

# Student Behavioral Health: Suicide Prevention & Intervention

**Sandi Scott**

Dean of Students, University of Wisconsin-Stout

**Tammy McGuckin**

Vice Provost for Student Affairs & Enrollment Services,  
University of Wisconsin-Parkside



# National Landscape

**The College Student Mental Health Crisis**

**'I Didn't Know How to Ask for Help':  
Stories of Students With Anxiety**

**The Kids are Not Alright: The Mental Health Crisis on College Campuses**

**Record Numbers of College Students Are Seeking Treatment for Depression and Anxiety — But Schools Can't Keep Up**



# Key Issues



Students are reporting **increased behavioral health issues** and seeking help in record numbers



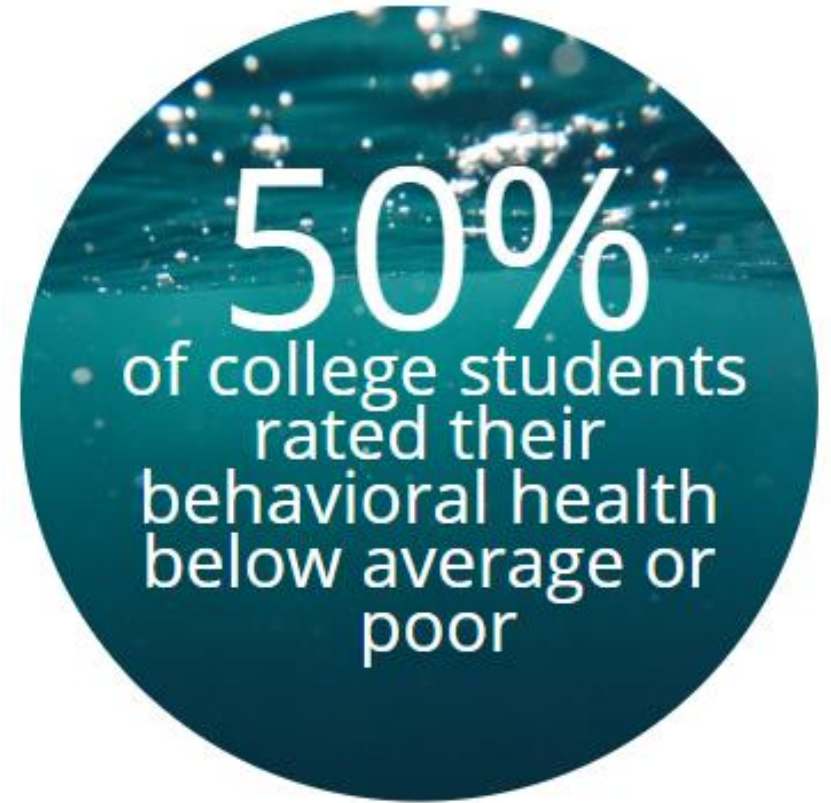
**Anxiety** and **depression** are the most common student behavioral health concerns, and are increasing; **suicide** is also on the rise



Behavioral health issues significantly **impact the academic success and retention** of our students

# Behavioral Health

A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.



Source: World Health Organization (WHO), College Stats, 2018



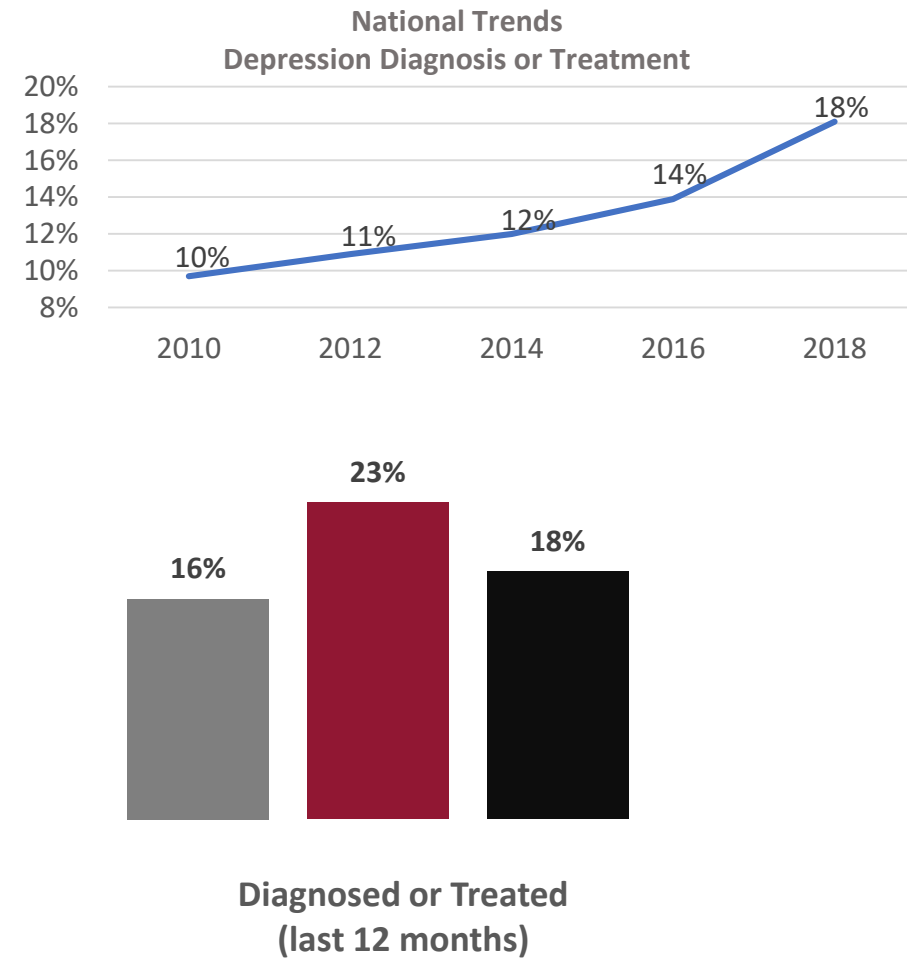
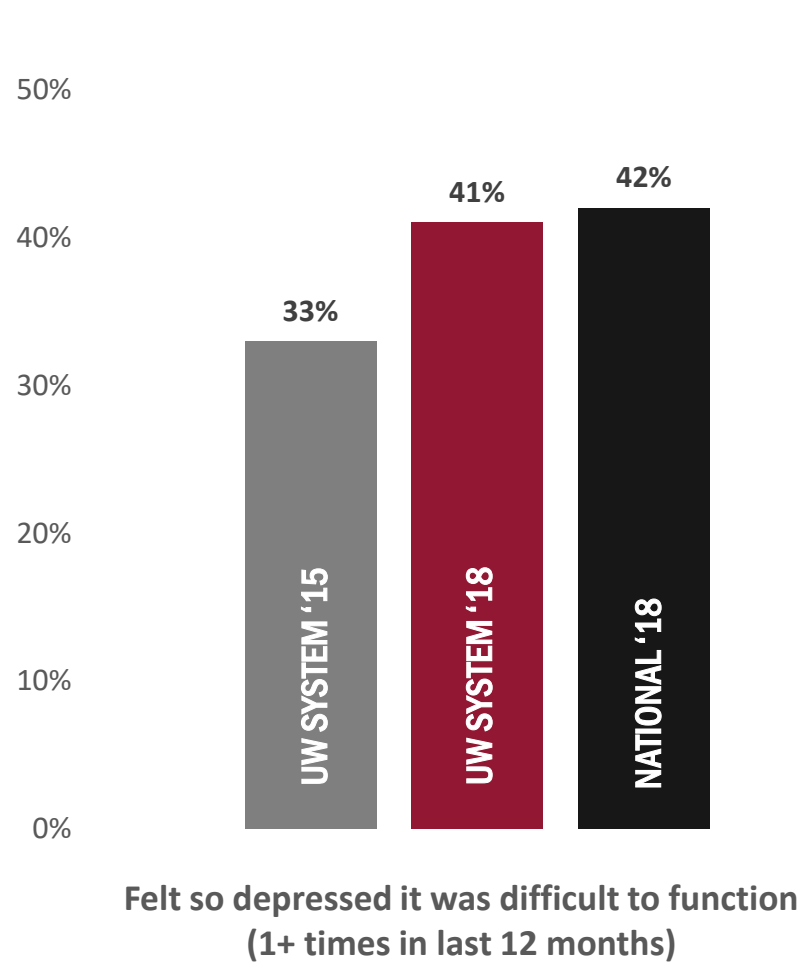
# Depression

A behavioral health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in daily life. Increases risk for suicide.



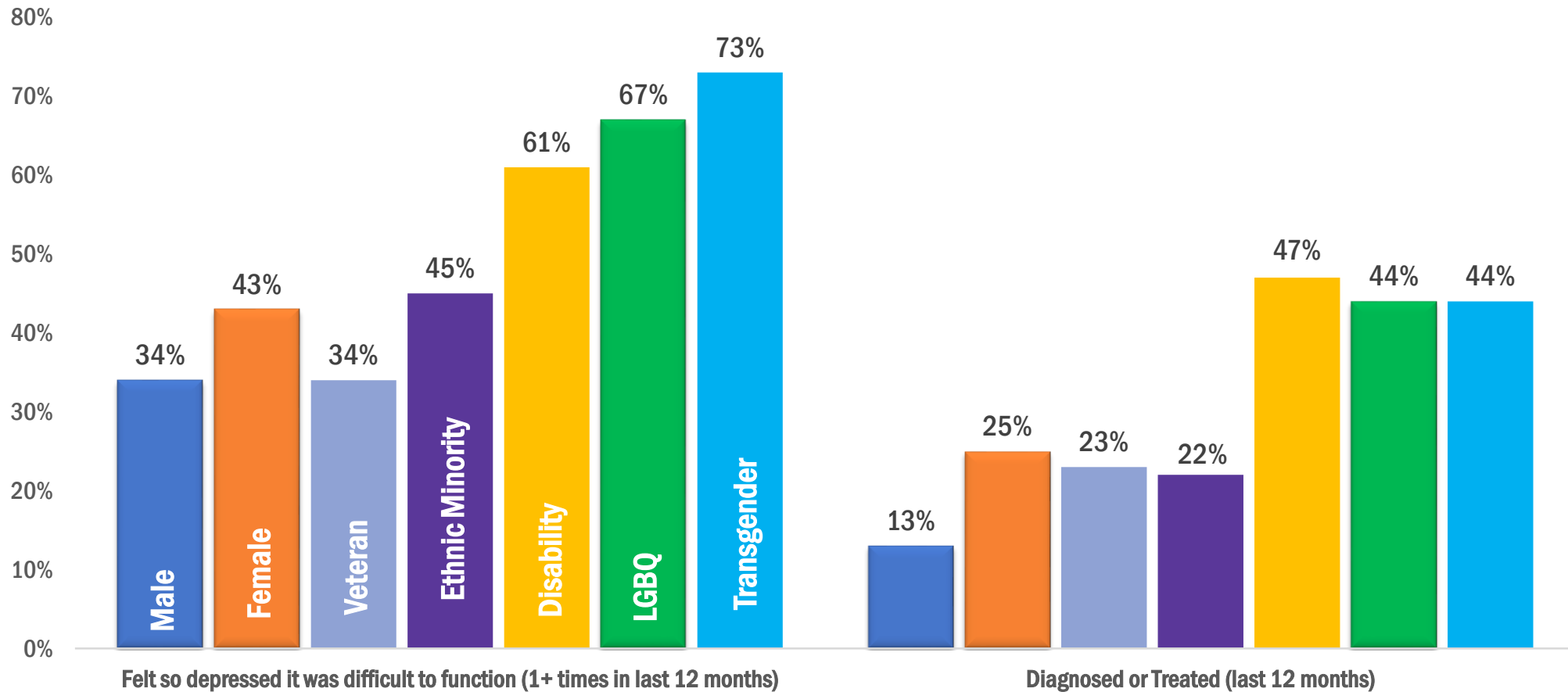
Source: World Health Organization (WHO), National College Health Assessment (NCHA), Spring 2015

# Depression: UW System vs. Nationwide



Source: National College Health Assessment (NCHA), Spring 2015, Spring 2010- 2018

# Depression – UW System Demographic Groups



# Suicide and Self-Harm

- **Suicide is the act of ending one's life, most often as a result of depression or other mental illness.**
- **Self-Harm is characterized by deliberate acts to wound one's self.**

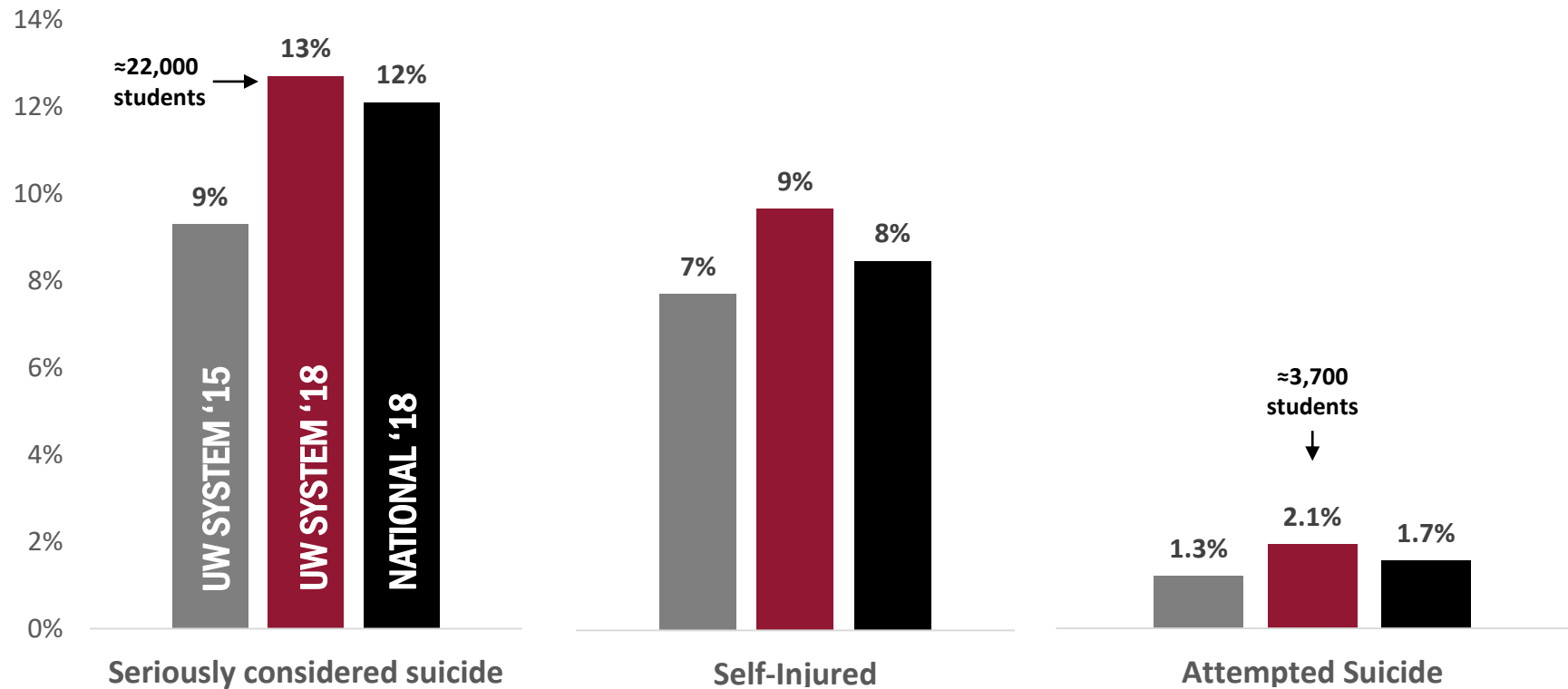


There are  
more than  
1,000 suicides  
on college  
campuses  
each year in  
the U.S.

Source: American Psychological Association (APA), 2015, College Stats, 2018

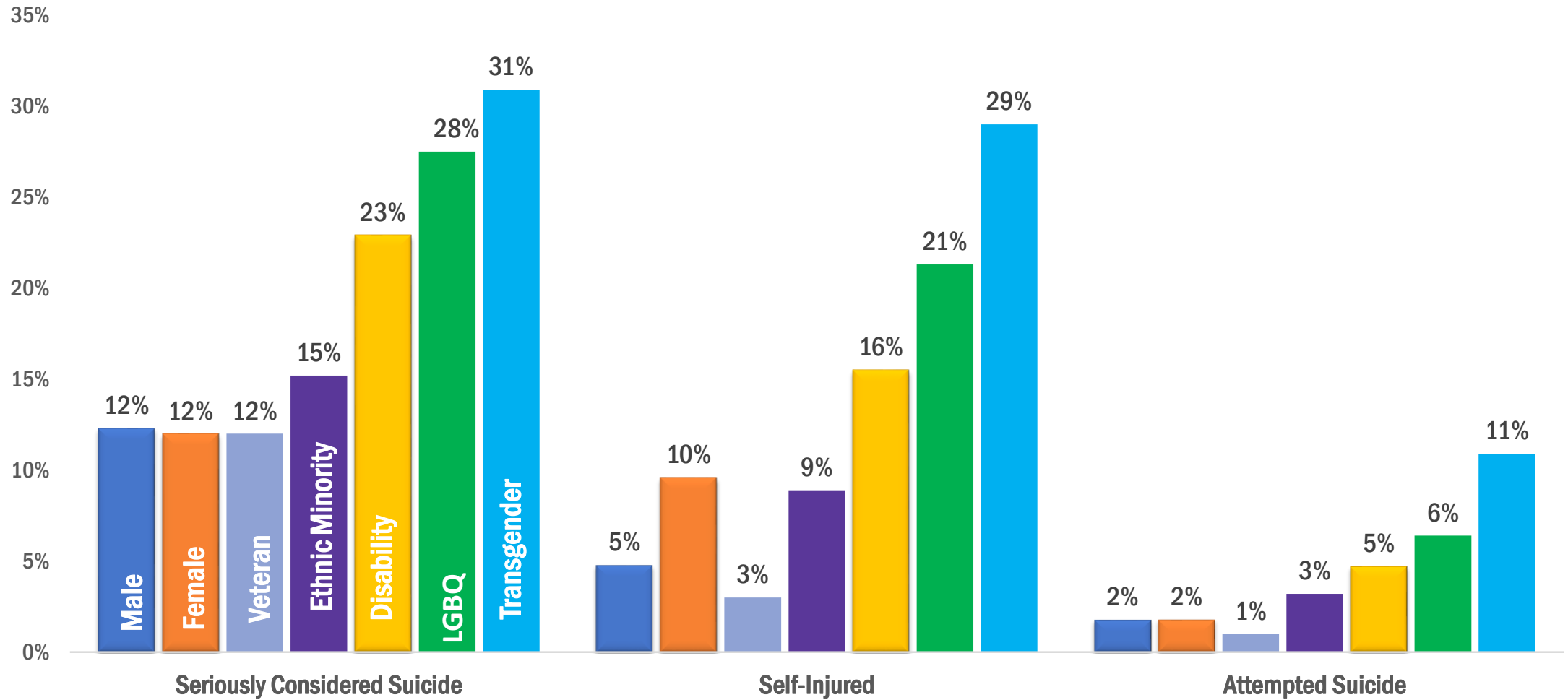


# Suicide and Self Harm (last 12 months)

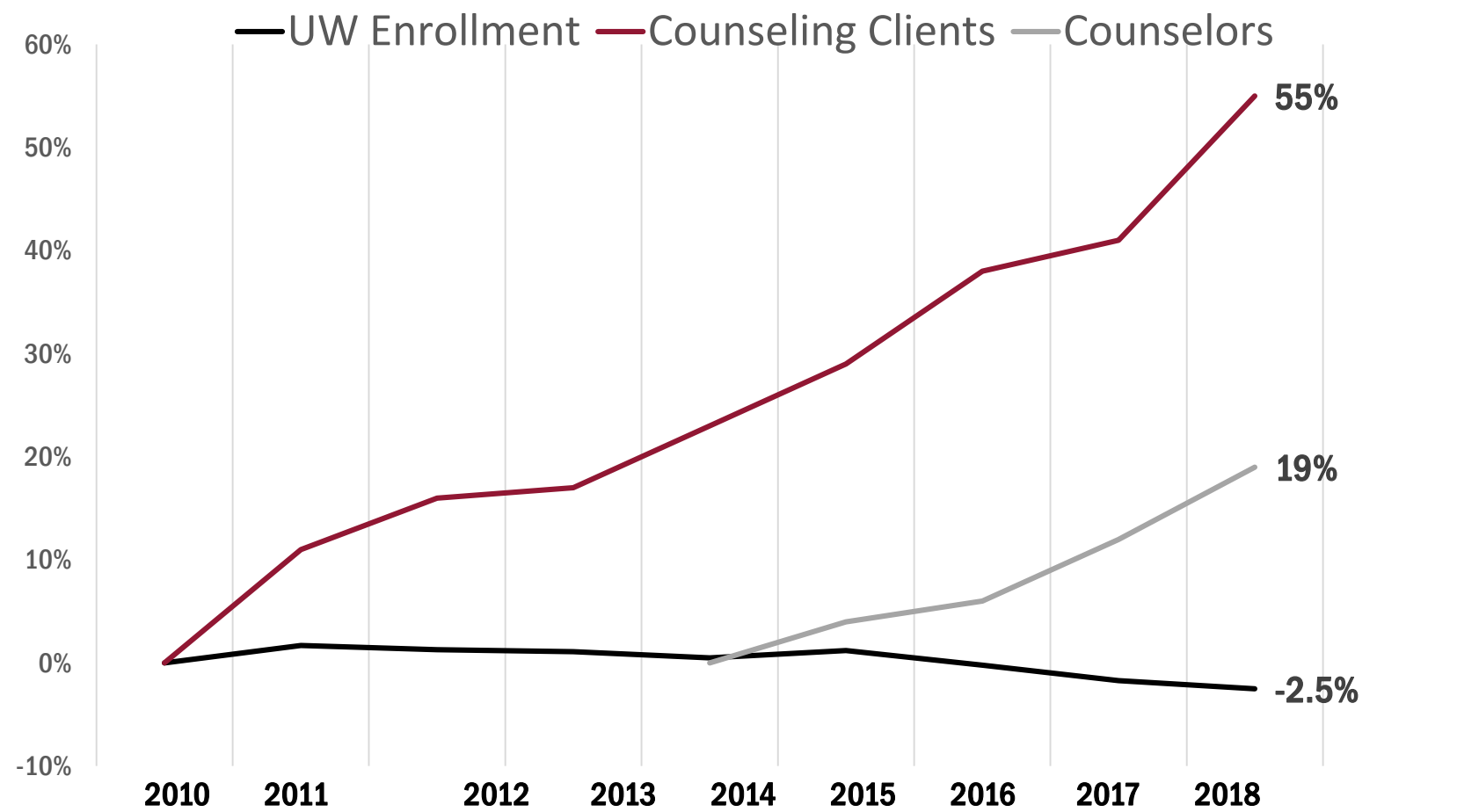


Source: NCHA-Spring 2015 and NCHA-Spring 2010- 2018

# Suicide & Self Harm (last 12 months)- University of Wisconsin System Demographic Groups



# Counseling Center Utilization & Enrollment Trends



Sources: UW System Fact Book; UW System Counseling Directors

# Impact on Health Services



- Student behavioral health issues accounts for up to **one third** of student visits to UW health services centers;
- Almost **one half** of visits to a UW health services center also involve a behavioral health issue



- Because of **limited access** to psychiatric services, students are increasingly relying on health services for support



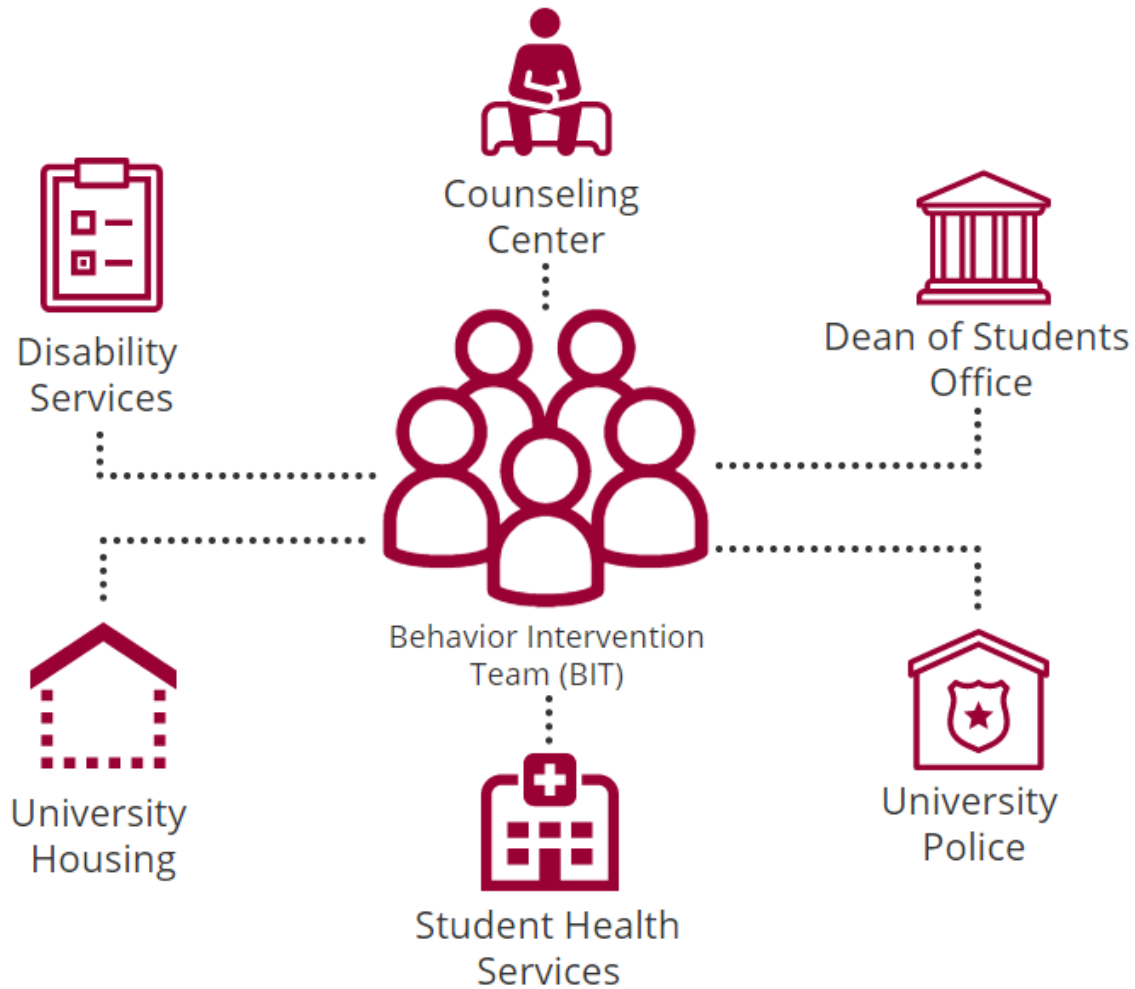
- **Access to psychotropic medication assessment and management** is a struggle



- Students request **documentation** from Health Services to be used for disability accommodations

Source: UW System Health Directors, 2018

# Behavior Intervention Teams



- Multidisciplinary teams of campus consultants trained in risk/threat assessment.
- Serve as a “vortex” for receiving and analyzing critical behavioral concerns.
- Assess safety risk (to self and others) and coordinate/manage response.



# Campus response to a student suicide attempt



**All threats are taken seriously**



**Initial conversations and appropriate interventions**



**Safety assessments**



**Family notification if deemed necessary**



**Care and attention given to others who may be impacted**

# Campus response to student death by suicide



Support for immediate circle (roommates, faculty advisor, teammates, etc.)



Impact can occur for an extended period of time



Support for family and campus community

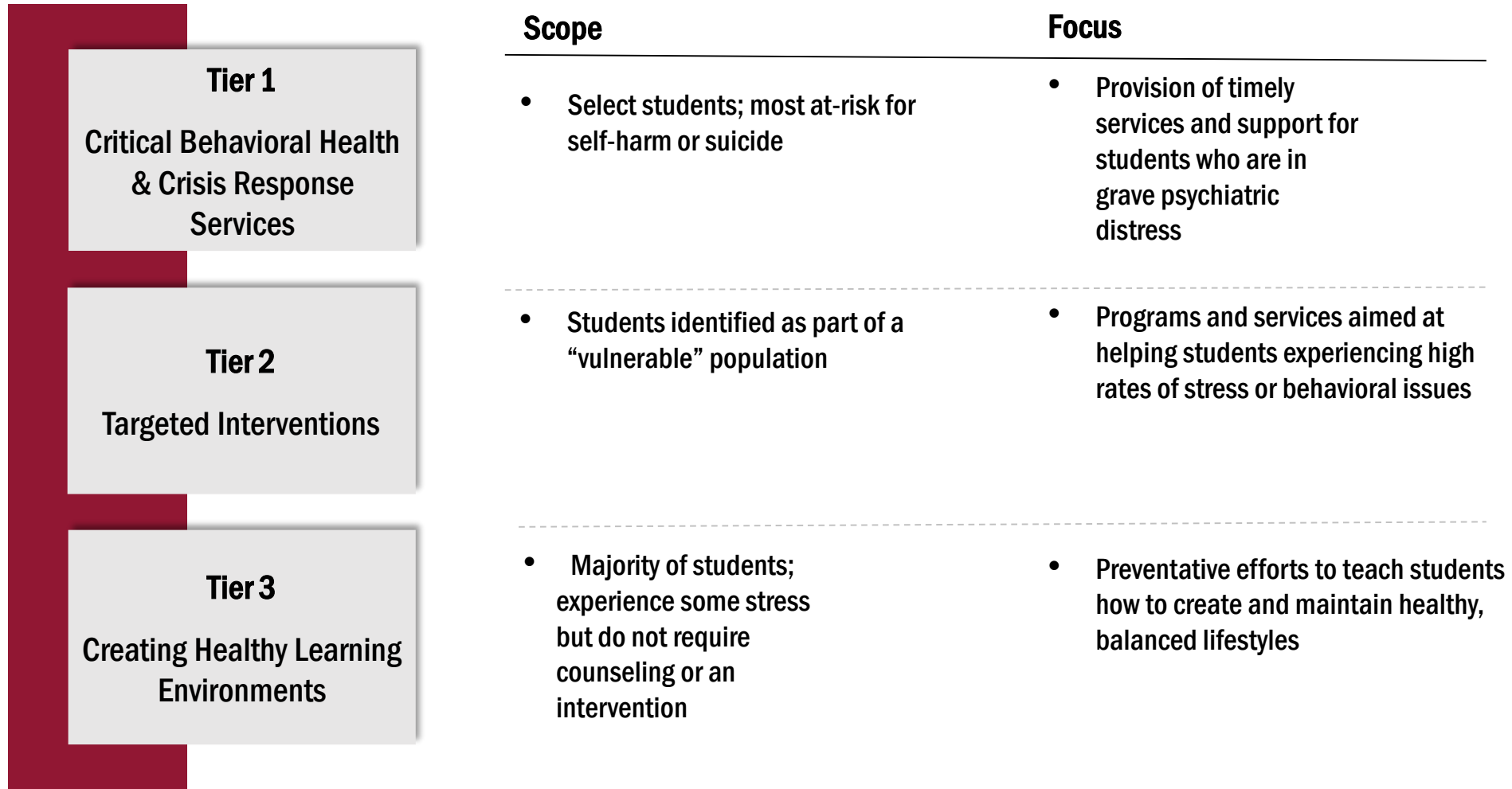
# College as a Protective Factor

College students are less likely to die by suicide than their non-student peers.



Source: Silverman et al., 1997; Drum et al., 2009)

# A Framework For Student Wellbeing



Source: Adapted from the University of California Student Mental Health Resources & Promising Practices Report, 2006