

Psychosocial Determinants of Health & Aging among Black Americans

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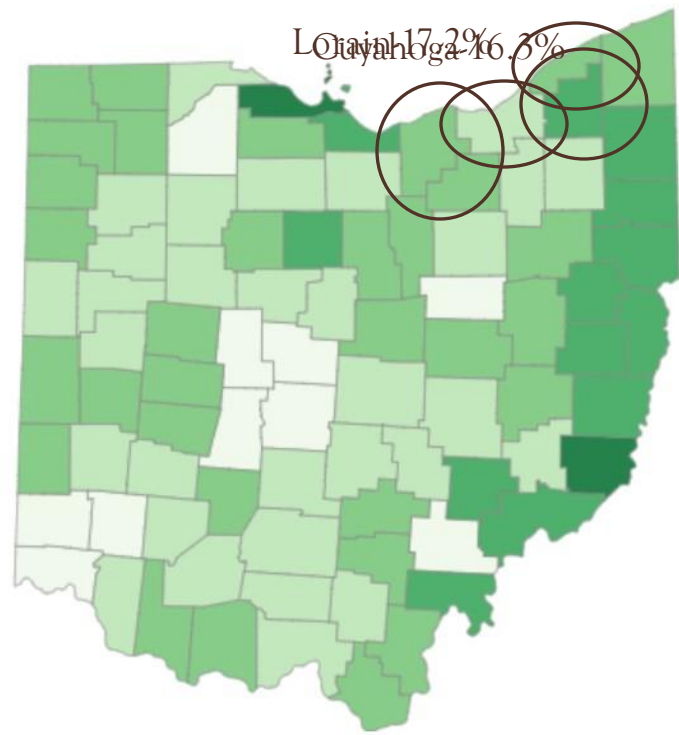
Case Western Reserve University

2020 U.S. Population of Persons 65+



Percentage of Population Aged 65 to 84 Years

Ohio: 15.8%



Lake-18.5%

Lorain-17.2%

Wayne-16.3%

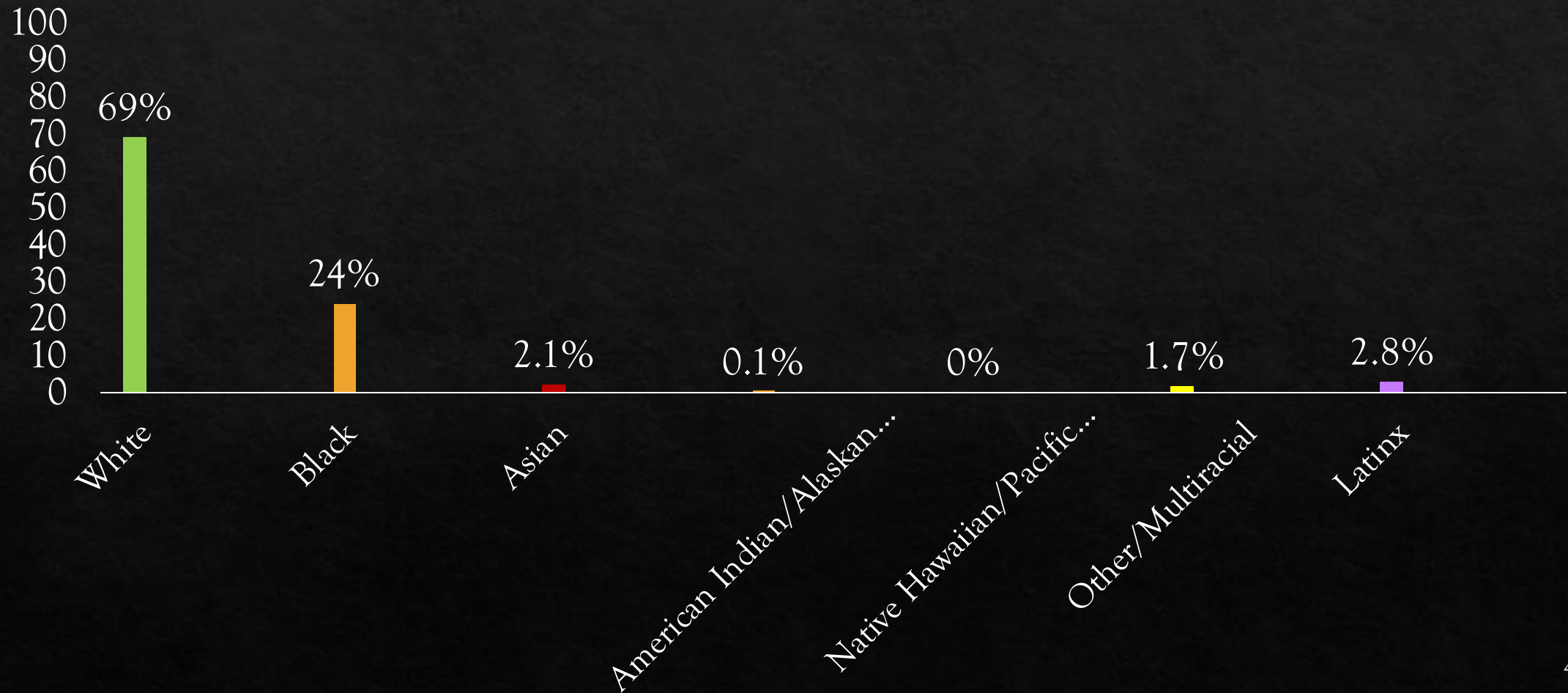
Geauga-19.4%

Percent population

- 21.0 or more
- 19.0 to 20.9
- 17.0 to 18.9
- 15.0 to 16.9
- Less than 15.0

Ottawa County	23.4%
Monroe County	22.0%
Erie County	20.6%
Harrison County	20.3%
Carroll County	20.2%
Morgan County	20.0%
Trumbull County	19.6%
Jefferson County	19.5%
Geauga County	19.4%
Belmont County	19.3%
Mahoning County	19.2%
Columbiana County	19.2%
Washington County	19.1%
Crawford County	19.1%
Meigs County	19.1%
Lake County	18.5%
Preble County	18.4%
Guernsey County	18.3%
Ashtabula County	18.2%
Darke County	18.2%
Lawrence County	18.0%
Wyandot County	18.0%
Clark County	17.9%
Sandusky County	17.9%
Ashland County	17.9%
Stark County	17.8%
Hocking County	17.8%
Richland County	17.7%
Tuscarawas County	17.7%
Defiance County	17.7%
Coshocton County	17.6%

2020 Cuyahoga Population of Persons 65+





Religion & Spirituality

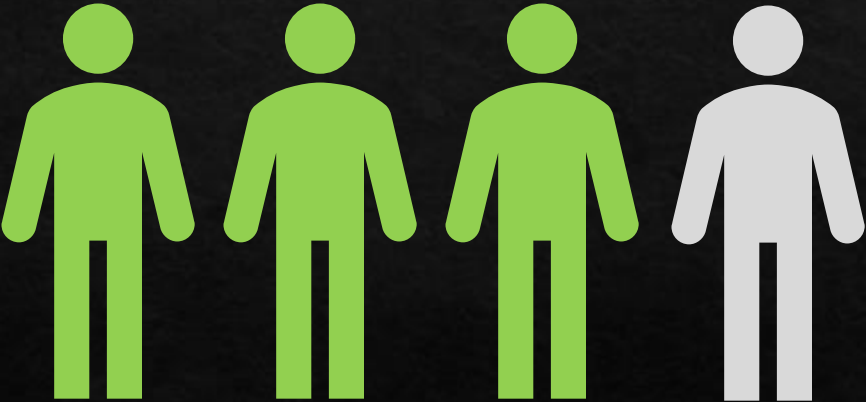
Significance of Religion and the Black Church

- ◆ Historically played a major role in African American communities
- ◆ Social, civic, political, educational, and economic institution
- ◆ Offer wide range of community programs and services



How Important is Religion in Your Life?

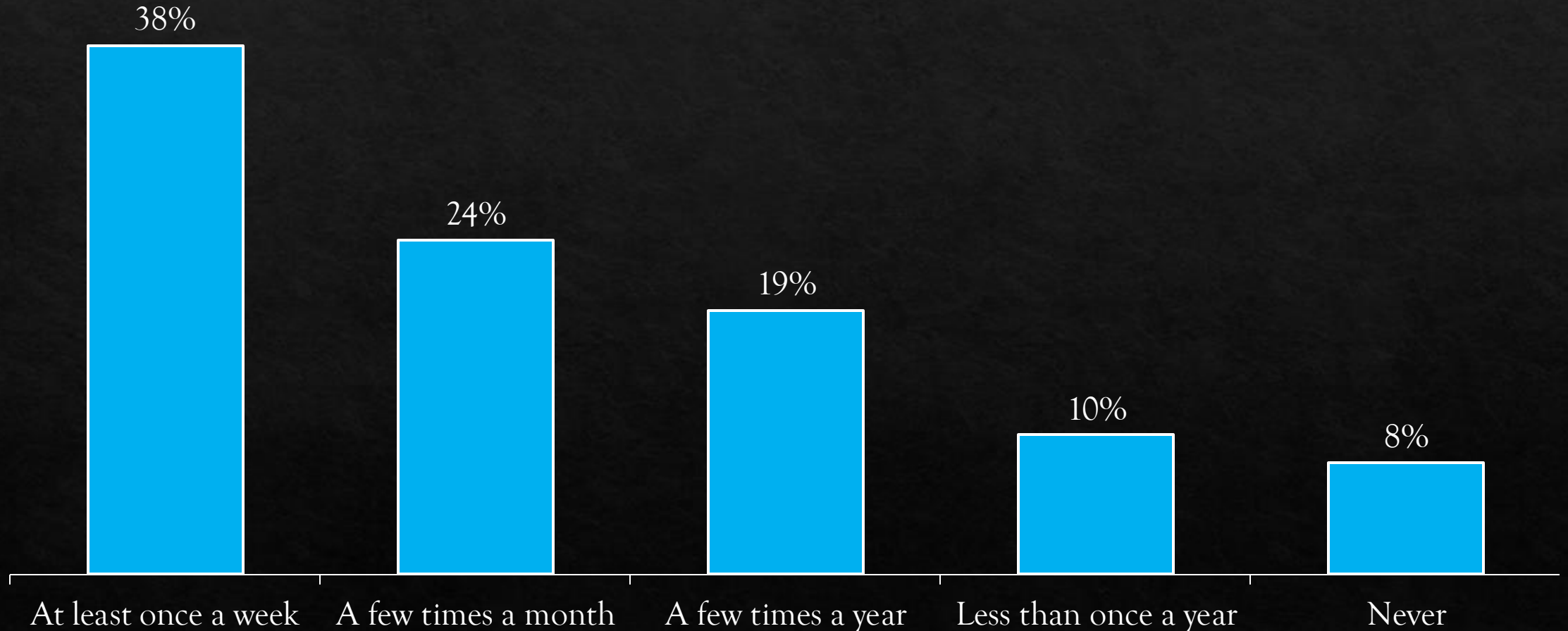
Very Important



Not At All Important



Religious Service Attendance





●
Organizational Religious Participation &
Mental Health

Service Attendance Is Related To

- ↓ Mood disorders
- ↓ Other psychiatric disorders
- ↓ Number of comorbid psychiatric disorders
- ↓ Depressed affect
- ↓ Somatic depressive symptoms



Non-
Organizational
Religious
Participation &
Mental Health



Non-
Organizational
Religious
Participation is
Related to



Subjective Religiosity & Mental Health





Older African Americans Who Are More Subjectively Religious

- ◇ Are less likely to experience a mental disorder
- ◇ Have fewer comorbid psychiatric disorders
- ◇ Have higher self-esteem
- ◇ Have greater environmental mastery
- ◇ Have greater personal growth
- ◇ Have greater purpose in life
- ◇ Have greater self-acceptance



Religion & Sleep



Why
should we
care about
sleep?

Importance of Sleep

- Brain is cleansed during sleep
- Memory is consolidated during sleep
- Poor sleep is related to a broad range of mental and physical health problems



Consequences of Poor Sleep

Mental Health

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- More severe schizophrenia symptoms
- Worsen ADHD symptoms
- Worsen ASD symptoms

Physical Health

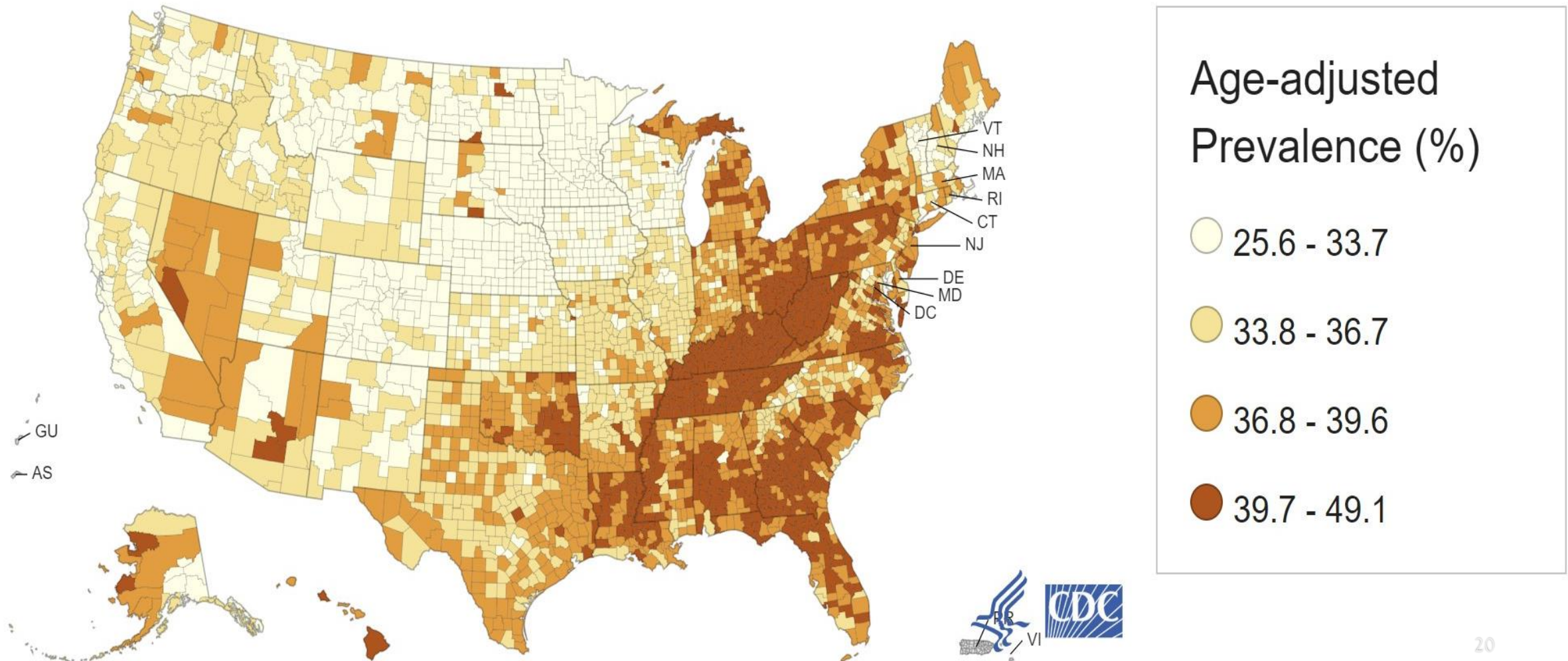
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disease
- Metabolic syndrome
- Inflammation
- Decreased immunity
- Mortality



Consequences of Poor Sleep for Older Adults

- Cognitive decline
- Dementia
- Falls (disability & mortality)

Prevalence of short sleep duration among US adults (2018)



Racial Disparities in Sleep

- African Americans are 2x as likely as white Americans to report short sleep
- Compared to white adults, African American adults are 60% more likely to report long sleep





Racial Disparities in Sleep

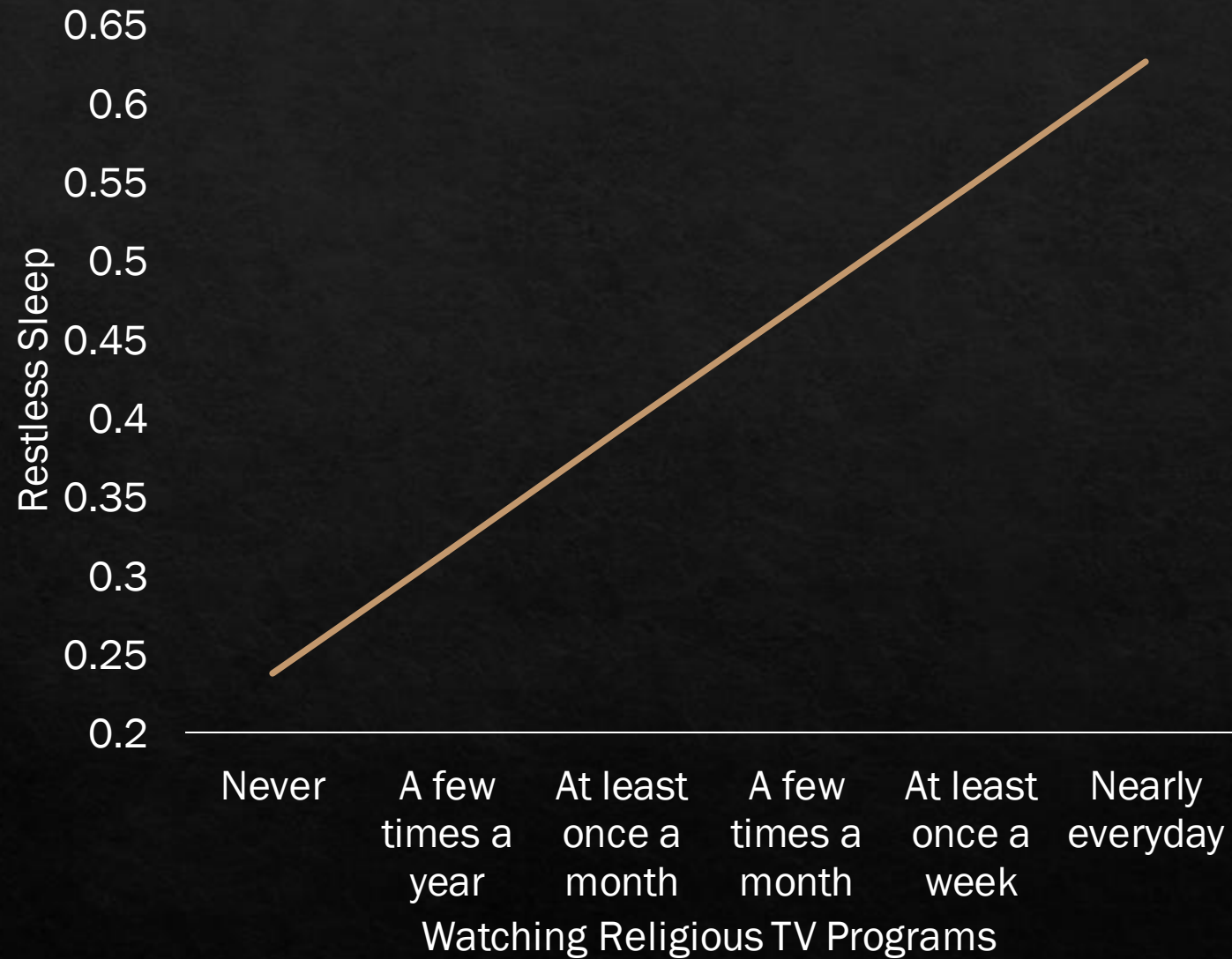
- Obstructive sleep apnea is more common and severe among African Americans than white Americans
- Insomnia is more common and chronic among African Americans than white Americans





Religious Participation & Sleep

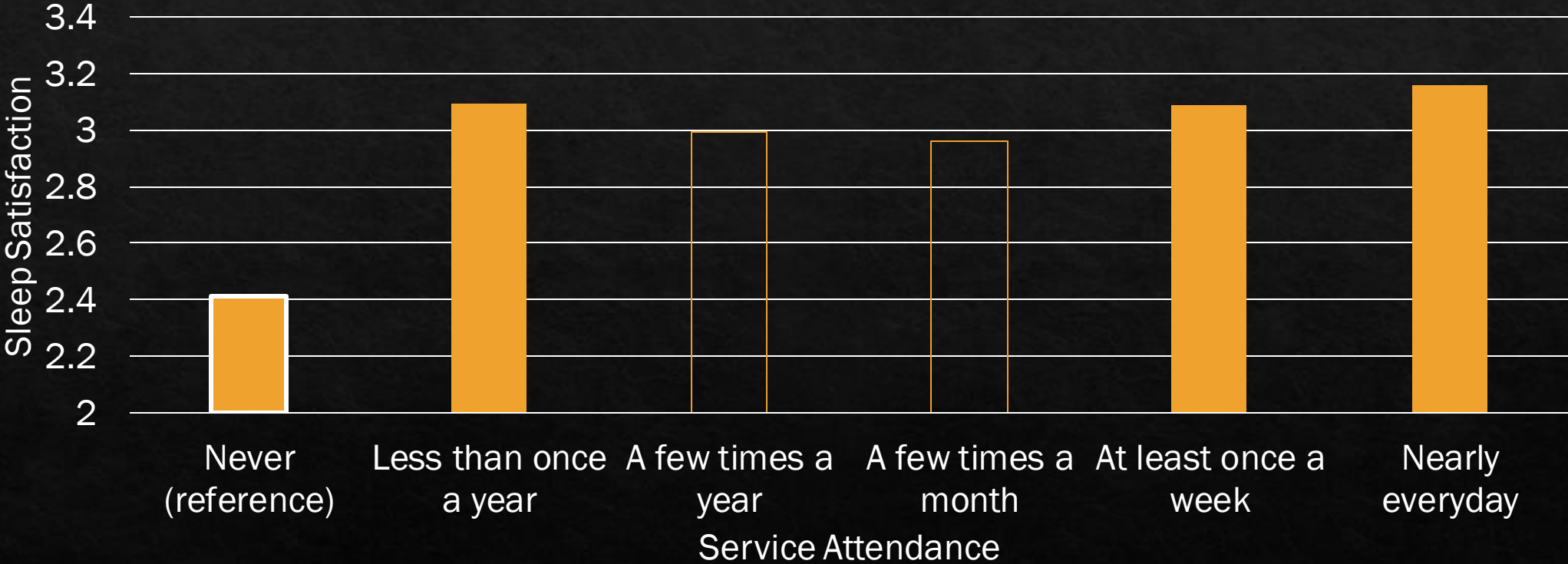
Watching Religious TV & Restless Sleep



Subjective Religiosity & Sleep Satisfaction



Service Attendance & Sleep Satisfaction



Social Relationships



Why Are Relationships Important?

Our relationships provide

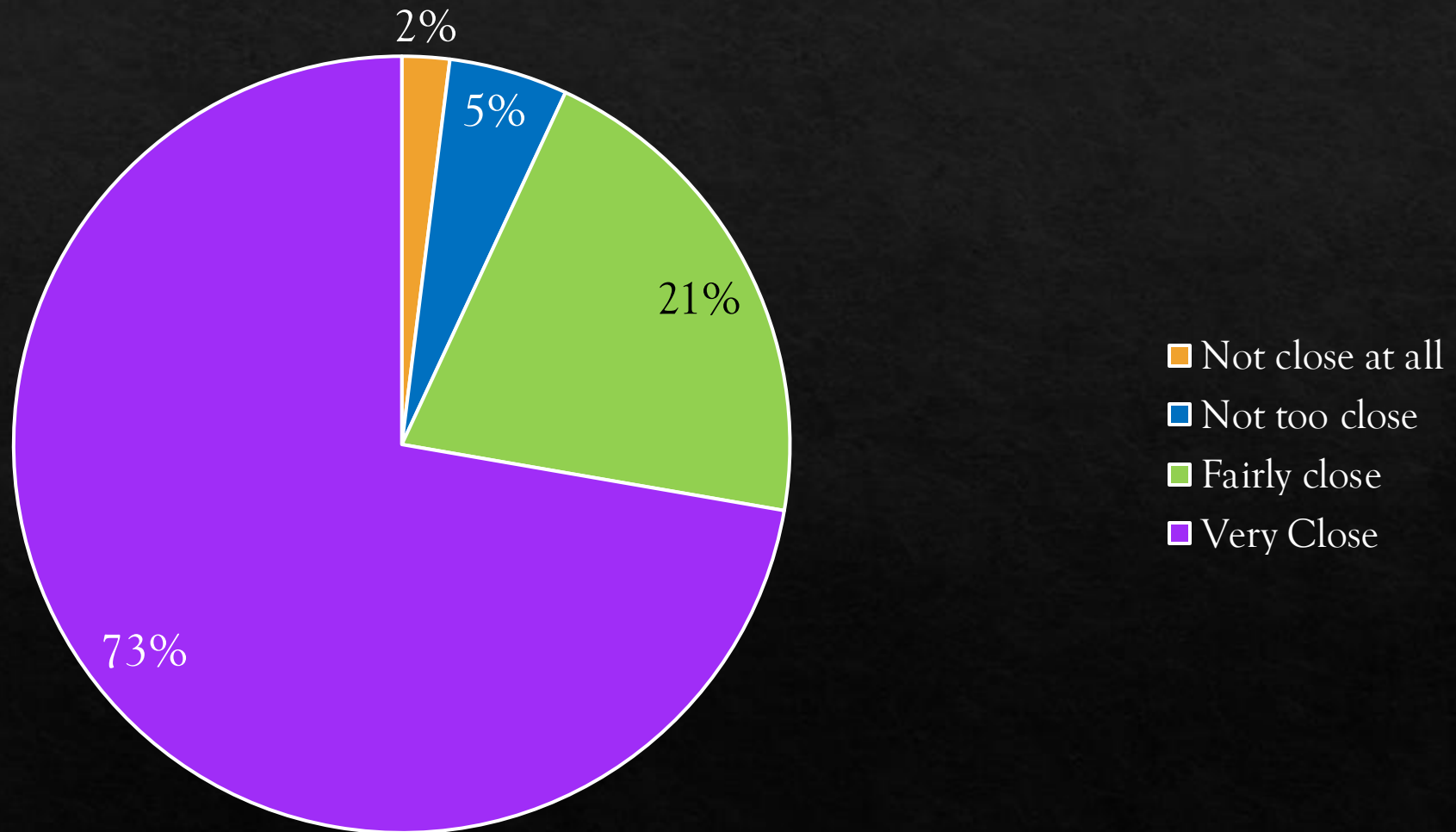
- Social support
- Social interactions
- Social engagement



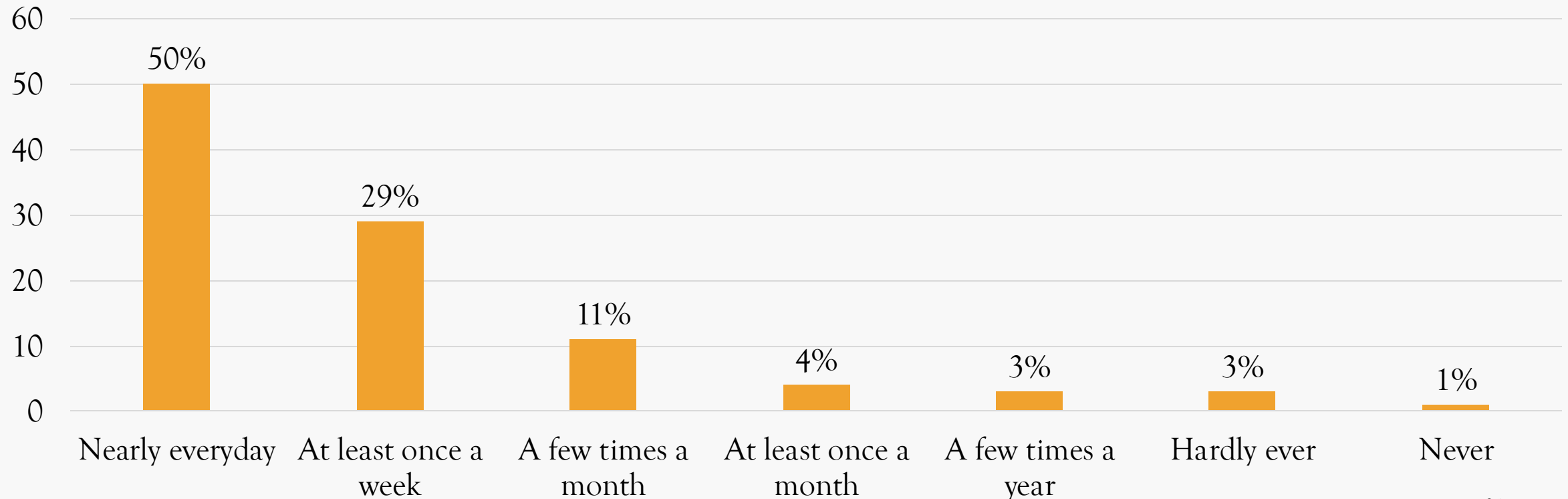


Extended
Family
Relationships
among
African
Americans

Emotional Closeness to Family



Frequency of Contact with Family





Extended Family & Mental Health

Extended Family Relationships

Black adults in frequent contact with their family are

- ◇ Less likely to have suicidal ideation
- ◇ Have fewer depressive symptoms

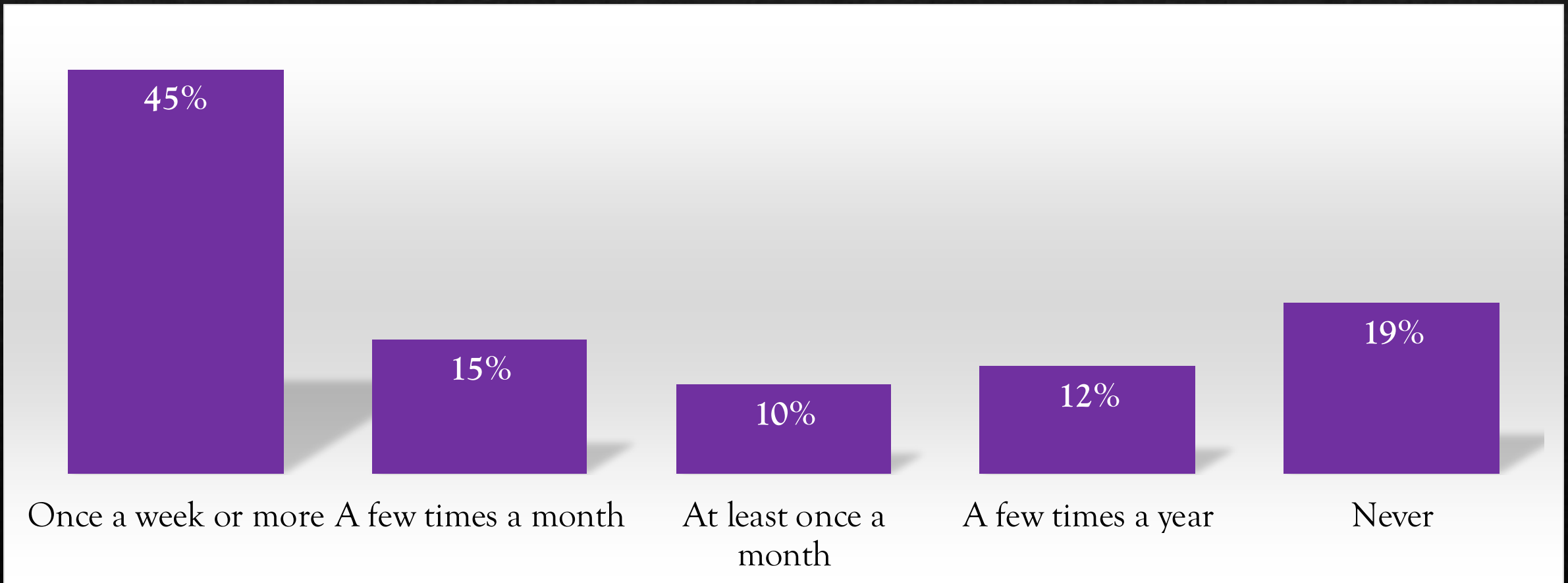
Black adults who are emotionally close to their family are

- ◇ Less likely to have suicidal ideation
- ◇ Less likely to attempt suicide
- ◇ More satisfied with life

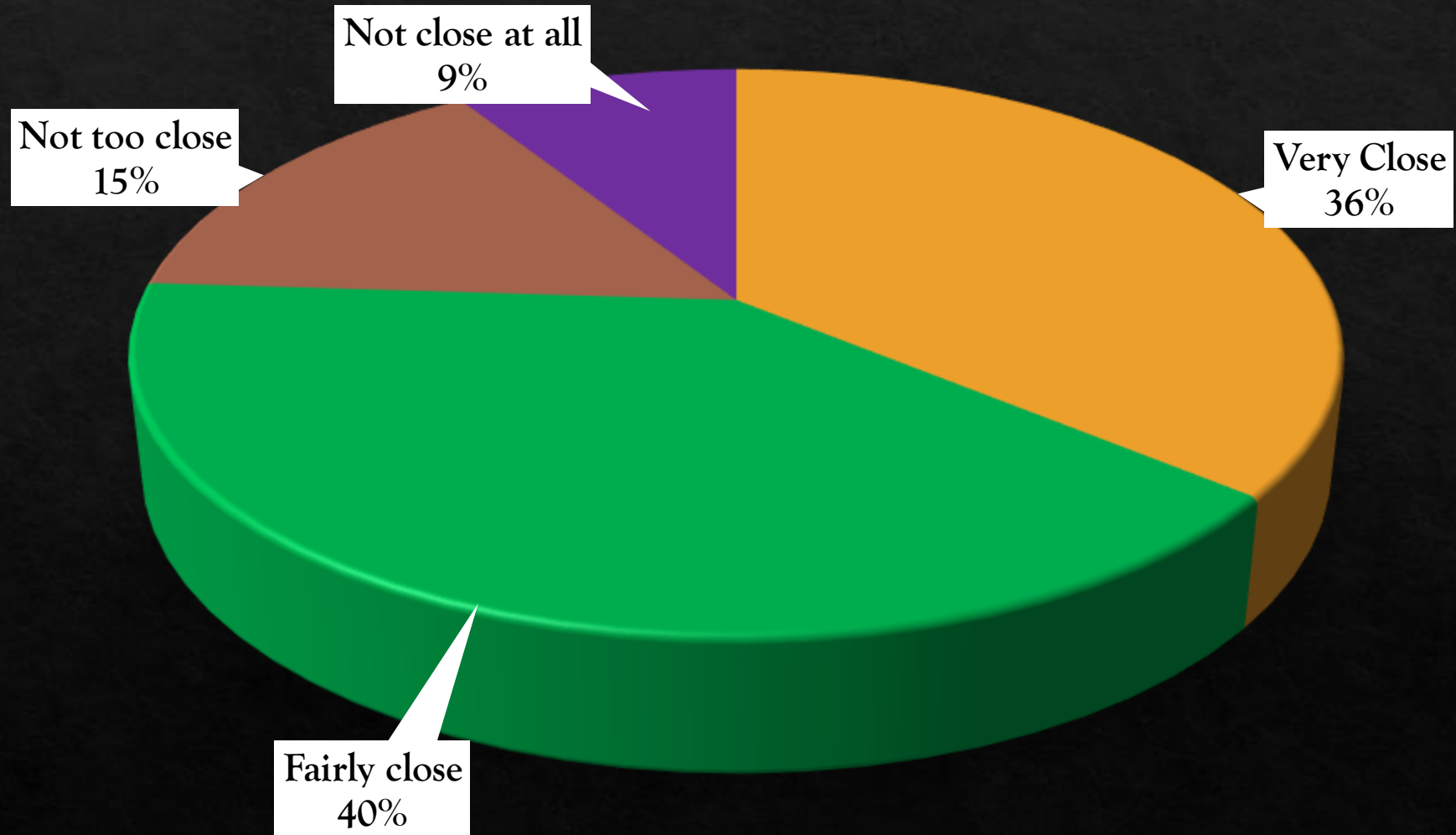


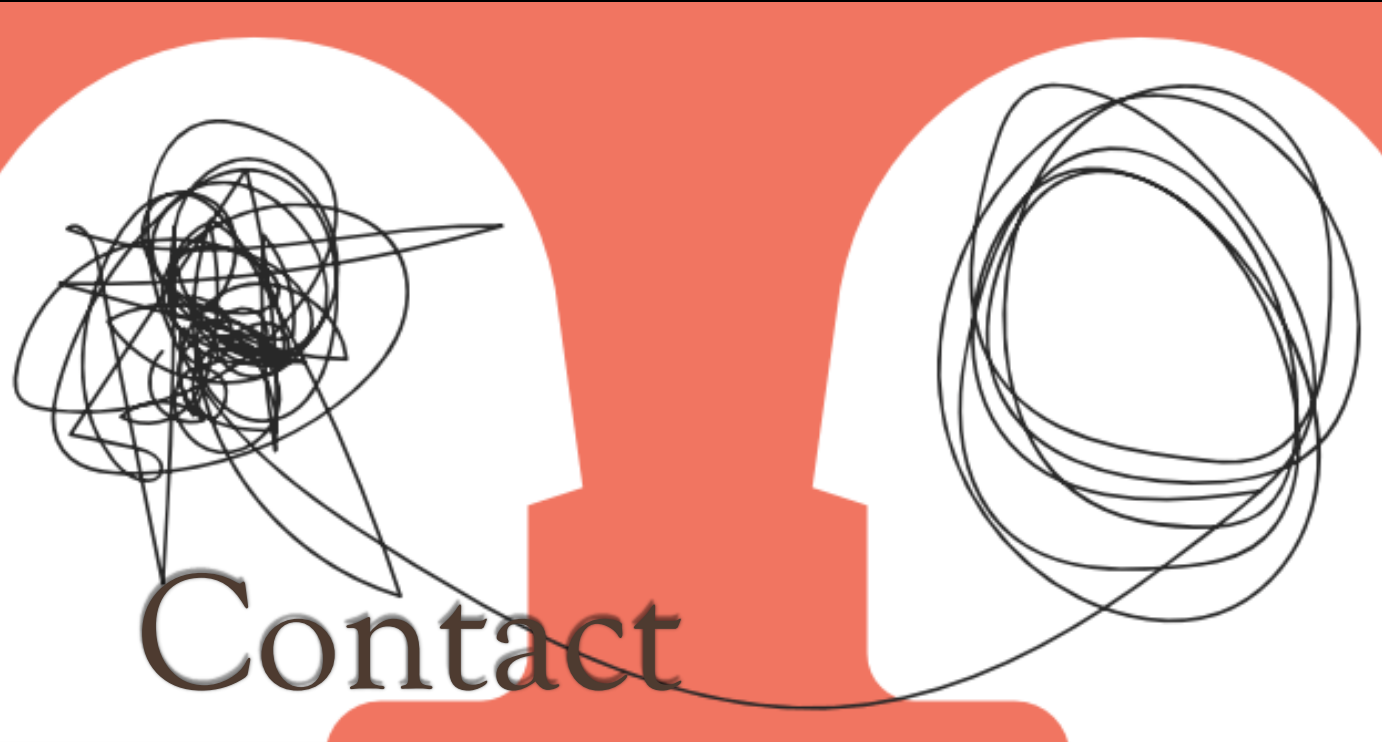
Church Relationships & Mental Health

Frequency of Contact with Church Members



Emotional Closeness to Church Members





- Fewer depressive symptoms
- Increased suicide attempts



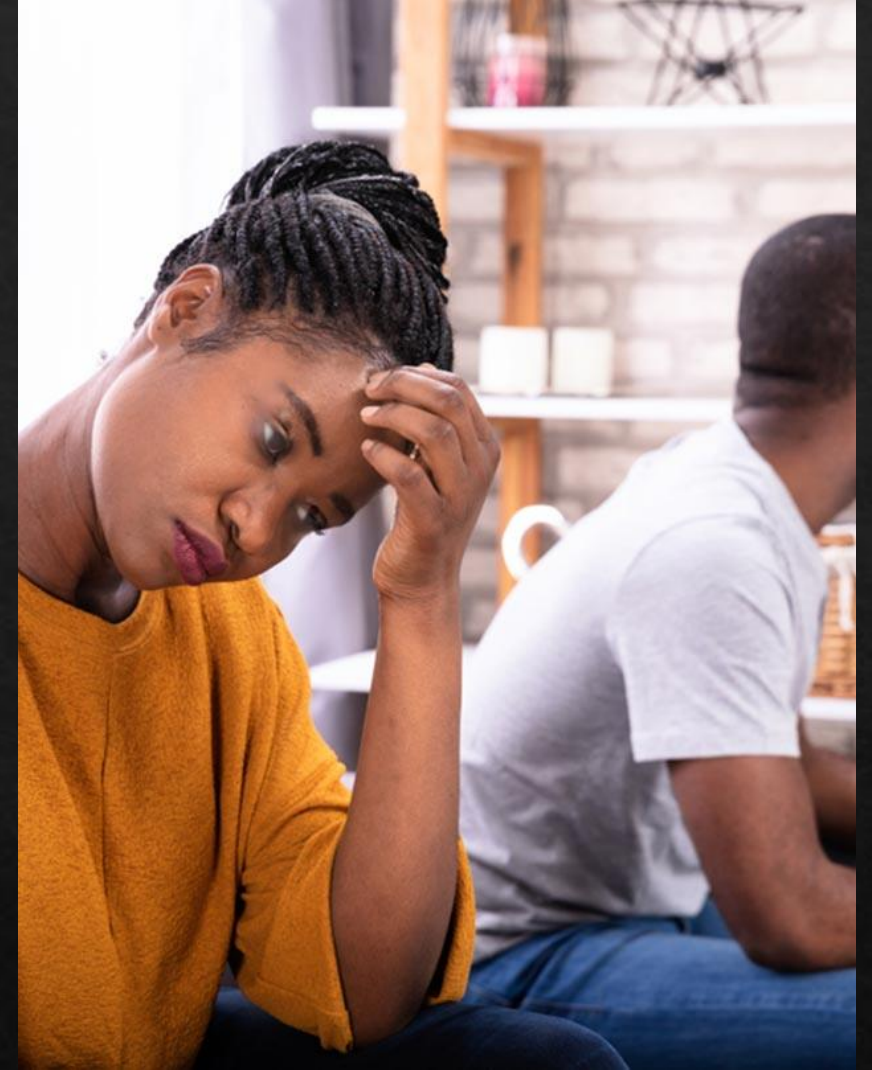
- Fewer depressive symptoms
- Lower psychological distress

A photograph of a woman and a man sitting on a couch, engaged in a heated conversation. The woman, on the left, has a concerned expression and her hands are raised in a gesture of surprise or frustration. The man, on the right, is also gesturing with his hands raised, looking intently at the woman. The scene is dimly lit, with a soft, muted color palette. The text 'Negative Social Interactions' is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font.

Negative Social Interactions

What Are Negative Interactions?

- ❖ Criticisms, demands, being taken advantage of, conflict/arguments
- ❖ Source of chronic stress
- ❖ Tend to be more salient than positive social interactions
- ❖ Can offset the positive health effects of social support



Effects of Negative Interactions

African Americans who have frequent negative **family** interactions

- ◇ Are less happy
- ◇ Have lower self-esteem
- ◇ Have more severe depressive symptoms

Effects of Negative Interactions

African Americans who have frequent negative **family** interactions

- ◆ Are more likely to experience PTSD
- ◆ Are more likely to experience social anxiety disorder
- ◆ Are more likely to experience OCD

African Americans who have frequent negative interactions with **church** members have more severe depressive symptoms

Social Isolation



Social Isolation Is an Epidemic



World Health
Organization

AARP



Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation



2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the
Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community



U.S. Surgeon General's Report

- Issued May 2023
- Labeled social isolation as a public health epidemic
- Identified mental and physical health outcomes of social isolation



Being socially isolated is equivalent to
smoking 15 cigarettes a day.



Effects of Social Isolation

African American adults who are socially isolated

- ◆ Are more likely to experience a diagnosable mental illness in the past 12 months
- ◆ Are more likely to experience depression
- ◆ Experience a greater number of co-morbid mental disorders



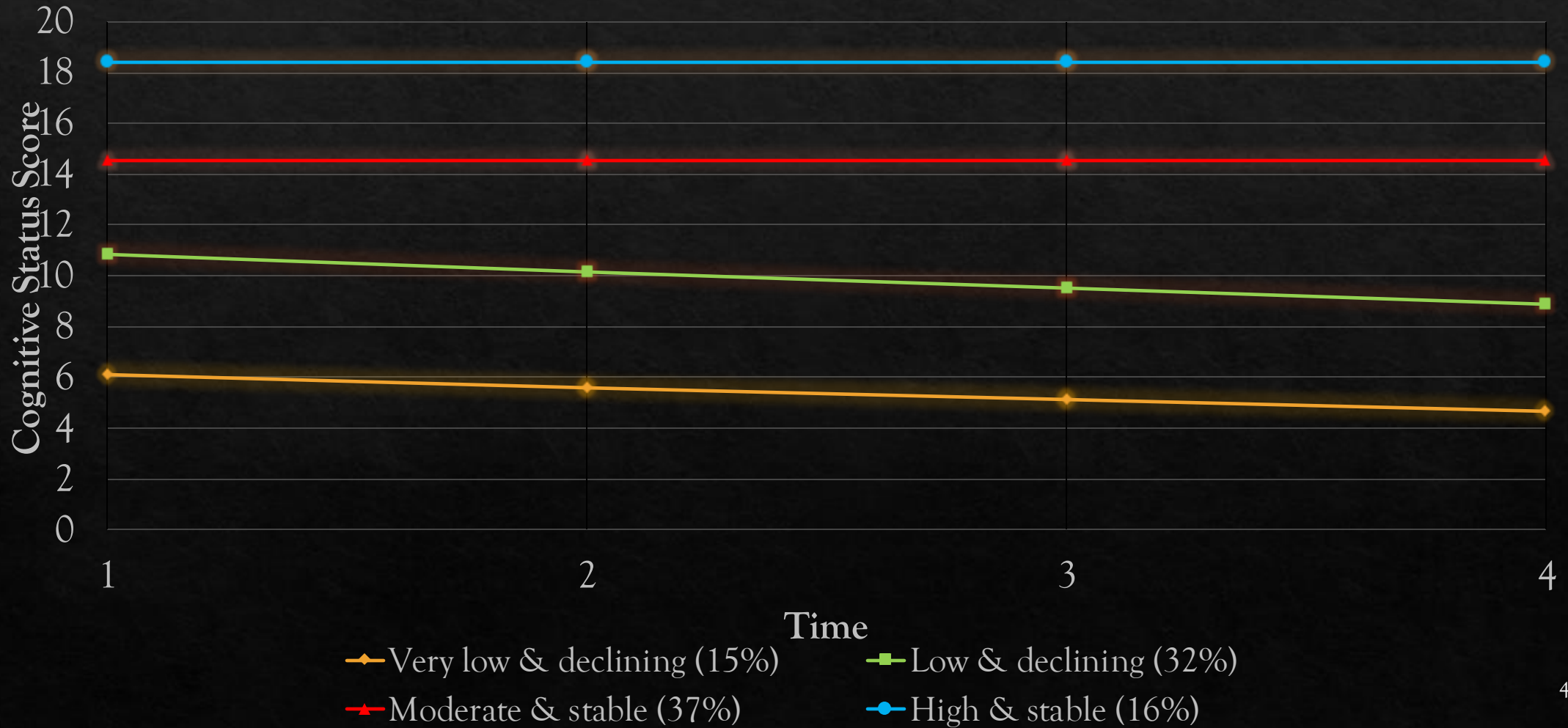
Social Isolation & Cognitive Decline among Middle-Aged and Older Black Adults

Racial Disparities in ADRD

Compared to white Americans, Black Americans are...

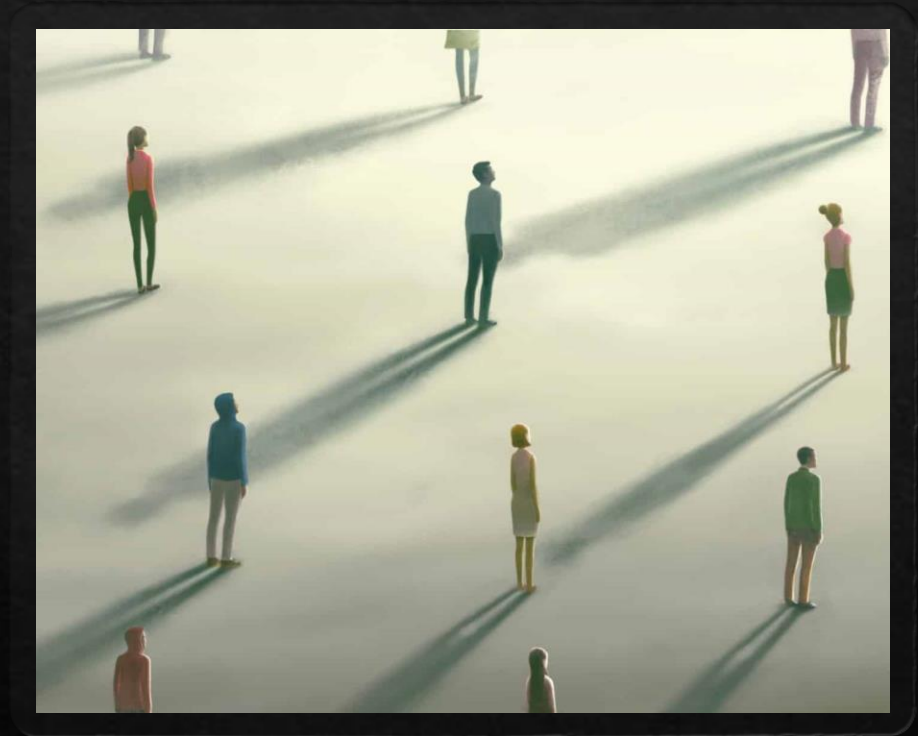
- 2x more likely to have ADRD
- Less likely to have a diagnosis
- Diagnosed in the later stages of ADRD

Cognitive Status Trajectories



Social Isolation & Cognitive Trajectories

- ◇ People who were isolated from **friends** were less likely to belong to the high & stable trajectory and more likely to belong to the:
 - ◇ Very low & declining trajectory
 - ◇ Low & stable trajectory
 - ◇ Moderate & stable trajectory
- ◇ People who were socially isolated from **extended family** did not differ in cognitive status trajectories



Conclusions

- ◆ Family and church relationships and religion play an important role in older African Americans' health
- ◆ These factors can promote health or act as stress coping resources
- ◆ Some relational aspects can act as chronic stressors
- ◆ Health equity programs and interventions may consider addressing these modifiable factors
 - ◆ Increasing positive social engagement
 - ◆ Role of religious communities?



Acknowledgments

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