Stay SHARP

Empowering Utah parents and communities

Utah Department of
Health & Human
Services

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How did Utah lower the rate of underage drinking by 70% in less than 20 years?

By giving teens a voice and listening to what they said.
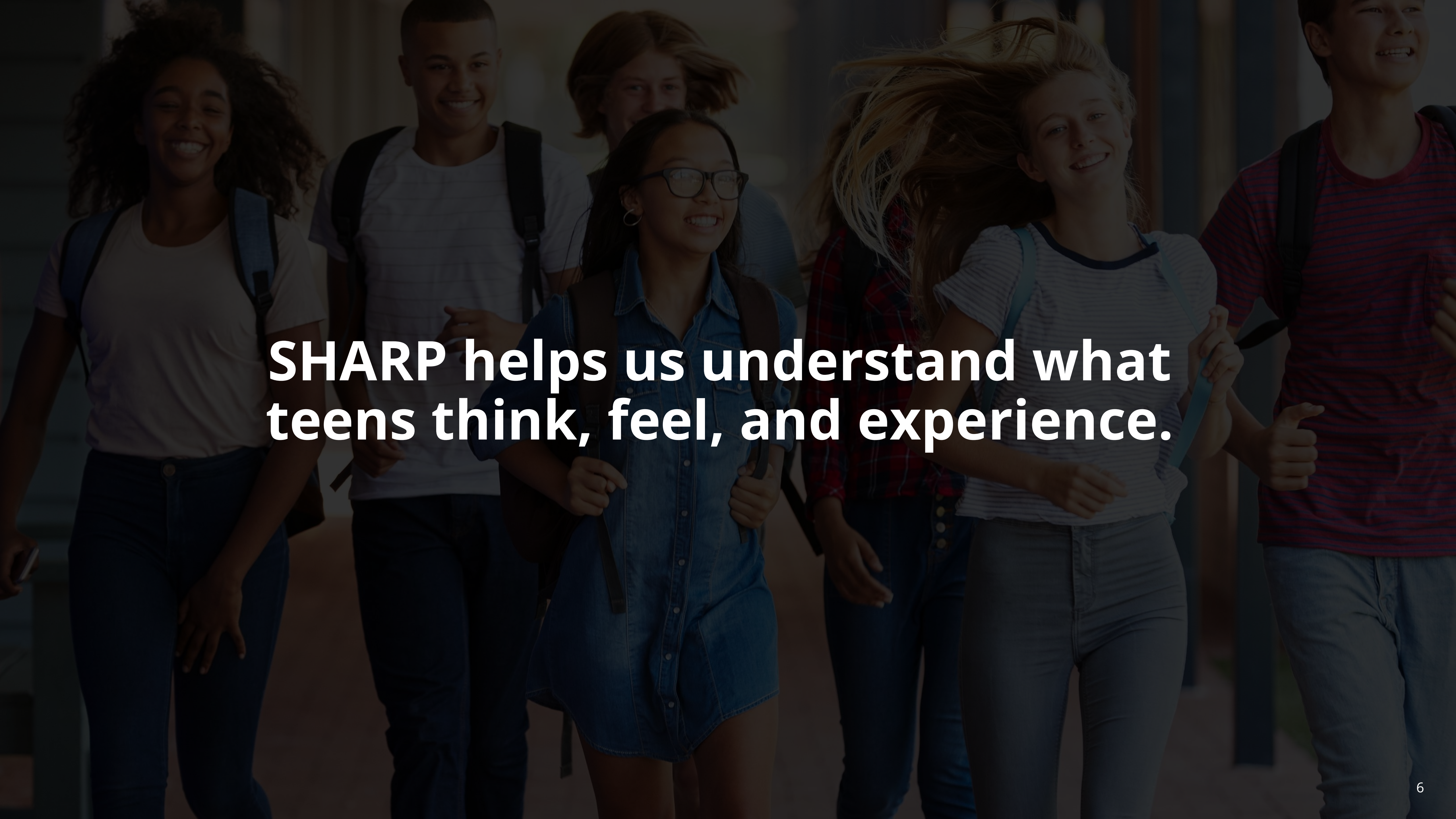
Utah youth past **30-day** alcohol use trends (all grades)

11.8%
15.1%
14.6%
12.1%
11.2%
9.1%
8.6%
8.8%
7.1%
5.3%
3.4%

In Utah, 30-day use rates decreased 65% from 2005 to 2021

2003 2005 2007 2009 2011 2013 2015 2017 2019 2021 2023
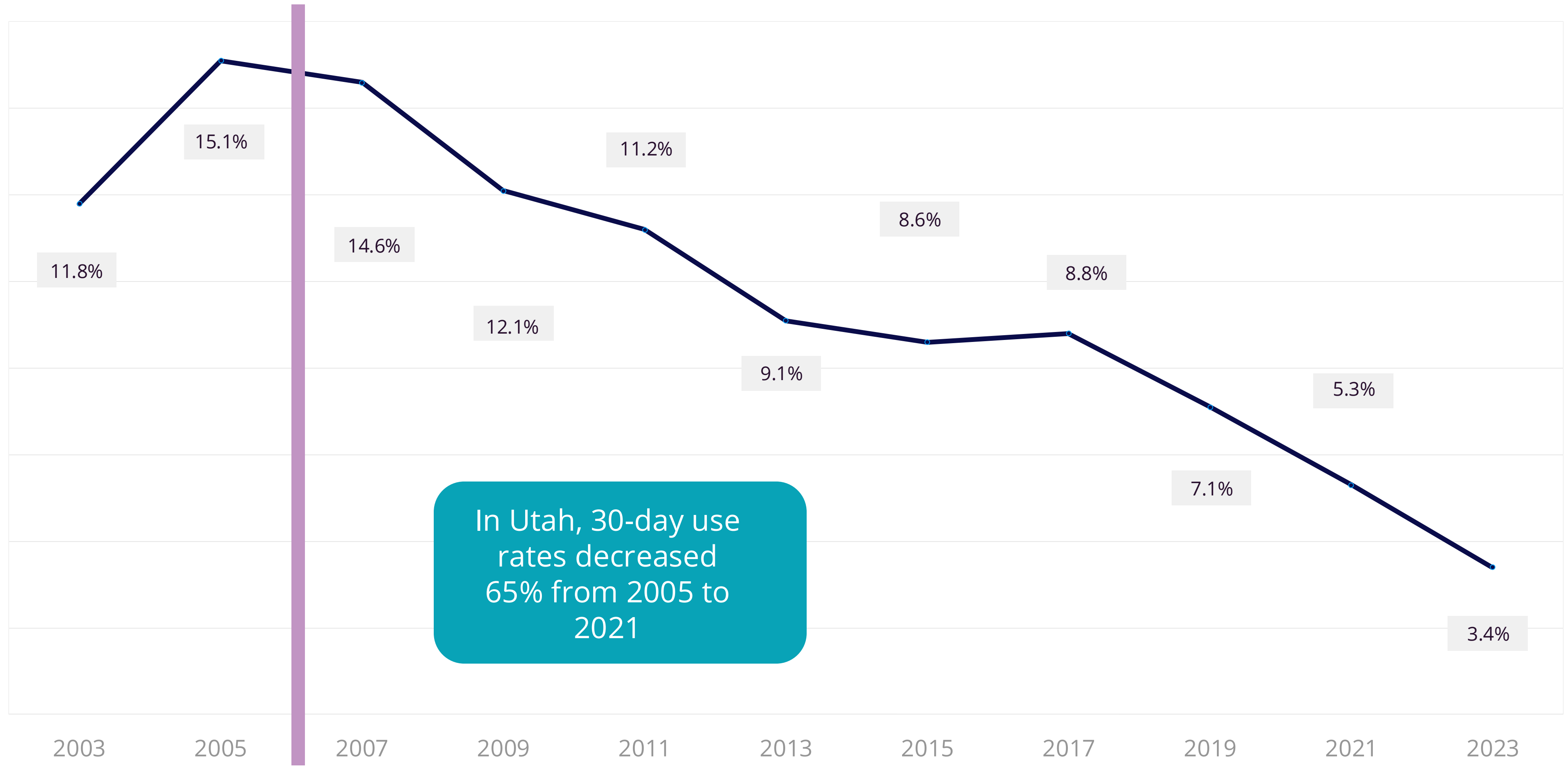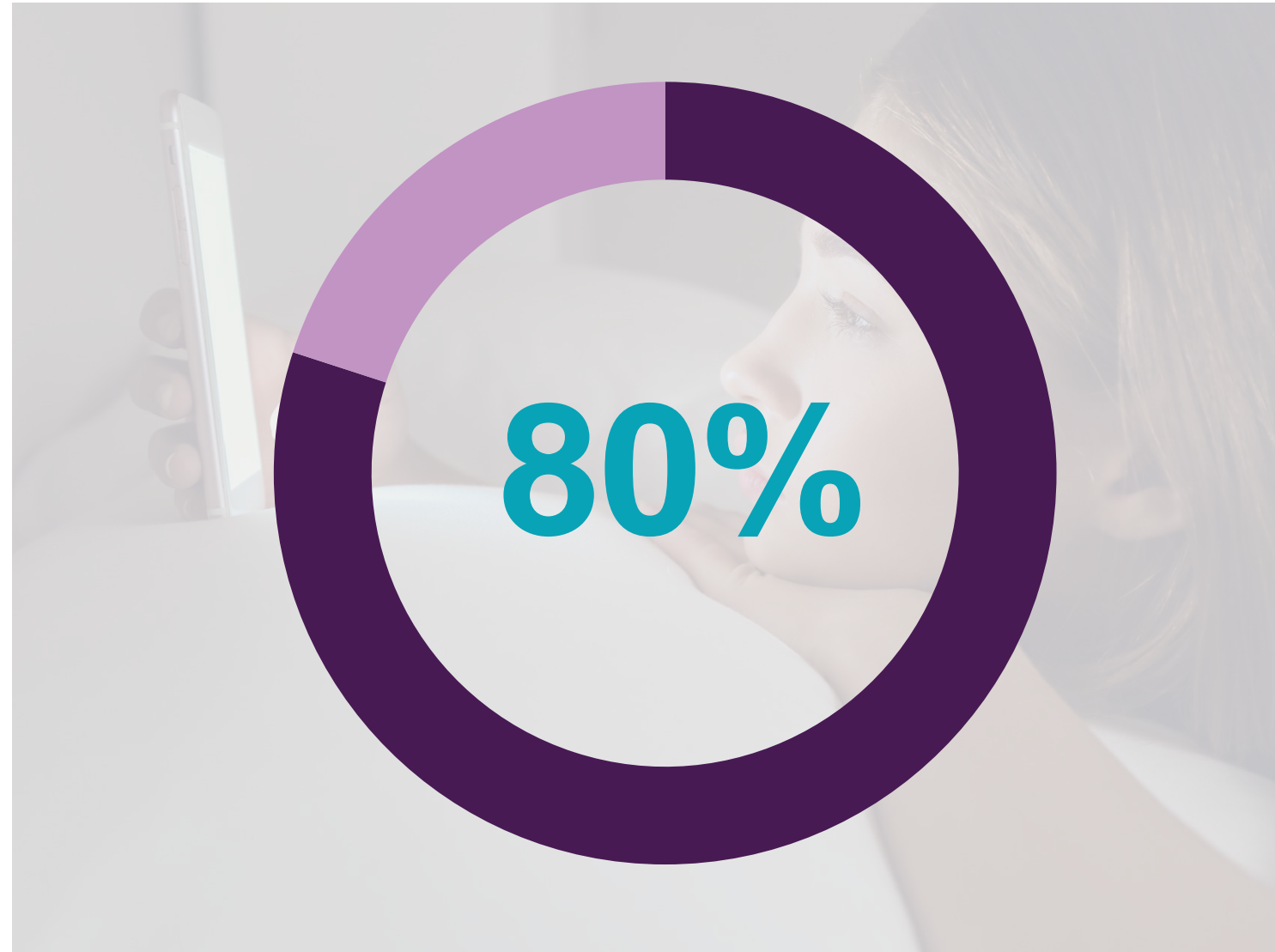
Utah youth drinking rates

The start of Parents Empowered in 2006

*Source: (SHARP) Statewide Surveys, 2005-2021 Grades 8, 10, & 12 combined (2005-2021)

SHARP helps us understand what teens think, feel, and experience.
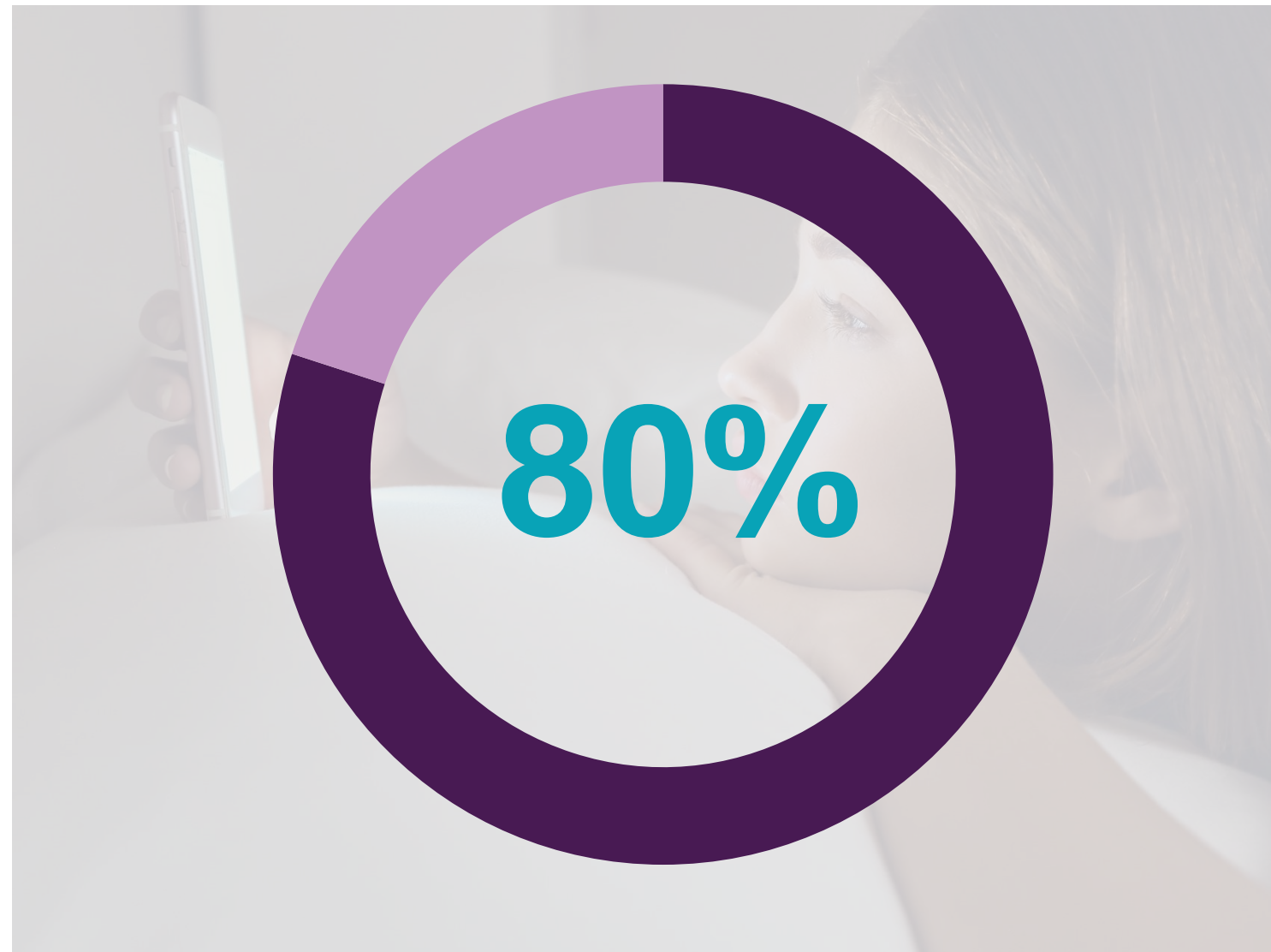
80%

spend 2 or more hours every day on their phones or devices.

80%

spend 2 or more hours every day on their phones or devices.

54%

worry about suicide of one of their peers.

80%

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7.4%
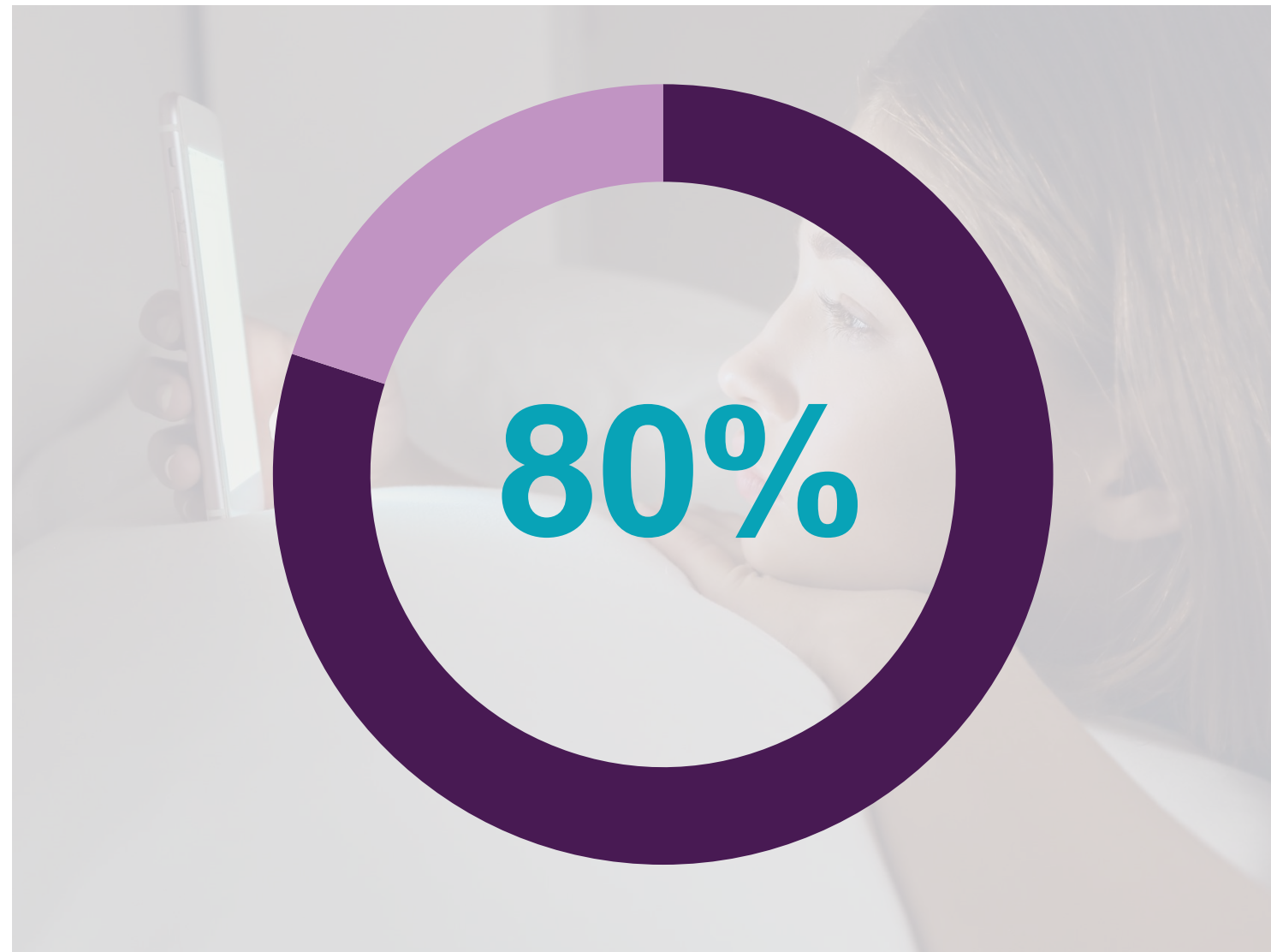
use vape products that contain either nicotine or marijuana or both.

What is SHARP?

The Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) survey has been given by the Utah Department of Health and Humans Services for the past 20 years.

No other survey provides the same data about the most important topics related to youth health.

Who takes the survey?

Students in grades 6 through 12 in Utah public schools. Sixth graders do not get the same survey as older students.

What does it ask?

It asks questions about physical, social, and mental health; substance use; social connections; basic demographics; risky or harmful behaviors—and what protects kids from these things.

What do parents think?

We asked parents and caregivers from 20 school districts across the state how they felt about the SHARP survey.

Here's what we learned:

Parents see the benefits of SHARP.

Parents were supportive of SHARP, even among those who had concerns with it.

Parents felt SHARP would help them have tough conversations with their kids.

Parents want the choice to participate in SHARP.
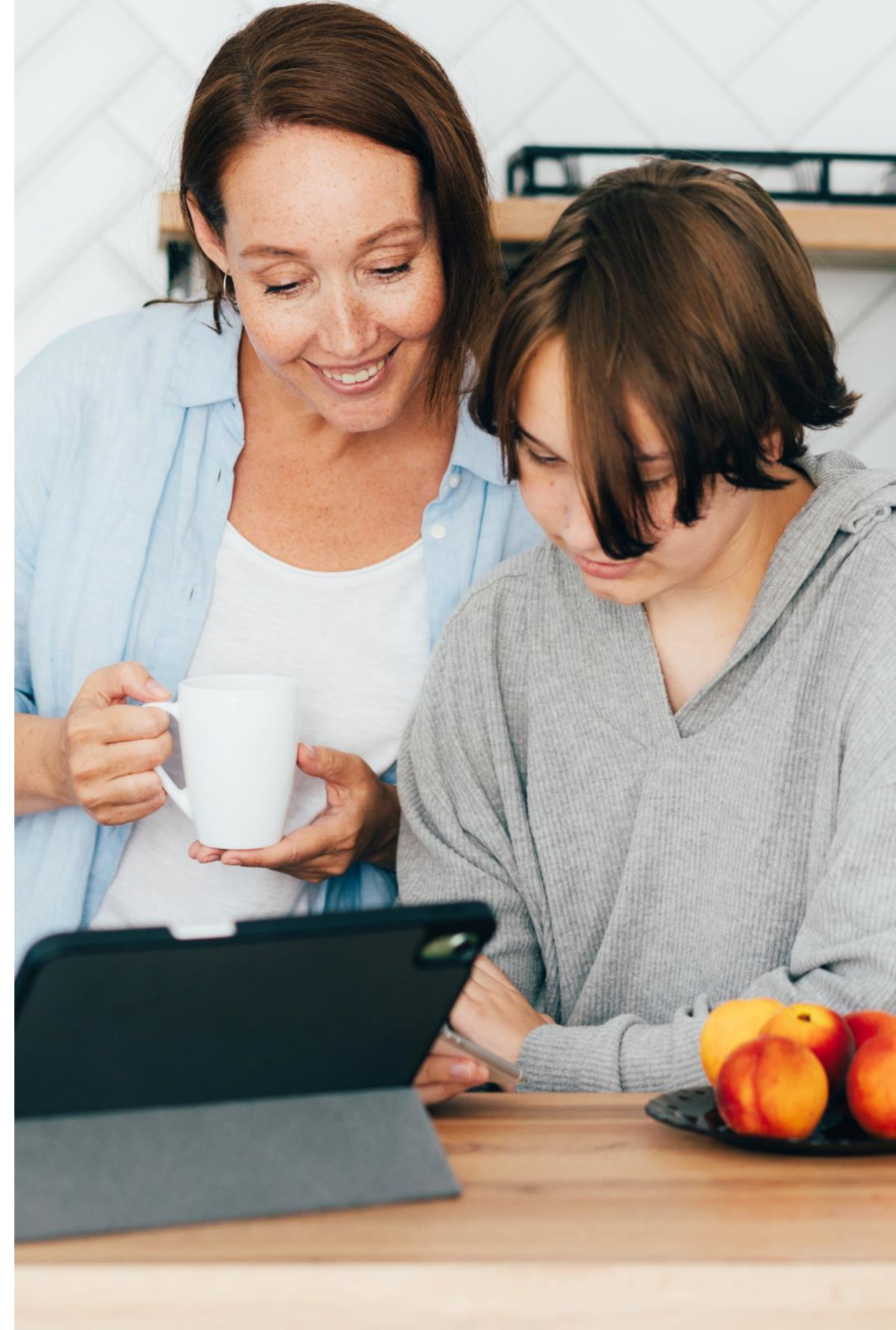
SHARP is **confidential.**

Students need to feel safe. That's why the SHARP survey is confidential and anonymous. Nothing a student reports can be linked to them or your family. Family privacy is a priority.

SHARP is **voluntary.**

Parent consent is—and has always been—required. Only students who have parent permission are allowed to take the survey. Students also get to choose whether to take SHARP. They can choose to skip any questions they don't understand or don't want to answer. Students are not rewarded for taking the survey— or penalized if they don't.

SHARP is
not harmful.

- Age sensitive.

- Given in a protected environment.

- Asking students about survey topics does not cause psychological or other harm, and does not lead to negative behavior.

SHARP is
easy to access.

- Given in English or Spanish.

- No cost to schools.

SHARP is **transparent.**

- Parents and community members can see the survey questions before it's given.

- Data is available online.

- Results are reported at a state and local level.

SHARP is **valid.**

- Shows similar trends as other behavior surveys.

- Studies repeatedly show most students are truthful.

- Includes 5 validity checks and invalid data is removed.

SHARP is **free.**

Schools do **not** have the funding, time, or resources to create, validate, and interpret the data for a survey equivalent to SHARP. This means parents and communities may not have this information if schools opt out. **SHARP is free to all schools.**

SHARP is much more than a simple survey.

The survey is designed and analyzed so that we can measure two critical factors:

- SHARP informs us about **'risk factors'**, **which are the things that put kids at risk.** For example, media portrayals of substance abuse are more likely to lead to adolescent substance abuse issues.

- SHARP also tells us about the **'protective factors,' which are the things that protect kids from those risks**. For example, social bonding helps protect kids from substance abuse and depression.

Everyone in our community has a role to play in helping our kids stay healthy and happy.

The SHARP survey allows us to **stay informed.** It helps to know what challenges kids face and what parents, families, schools, and community leaders can do to help.

Working together and **intervening earlier** is how we can help prevent behaviors that get in the way of healthy youth development.

SHARP data builds a foundation to take action.

Step 1: **Topics and data**
SHARP data represents a variety of student experiences.

**The survey takes a holistic approach to understanding youth well-being.**

- Underage drinking, tobacco and vaping, and drug use

- Emotional and mental health issues and treatment needs

- Suicide ideation and suicide prevention

- Bullying and cyberbullying

- Gang prevention

- Violence

- Highway safety (texting while driving, seatbelt use)

- Parental involvement

- Career and college readiness

- Health issues (exercise, diet, tanning, asthma, diabetes)

- Social media and screen time usage

Step 2: Insight

We know what helps protect teens by looking a data over time and across topics.

Kids who eat more meals together with their family have lower rates of depression

How many days do all or most of your family eat at least one meal together?

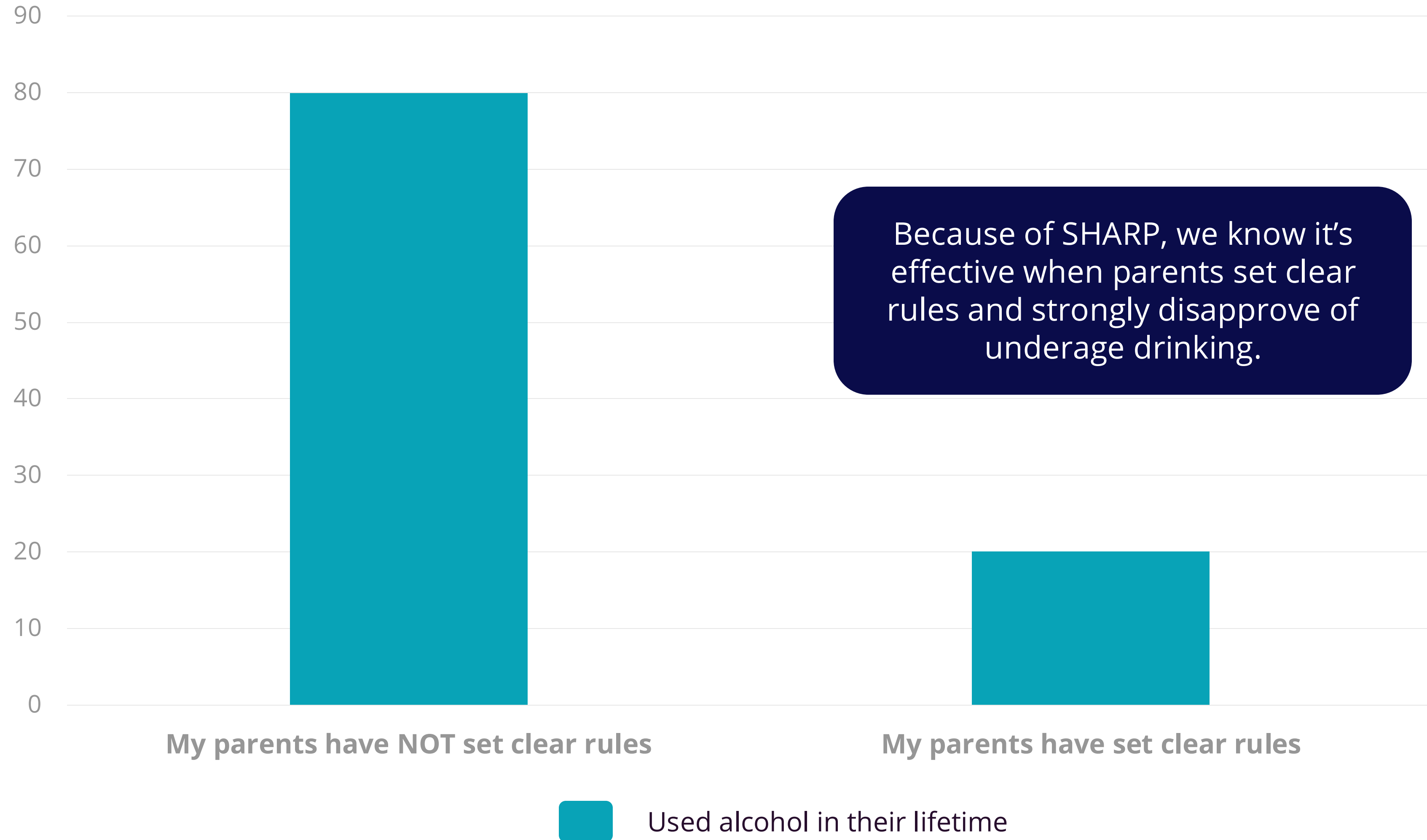|	
0 days	38
1 day	38
2 days	28
3 days	18
4 days	15
5 days	12
6 days	10
7 days	8
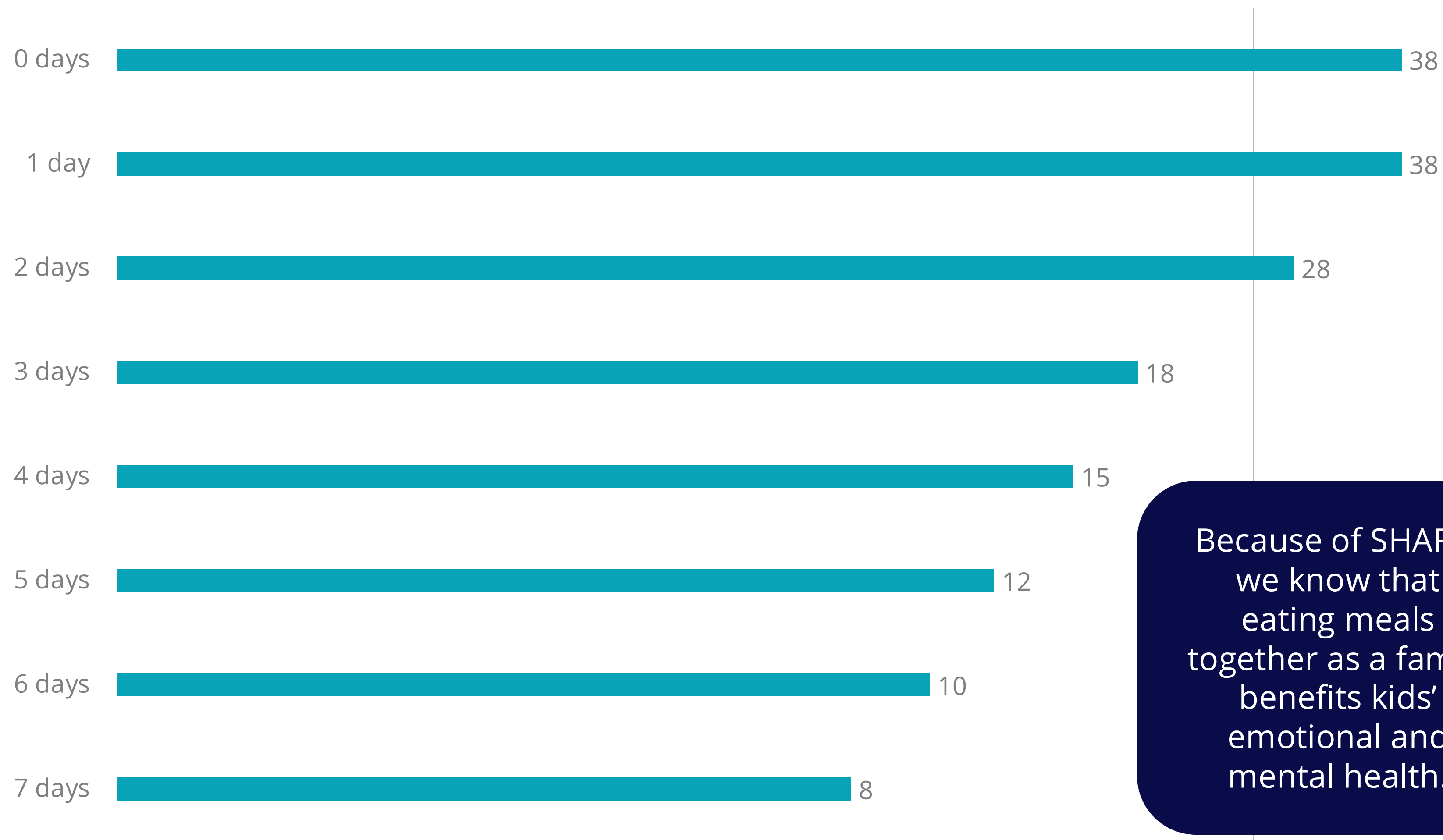
Felt depressed or sad most days in the past year

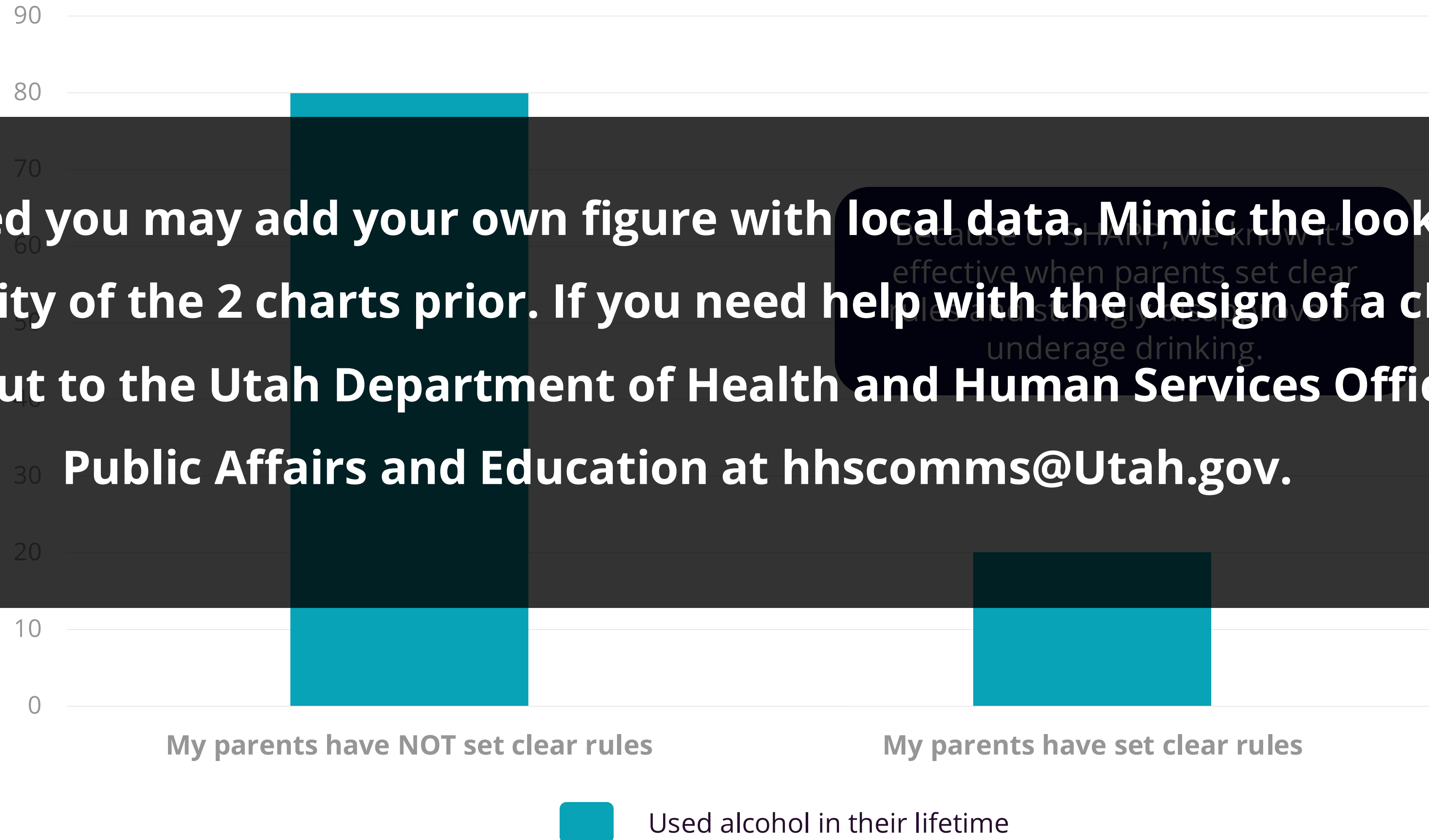Because of SHARP, we know that eating meals together as a family benefits kids' emotional and mental health.

All grades

Setting clear rules prevents underage drinking

Did your parents communicate expectations of NOT to use at least twice in the last year?

Because of SHARP, we know it's effective when parents set clear rules. Statistically helps prevent underage drinking.

90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

My parents have NOT set clear rules

My parents have set clear rules

■ Used alcohol in their lifetime

If needed you may add your own figure with local data. Mimic the look and simplicity of the 2 charts prior. If you need help with the design of a chart reach out to the Utah Department of Health and Human Services Office of Public Affairs and Education at hhscomms@Utah.gov.

Step 3: Strategies and programs

SHARP insights turn into programs, services, and resources that help kids and families.

Statewide programs and initiatives

The SafeUT app
Connects teens and families to confidential crisis counselors.

See Through the Vape
Resources to talk to your kids about the dangers of vaping.

Parents Empowered
Resources to talk to your kids about the dangers of underage drinking.

Live On
Tools to help prevent suicide.

Social Harms
Tips to keep kids safe online and learn about the dangers of social media.

Local programs and initiatives

Put name of your program or initiative here

Share a story of how SHARP data or a program created because of SHARP insights (like Parents Empowered, See Through the Vape) has been used in your local area and how it improved outcomes.

Start at the beginning of the story—what was the problem SHARP identified? Then what happened? For example... Who am together to tackle this problem (it's especially important to point out if parents were involved)? How does this help kids? How much funding did SHARP bring our community? How do you know it worked? What was the outcome? This slide shouldn't **just** be a data slide! You can use data or graphs, but people resonate more with stories. Use short paragraphs (no more than 2-3 sentences). Mimic the look and simplicity of the previous slides and use of data.

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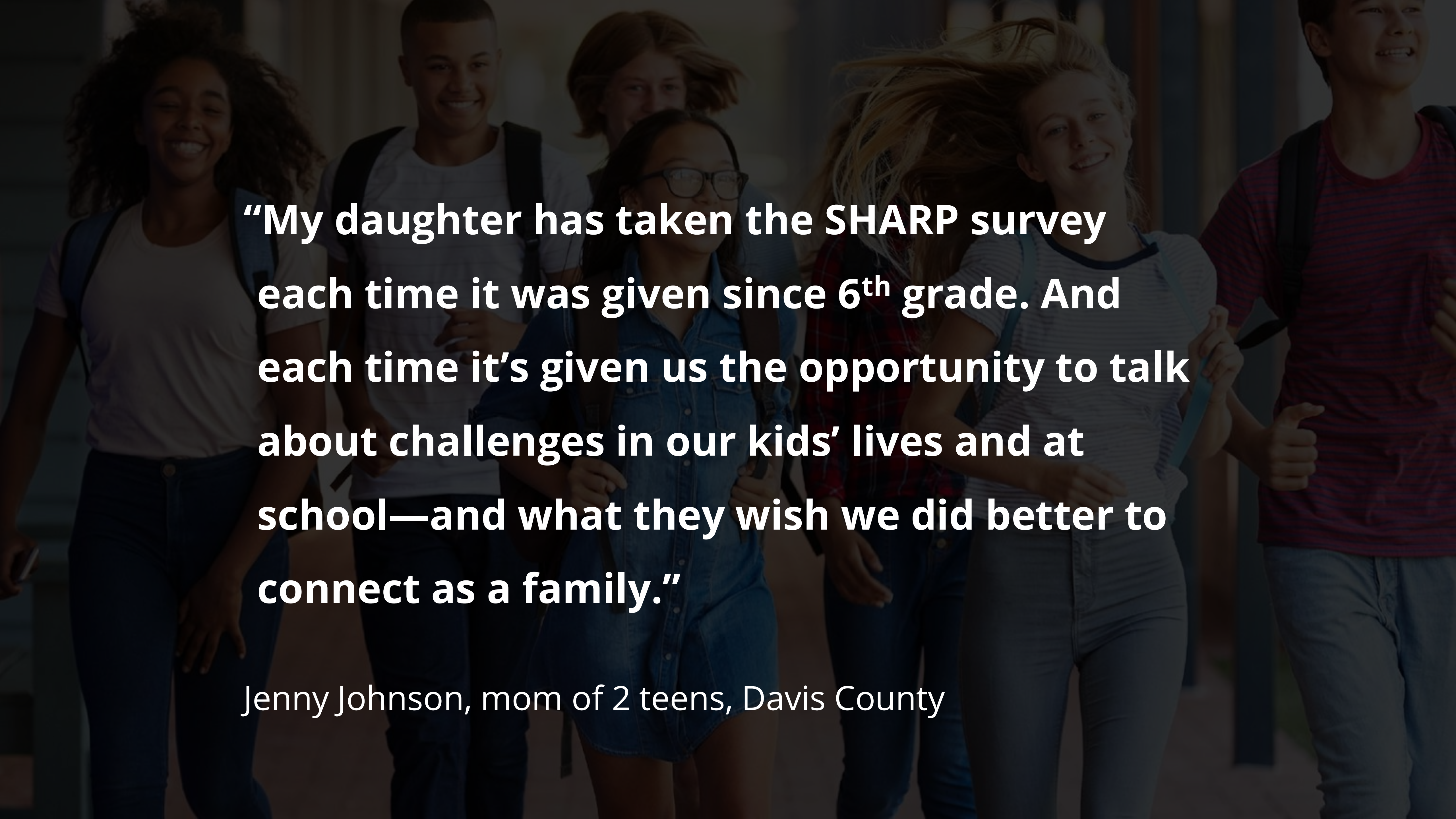
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SHARP provides parents, families, schools, and community leaders with information we can't get anywhere else because it comes from the students themselves.

SHARP is used by many people and organizations

- Parents and families

- Schools, districts, and school boards

- Local health department

- Community prevention coalitions

- Local substance use and mental health programs

- County and city level government

- Utah State Board of Education

- Utah State Legislature

- Utah Department of Health and Human Services

"My daughter has taken the SHARP survey each time it was given since 6ᵗʰ grade. And each time it's given us the opportunity to talk about challenges in our kids' lives and at school—and what they wish we did better to connect as a family."

Jenny Johnson, mom of 2 teens, Davis County

Why are we all here?

To keep Utah kids safe, healthy and happy.

Learn more

https://sharp.utah.gov

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