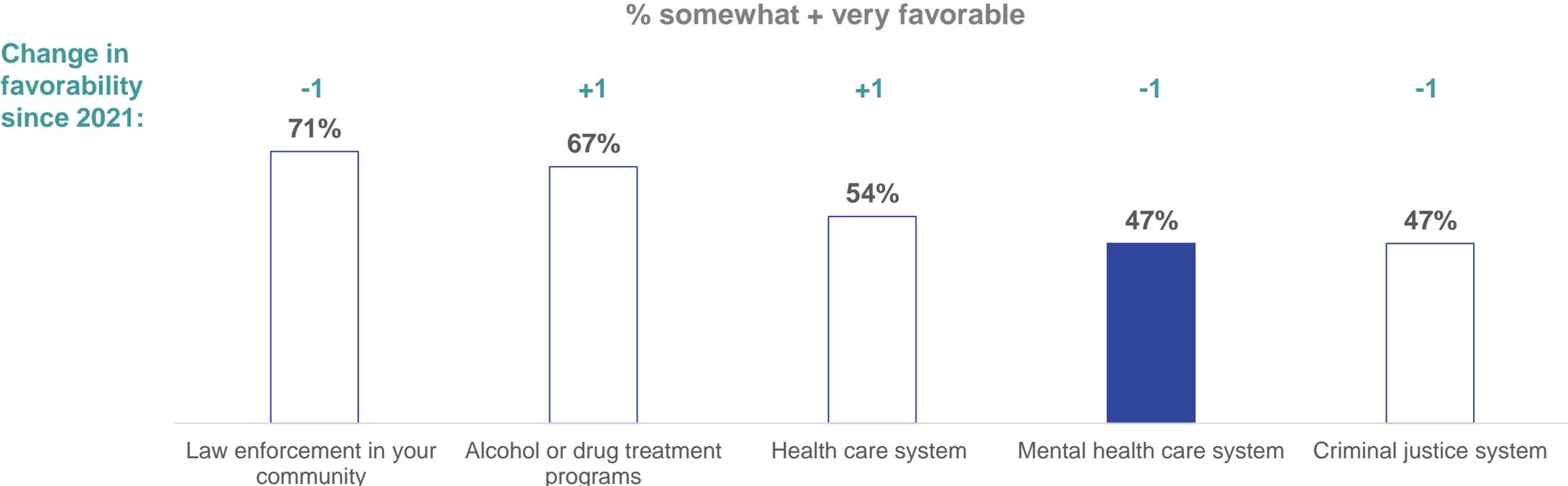


Q. How familiar are you with the following in the United States? Base: Total (n=2,045)



Fewer than half of Americans view the mental health care system favorably. Many view local law enforcement positively.

### Consider the current state of the following in the United States. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the following?



Q. Consider the current state of the following in the United States. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the following? Base: Those very familiar, somewhat familiar, not very familiar with each system: Mental health care system n=1,842; Health care system n=1,963; Criminal justice system n=1,929; Alcohol or drug treatment programs n=1,798; Law enforcement in your community (n=1,946)

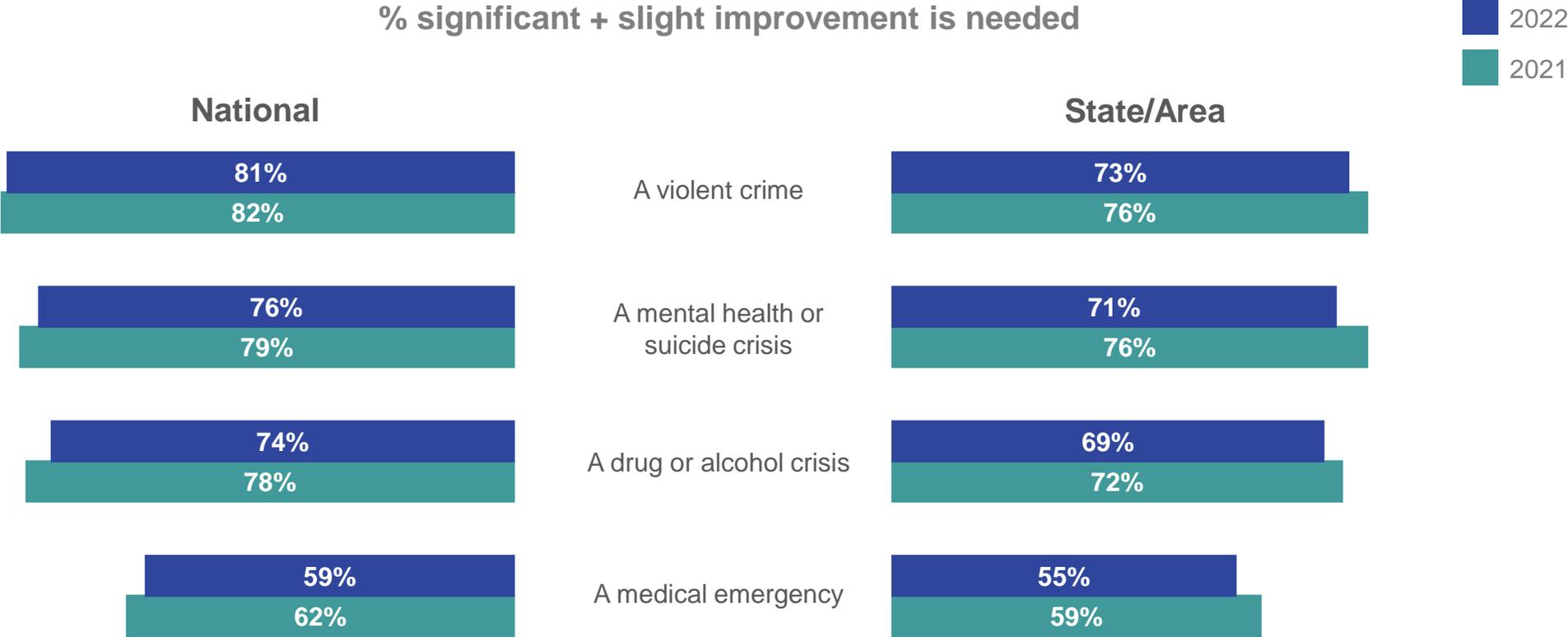


# CRISIS RESPONSE IN AMERICA

# More than 3 in 4

believe that  
improvement is  
needed in emergency  
responses to a mental  
health or suicide  
crisis – both  
nationally and in their  
state or area

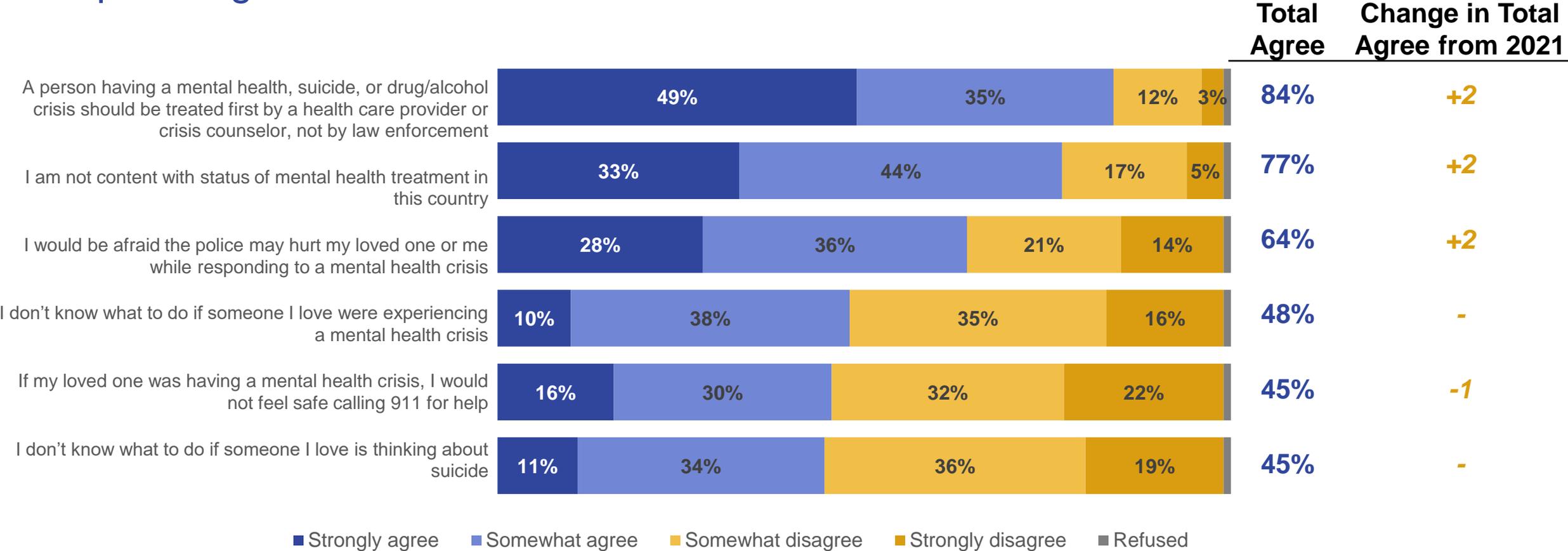
# Americans continue to agree that emergency responses to mental health and suicide crises need improvement, but the perceived need for improvement has slightly declined since 2021.



Q. Consider the following emergency situations. How much improvement, if any, is needed in your state/in your area when it comes to the following emergency responses? Total (n=2,045)  
 Q. Consider the following emergency situations. How much improvement, if any, is needed at the national level when it comes to the following emergency responses? Total (n=2,045)



# Most are not content with mental health treatment in this country and say they'd be afraid of the police hurting them or their loved one when responding to a mental health crisis.



Q. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base: Total (n=2,045)



Marginalized groups, particularly Black Americans, are more likely to feel afraid of the police or of calling 911 for help in the event of a mental health crisis. Black Americans are even more likely to report this feeling since our last survey in 2021.

	<b>Total Agree</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Those with mental health condition</b>
A person having a mental health, suicide, or drug/alcohol crisis should be treated first by a health care provider or crisis counselor, not by law enforcement	84%	83%	84%	85%	84%	87%
I am not content with status of mental health treatment in this country	77%	78%	73%	81%	75%	82%
I would be afraid the police may hurt my loved one or me while responding to a mental health crisis	64%	57%	85%*	66%	73%	68%
I don't know what to do if someone I love were experiencing a mental health crisis	48%	46%	43%	65%	51%	43%
If my loved one was having a mental health crisis, I would not feel safe calling 911 for help	45%	40%	59%	51%	54%	52%
I don't know what to do if someone I love is thinking about suicide	45%	44%	43%	52%	45%	42%

*\*This represents a significant 11-point increase from last year*

Q. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base: Total (n=2,045) Shading indicates statistically significant differences





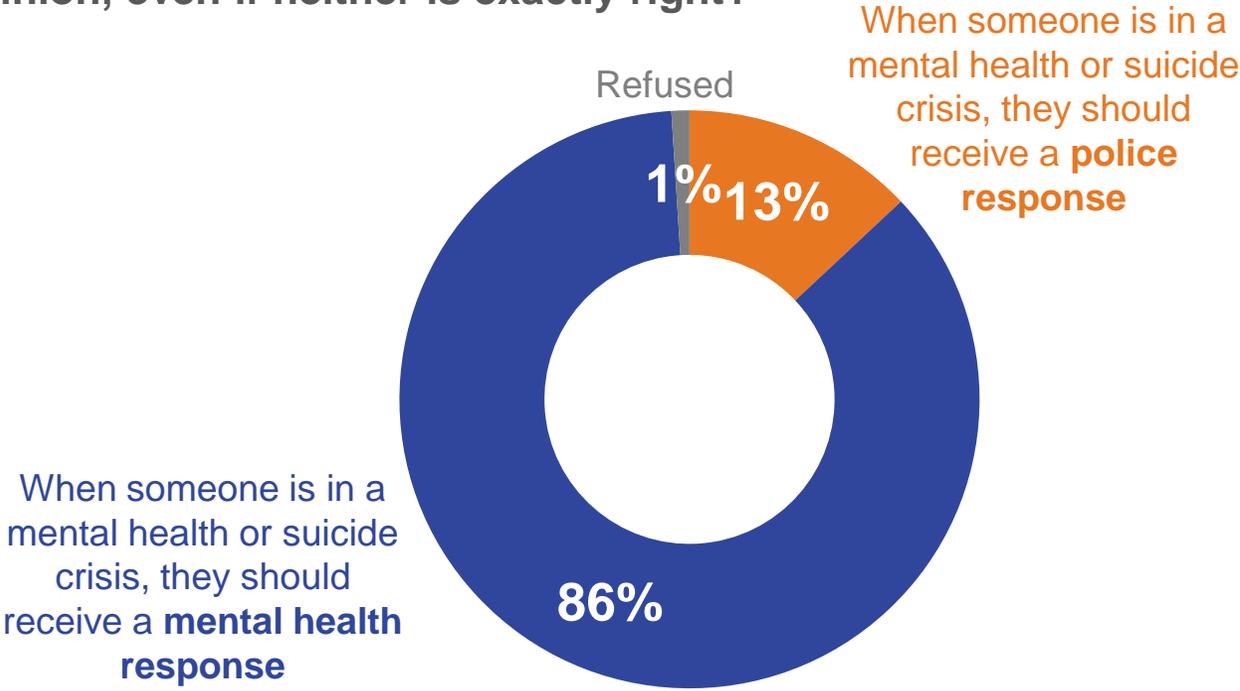
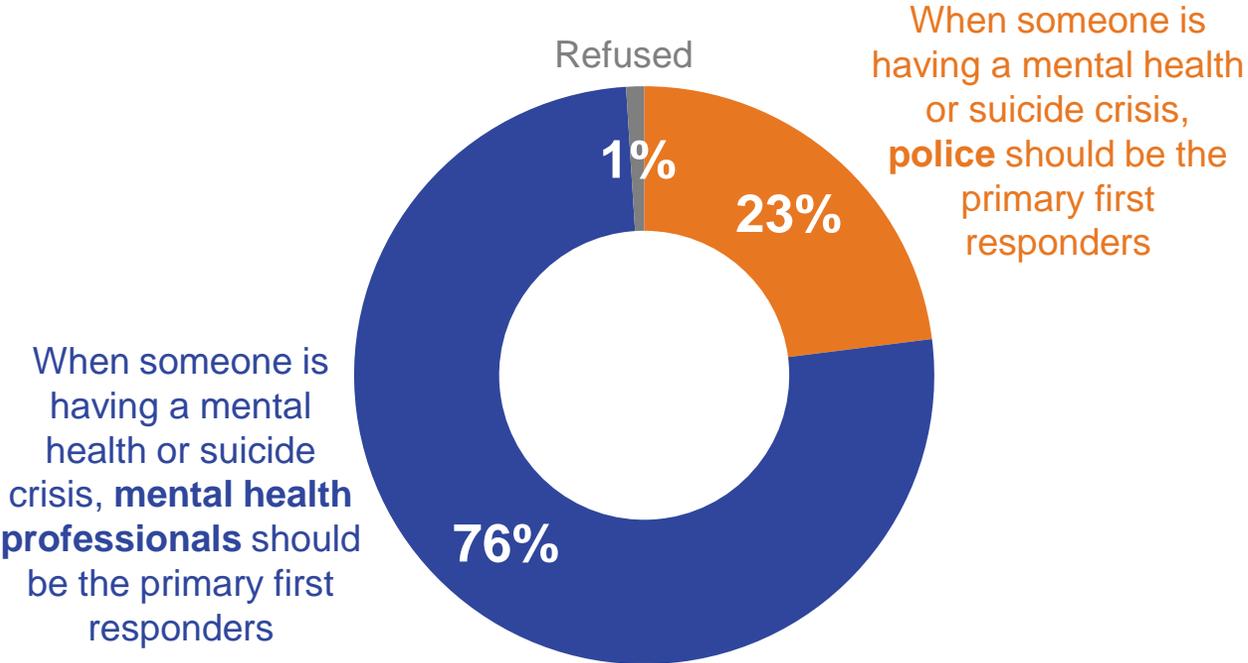
# 9 in 10

**believe those in a mental health or suicide crisis should receive a mental health response, not a police response.**

Over three-quarters of Americans want mental health and suicide crises to receive a mental health response and for mental health professionals to be the primary first responders.

*Note that the framing of “a mental health response” elicits a stronger reaction than who should be the primary first responder*

**Which statement comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right?**



Q. Which statement comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right? Split sample (n=1,021 and n=1,024)



# Women, Black Americans, and those with a mental health condition most want mental health professionals to be the primary first responders to a mental health crisis.

Which statement comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right?

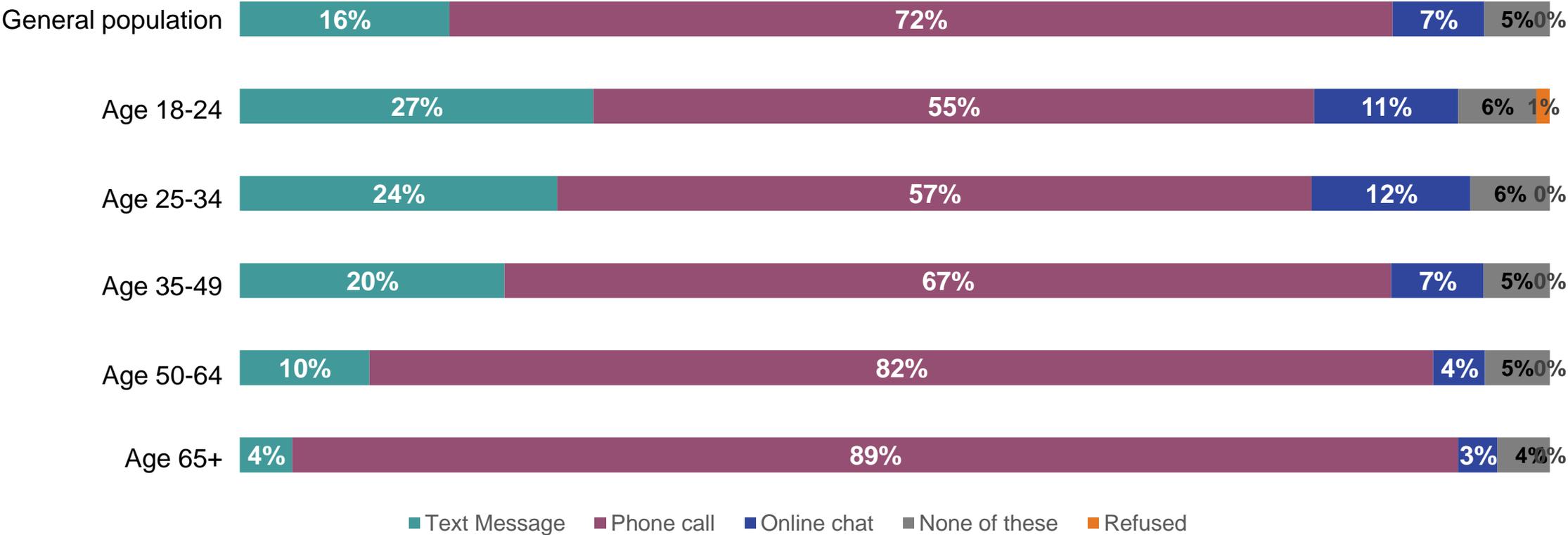
	Mental health professionals should be the primary first responders	Police should be the primary first responders	Should receive a mental health response	Should receive a police response
<b>General Population</b>	76%	23%	86%	13%
<b>Republican</b>	62%	37%	75%	24%
<b>Democrat</b>	87%	13%	92%	7%
<b>Independent</b>	73%	26%	89%	10%
<b>Men</b>	72%	28%	83%	16%
<b>Women</b>	81%	18%	88%	10%
<b>White</b>	76%	23%	85%	13%
<b>Black</b>	89%	10%	90%	8%
<b>Hispanic</b>	72%	28%	84%	16%
<b>Those with mental health condition</b>	78%	21%	90%	8%

Q. Which statement comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right? Split sample (n=1,021 and n=1,024) Shading indicates statistically significant differences



# Regardless of age, Americans prefer to communicate with crisis counselors over the phone when experiencing a mental health, alcohol/drug, or suicide crisis.

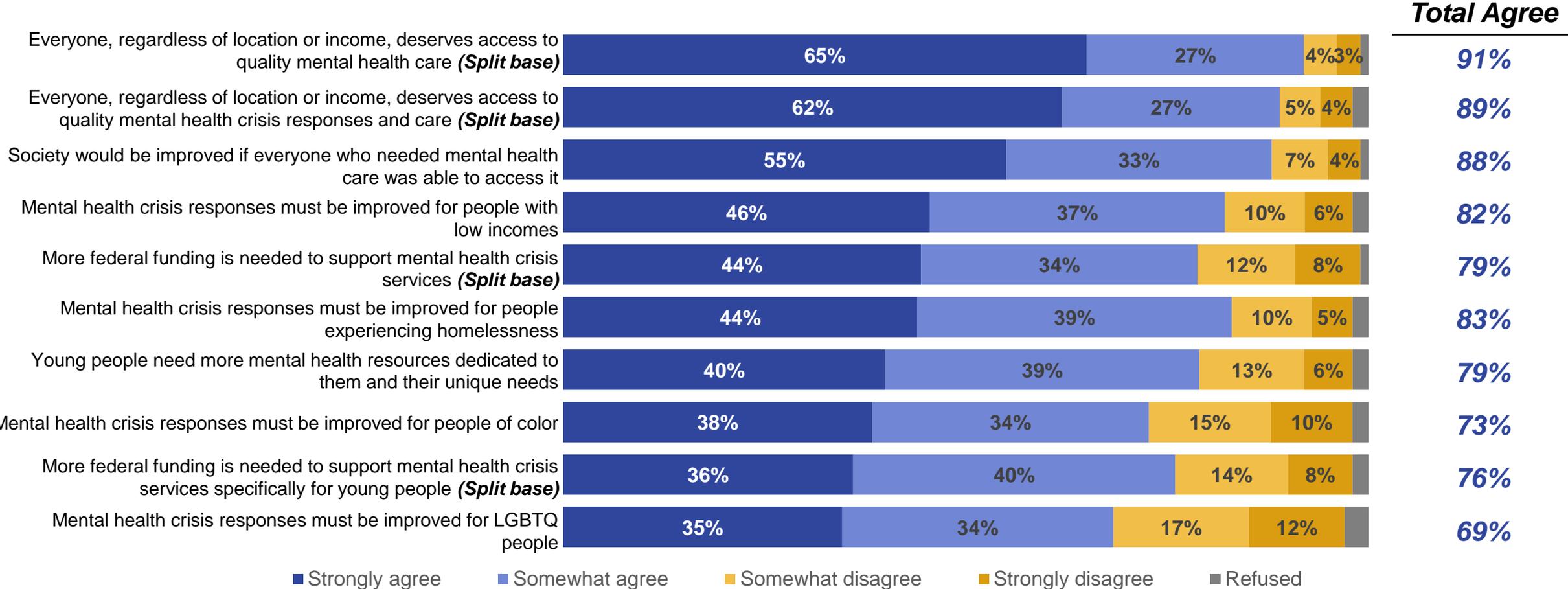
Preferred Method to Communicate with Crisis Counselors



Q. If you or a loved one were experiencing a mental health, alcohol/drug, or suicide crisis, would you prefer to use text message, online chat, or phone calls to reach crisis counselors? Base: Total (n=2,045)



# Large majorities of Americans agree that mental health crisis responses need improvement for low-income people, those experiencing homelessness, people of color, young people, and LGBTQ people.



Q. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base: Total (n=2,045)



Americans under the age of 50, women, and Black Americans are more likely to strongly agree that young people need more mental health resources dedicated to them.

“Young people need more mental health resources dedicated to them and their unique needs”

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Total Agree</b>
<b>General Population</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Age 18-24</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Age 25-34</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Age 35-49</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Age 50-64</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Age 65+</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Republican</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Men</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>80%</b>

Q. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base: Total (n=2,045). Shading indicates statistically significant differences

# Americans agree that mental health crisis responses must be improved for low-income people, people of color, and those experiencing homelessness.

	Mental health crisis responses must be improved for people with low incomes		Mental health crisis responses must be improved for people experiencing homelessness		Mental health crisis responses must be improved for people of color		Mental health crisis responses must be improved for LGBTQ people	
	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Total Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Total Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Total Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Total Agree</i>
<b>General Population</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Republican</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>69%</b>

Q. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base: Total (n=2,045). Shading indicates statistically significant differences

# 2 in 3

**Would support their tax dollars being part of how mental health crisis services for young people are funded**



# Strong majorities are supportive of the solutions proposed by NAMI to help address problems with the crisis response system.

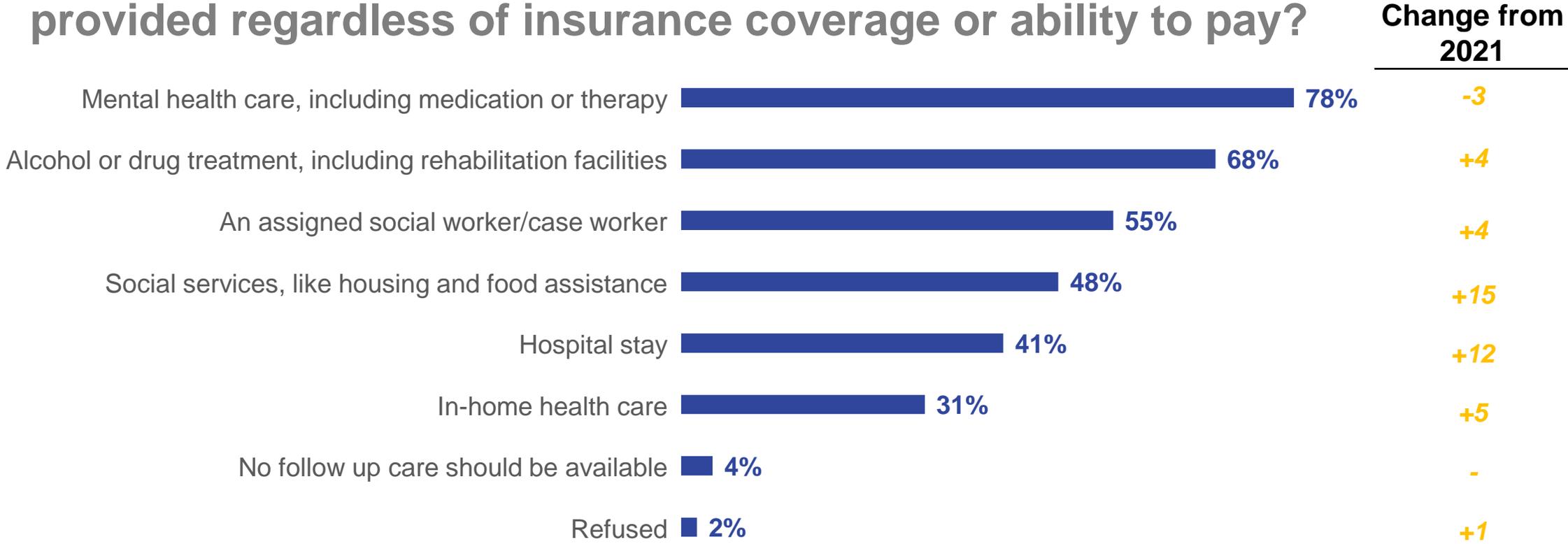


Q. Taking into account everything you know about mental health, alcohol/drug problems, and suicide crises, would you support or oppose policies that... Base: Total (n=2,045). Shading indicates statistically significant differences



Nearly four in five agree that mental health care should be provided regardless of an individual's ability to pay.

### What type of follow up care, if any, do you think should be provided regardless of insurance coverage or ability to pay?

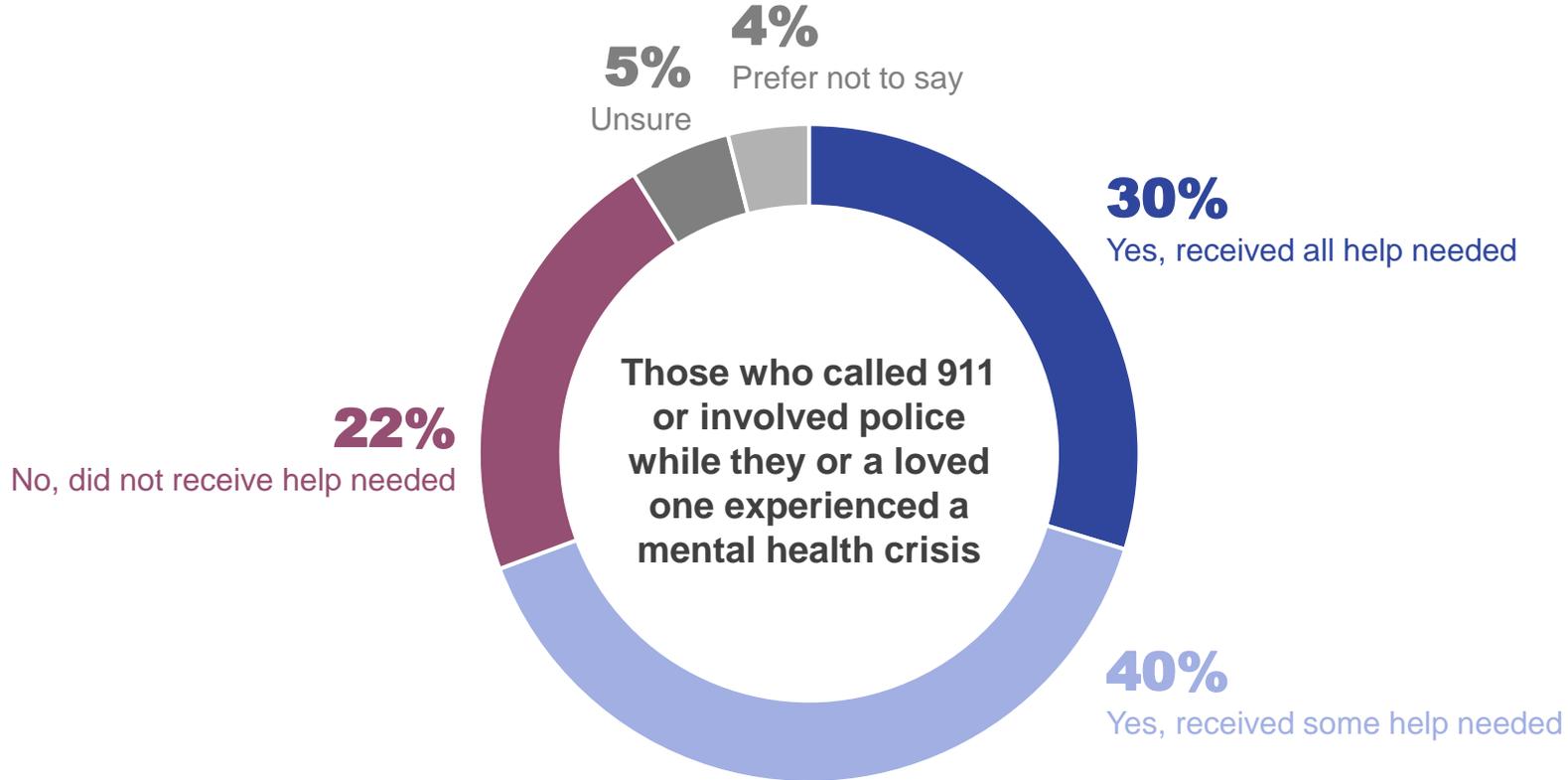


Q. Following an emergency intervention for someone having a mental health, alcohol/drug, or suicide crisis, what type of follow up care, if any, do you think should be provided regardless of insurance coverage or ability to pay? Select all that apply. Base: Total (n=2,045)



# Less than a third of those who sought help from the police/911 during a mental health crisis received all the help they needed.

You mentioned that you or a loved one had a mental health, alcohol/drug, or suicide crisis that involved 911 or the police. Did you or your loved one receive the help needed following this experience?



Q. You mentioned that you or a loved one had a mental health, alcohol/drug, or suicide crisis that involved 911 or the police. Did you or your loved one receive the help needed following this experience? If there was more than one experience, please think of the most recent experience. Base: Those who called 911 or involved police while they or loved one experienced a mental health crisis (n=309)



# 988 AWARENESS

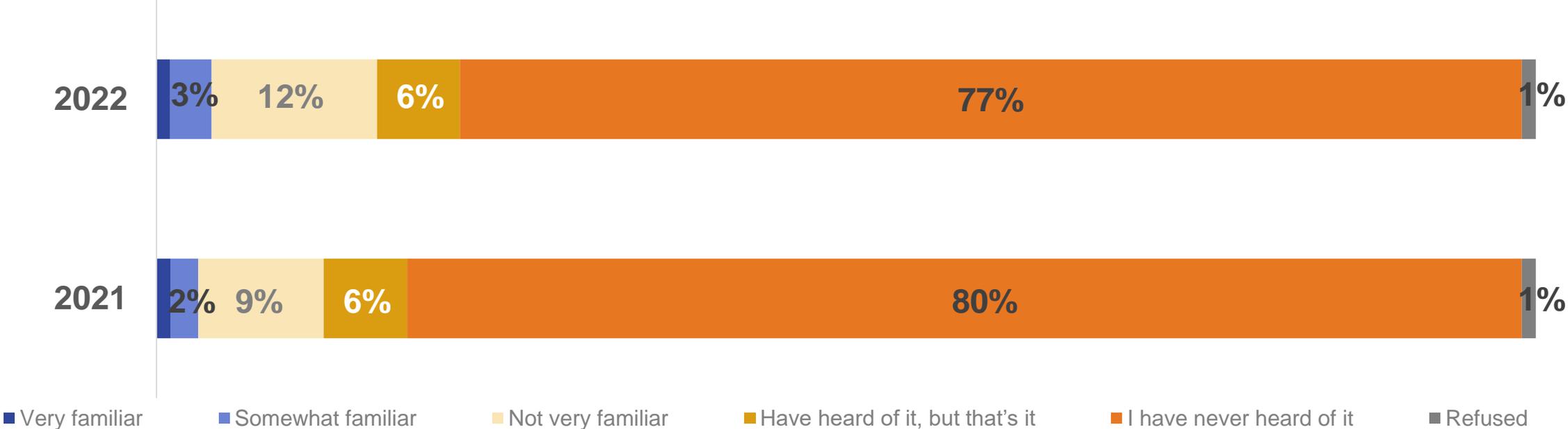
# Just 4%

**are familiar with the 988 emergency number, matching the level of awareness in fall 2021.**



Although most are still unfamiliar with the 988-emergency number, the number of people who have at least heard of it has slightly increased since 2021.

### How familiar are you with the 988-emergency number?



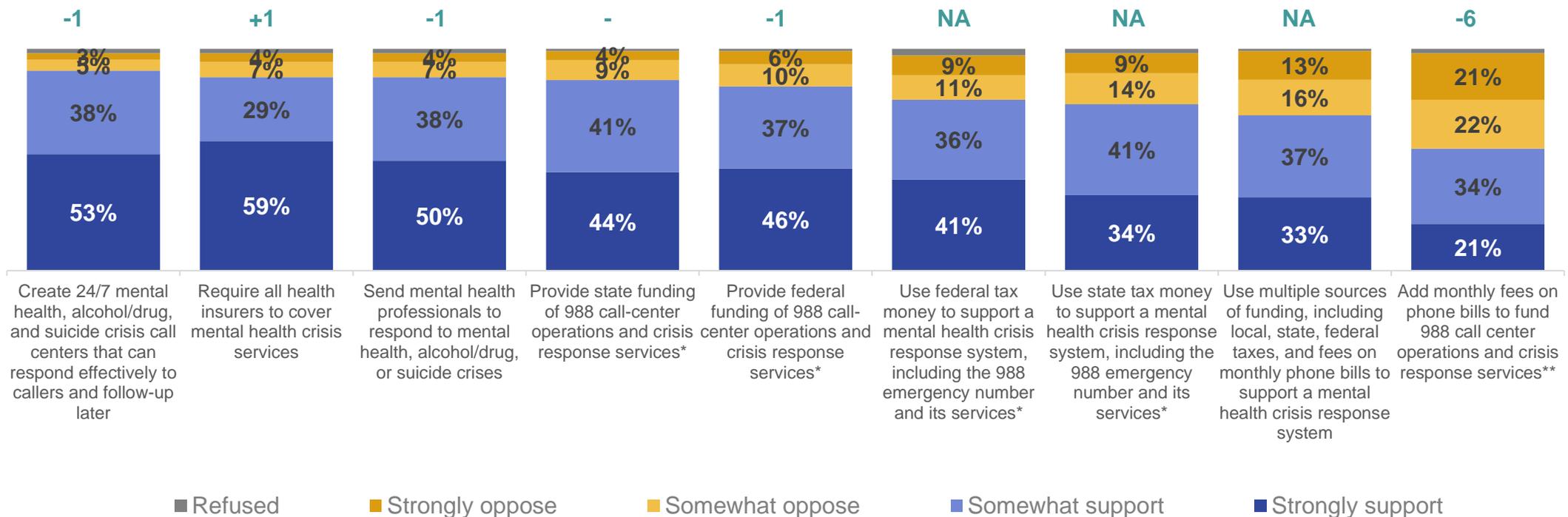
Q. How familiar are you with the 988-emergency number? Base: Total (n=2,045)



# More than four in five support state or federal funding for 988 call-center operations and related crisis response services.

Taking into account everything you know about mental health, alcohol/drug problems, and suicide crises, would you support or oppose policies that...

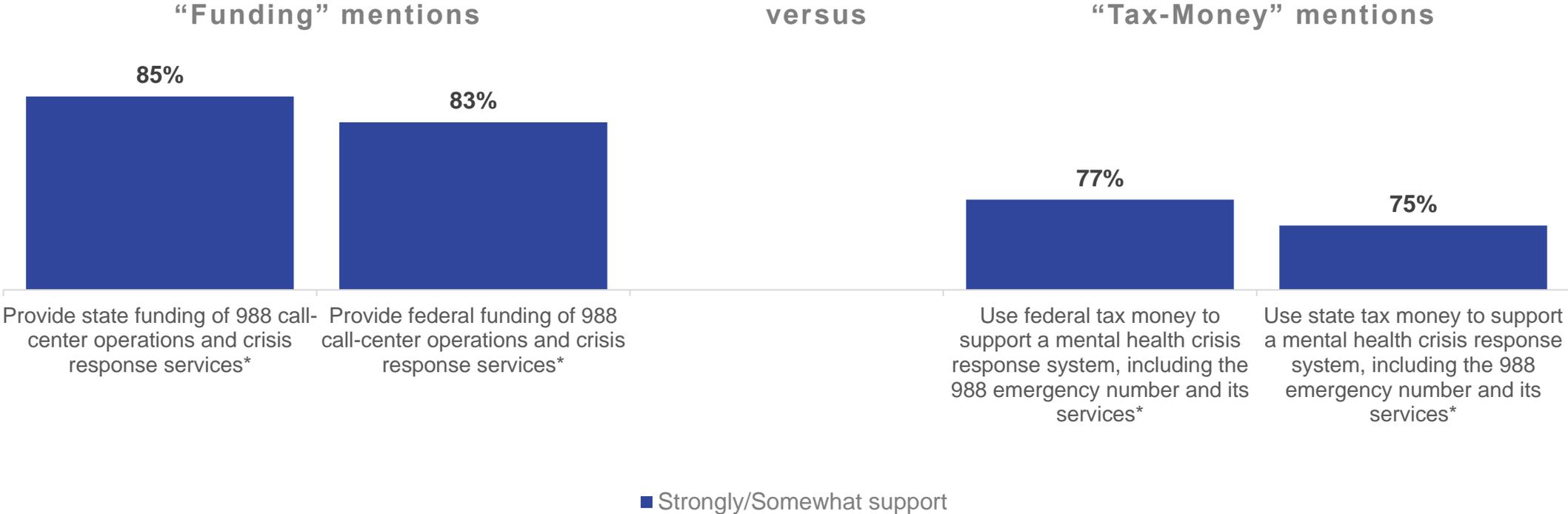
Change in Support since 2021



Q. Taking into account everything you know about mental health, alcohol/drug problems, and suicide crises, would you support or oppose policies that... Base: Total (n=2,045). \* Half of respondents asked (n=1,018). \*\*Was asked of half of respondents before.

Respondents more likely to support policies when using the word “funding” instead of “tax money”. When mentioning state funding, respondent support is 10 points higher than when mentioning state tax money. When mentioning federal funding, respondent support is 6 points higher than when mentioning federal tax money.

Taking into account everything you know about mental health, alcohol/drug problems, and suicide crises, would you support or oppose policies that...



Q. Taking into account everything you know about mental health, alcohol/drug problems, and suicide crises, would you support or oppose policies that... Base: Total (n=2,045). \* Half of respondents asked (n=1,018). \*\*Was asked of half of respondents before.



# Most Americans support the creation of 24/7 mental health, alcohol/drug, and suicide crisis call centers.

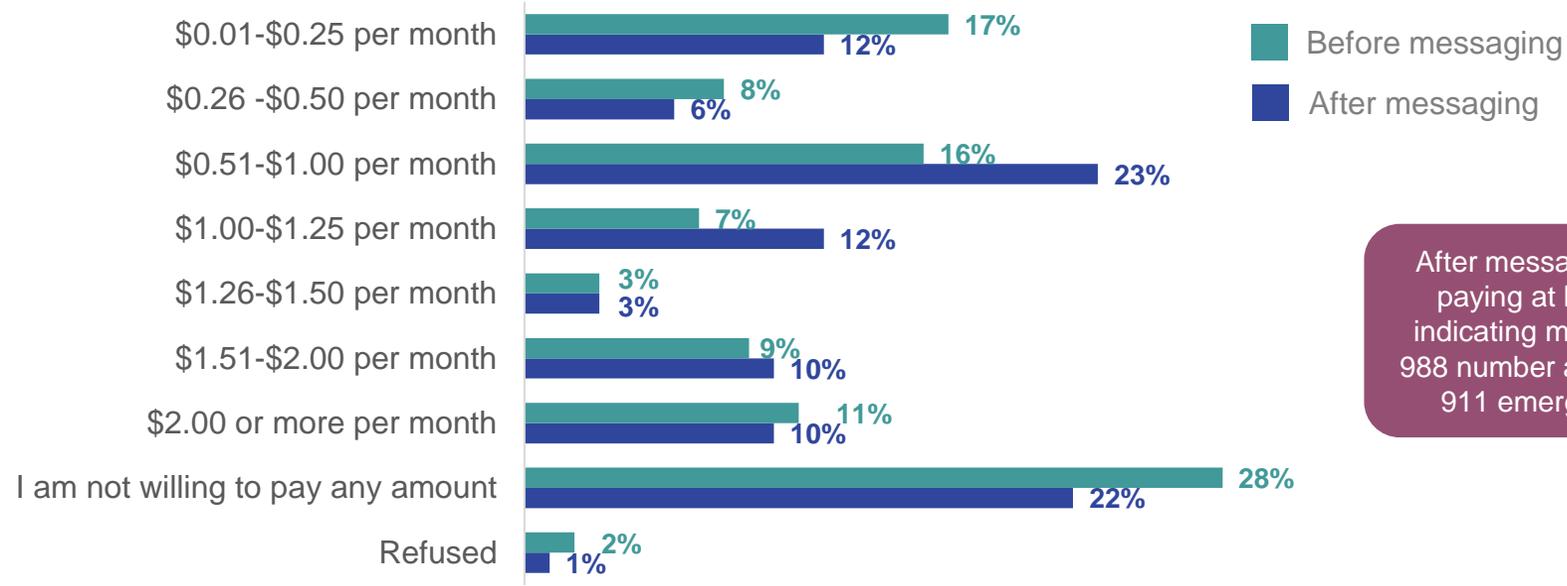
## % Total Support

	General Population	Men	Women	Republican	Democrat	Independent	White	Black	Hispanic	Those with mental health condition
Create 24/7 mental health, alcohol/drug, and suicide crisis call centers that can respond effectively to callers and follow-up later	91%	90%	92%	88%	94%	91%	91%	90%	94%	91%
Require all health insurers to cover mental health crisis services	88%	86%	89%	80%	94%	86%	88%	91%	85%	89%
Send mental health professionals to respond to mental health, alcohol/drug, or suicide crises	87%	86%	89%	80%	94%	88%	88%	91%	85%	90%
*Provide state funding of 988 call-center operations and crisis response services	85%	84%	86%	73%	94%	85%	85%	95%	83%	92%
*Provide federal funding of 988 call-center operations and crisis response services	83%	79%	87%	71%	94%	82%	82%	91%	84%	90%
*Use federal tax money to support a mental health crisis response system, including the 988 emergency number and its services	77%	75%	79%	61%	89%	77%	76%	81%	78%	81%
*Use state tax money to support a mental health crisis response system, including the 988 emergency number and its services	75%	74%	76%	61%	87%	74%	74%	78%	71%	81%
Use multiple sources of funding, including local, state, federal taxes, and fees on monthly phone bills to support a mental health crisis response system	70%	68%	71%	51%	86%	70%	67%	79%	71%	78%
**Add monthly fees on phone bills to fund 988 call center operations and crisis response services	55%	55%	55%	42%	63%	58%	55%	56%	54%	58%

Q. Taking into account everything you know about mental health, alcohol/drug problems, and suicide crises, would you support or oppose policies that... Base: Total (n=2,045). Shading indicates statistically significant differences. \* Half of respondents asked (n=1,018). \*\*Was asked of half of respondents before.

After seeing information on the cost of monthly phone bill fees for 911 services, more are willing to fund 988 call centers and related crisis response services via monthly phone bill fees. Of note, those who would pay ≤\$1/mo remains the same after messaging while those who would pay >\$1/mo increases.

**How much, if any, in fees would you be willing to pay on your monthly phone bill to fund 988 call-center operations and associated crisis response services?**



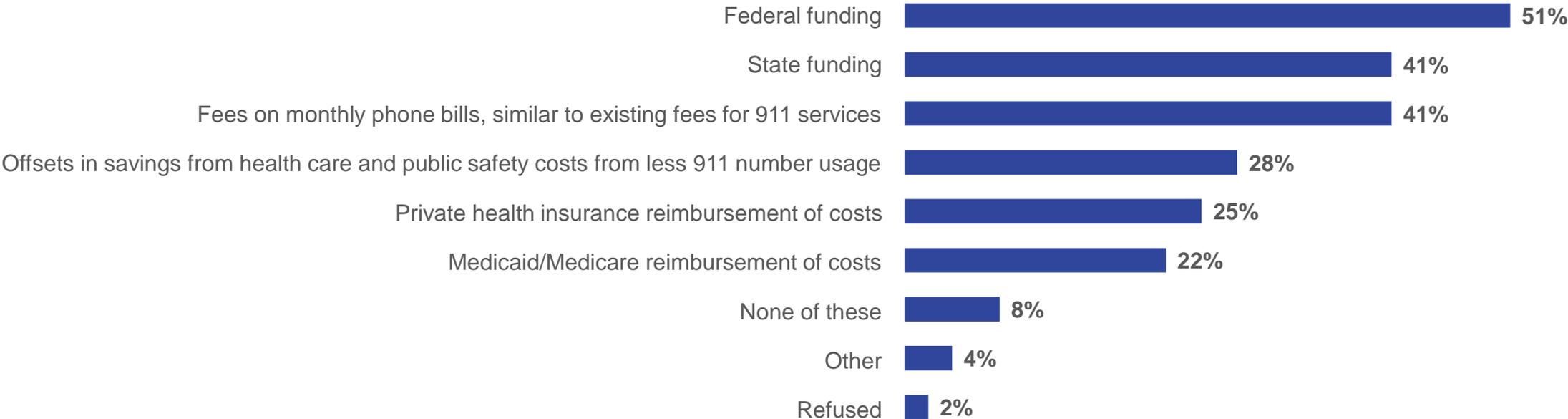
After messaging, support for paying at least \$1 grows, indicating many prioritize the 988 number at least as high as 911 emergency services

Q. How much, if any, in fees would you be willing to pay on your monthly phone bill to fund 988 call-center operations and associated crisis response services? Base: Total (n=2,045)  
 Q. Americans pay an \$1.00 on their monthly phone bill for 911 services...How much, if any, in fees would you be willing to pay on your monthly phone bill to fund 988 call-center operations and associated crisis response services Base: Total (2,045)



Half think federal funding is the best way to fund the 988 lifeline, followed by two in five who think state funding and monthly phone bill fees are best.

## What do you think is the best way to fund the 988 lifeline and related crisis services?

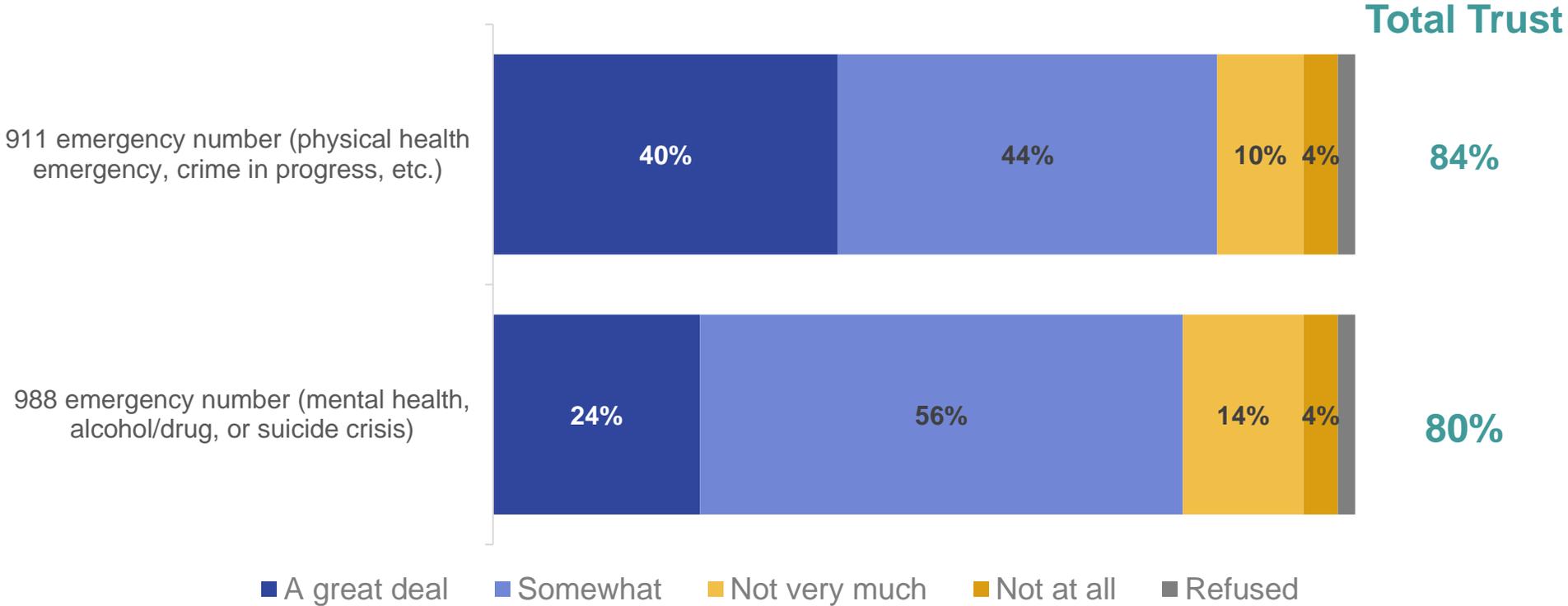


Q. What do you think is the best way to fund the 988 lifeline and related crisis services? Base: Total (2,045)



Four in five trust 911 and 988 to provide help when needed. However, intensity of trust is stronger for 911 versus 988.

### How much, if at all, do you trust that you would receive the help you need from each number if you needed to call?



Q. Consider existing 911 emergency services and the new 988 emergency number. How much, if at all, do you trust that you would receive the help you need from each number if you needed to call? Base: Total (n=2,045)



**THANK**  
**YOU**

**GAME CHANGERS**

