



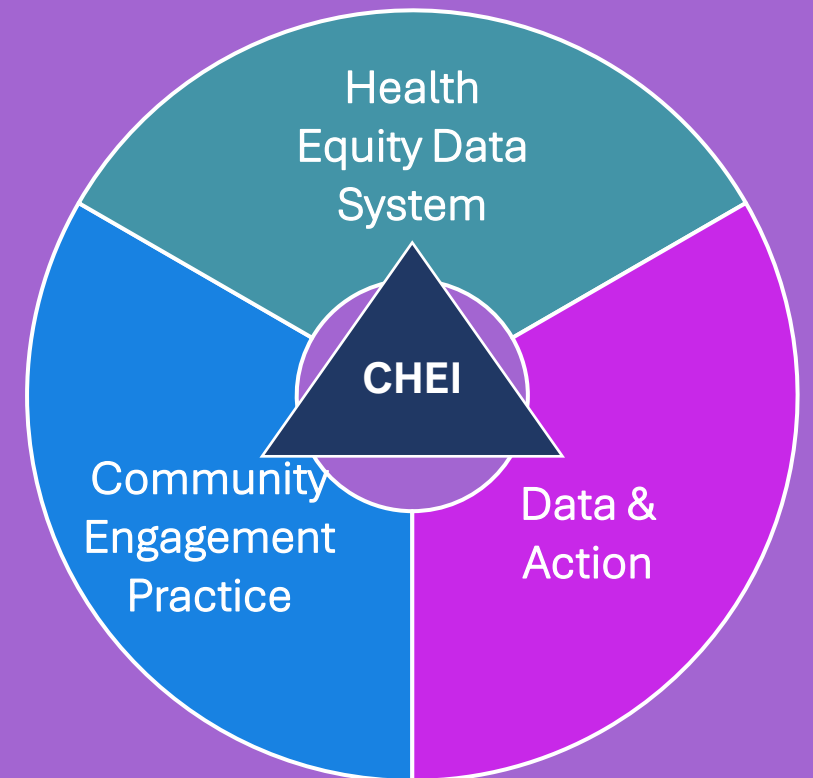
# MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## Community Health Equity Initiative (CHEI)

Community Health Equity Survey 2023

Mental Health Spotlight

Part 2: Mental Health in Massachusetts:  
Equity Framing and Data Overview



# 2023 CHES MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT



## **Mental Health in Massachusetts: Mental Health Equity Framing and Data Overview**

Part 2 of the 2023 CHES Mental Health Spotlight provides a framework for mental health equity and a brief overview of the state of mental health in Massachusetts focusing on findings from the 2023 CHES.

This slide deck is meant to be viewed after you have read through Part 1 – CHEI Overview.  
To access the entire spotlight and the full mental health report, please visit the 2023 CHES Mental Health Spotlight page on [www.mass.gov/CHEI](http://www.mass.gov/CHEI).

Part 1: Community Health Equity Initiative Overview

**Part 2: Mental Health in Massachusetts: Equity Framing and Data Overview**

Part 3: Inequities in Mental Health

Part 4: Drivers of Mental Health Inequities

Part 5: Promoting Mental Health: Potential Areas of Action to Address Root Causes of Inequities

# MENTAL HEALTH EQUITY FRAMING

# MENTAL HEALTH EQUITY FRAMING



## Mental Health Is A Core Component Of Our Overall Health

- Our mental health impacts nearly all aspects of our lives and is important for maintaining meaningful relationships, coping with everyday stress, and making choices.

## Mental Health Is More Than Just the Absence of Illness

- Mental health exists on a continuum and having positive mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness.
- Individuals living with a mental health condition can have high levels of mental well-being just as individuals without a mental health diagnosis are not guaranteed to have positive overall mental health.

## Promoting Mental Health Equity Goes Beyond Focusing on Individuals

- The building blocks for positive mental health include factors at the individual, community, environment, institution, and systems levels.
- Promoting mental health equity will require strategies across all levels, including addressing systems and structures that drive health inequities.

# CHEI HEALTH INEQUITIES FRAMEWORK

## Interconnected Systems

Address interconnected systems and policies, including global forces and governmental policies, at the macro level.

## Policies & Environment

Address policies and environments to change these unjust systems *ex: housing policies, land trusts, etc.*

## Increased Risk

Mitigate impact of increased risk caused by these unjust systems *ex: supportive housing, new development, stabilization initiatives*

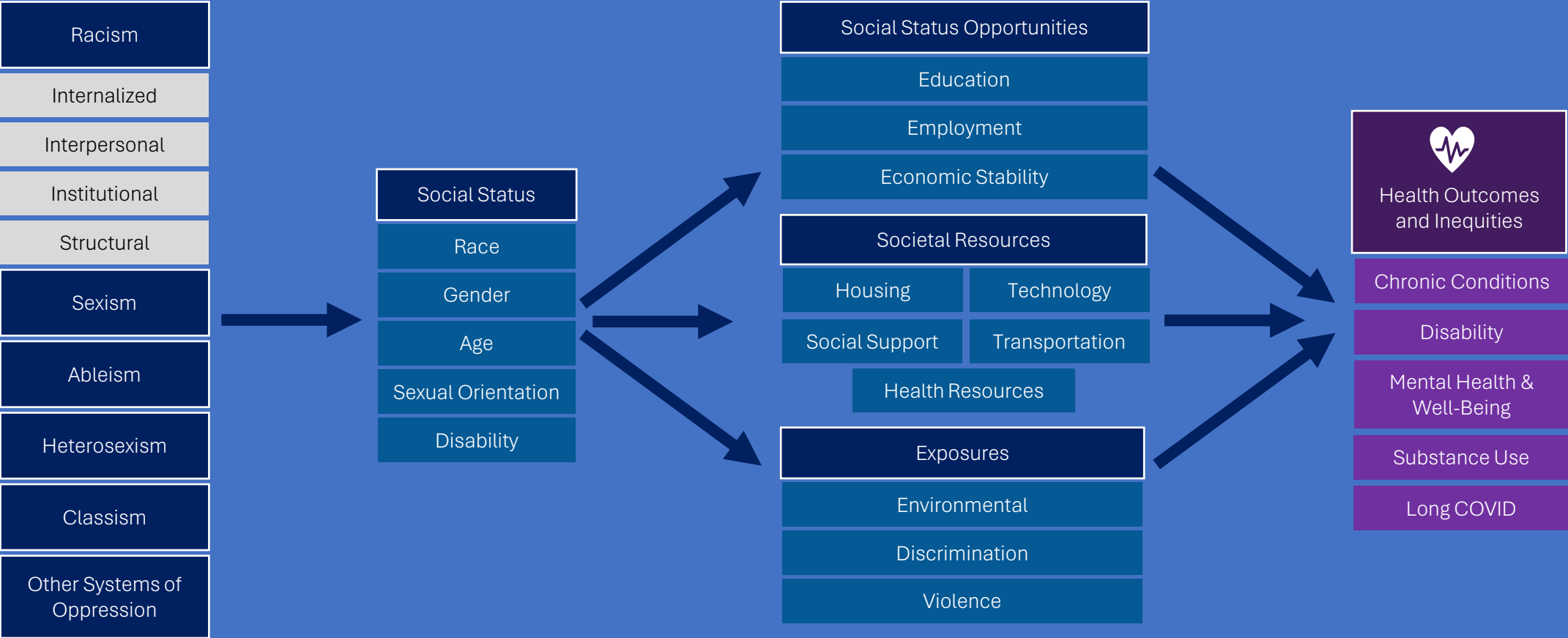
## Health-Related Social Needs

Address immediate health related social needs caused by these unjust systems *ex: air conditioner vouchers*

SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

UPSTREAM / MIDSTREAM

DOWNSTREAM



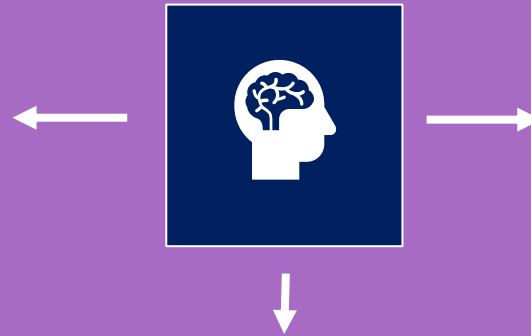
# MENTAL HEALTH IN MASSACHUSETTS

# 2023 CHES MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS



## Psychological Distress

- 2023 CHES used the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale\*.
- Scores from the Kessler Scale were used to categorize levels of psychological distress.
- Psychological distress in this spotlight is defined as having “high” or “very high” levels of psychological distress.



## Suicidal Ideation

- 2023 CHES gathered information on suicidal ideation and suicide attempts.
- Suicidal ideation is defined as thinking about doing something to end your life in the past 12 months.

## Social Isolation

- Social isolation is defined as not having many people to talk to or spend time with on a regular basis.
- 2023 CHES asked respondents how often they feel isolated from others. Those who reported feeling isolated “usually” or “always” were considered socially isolated.

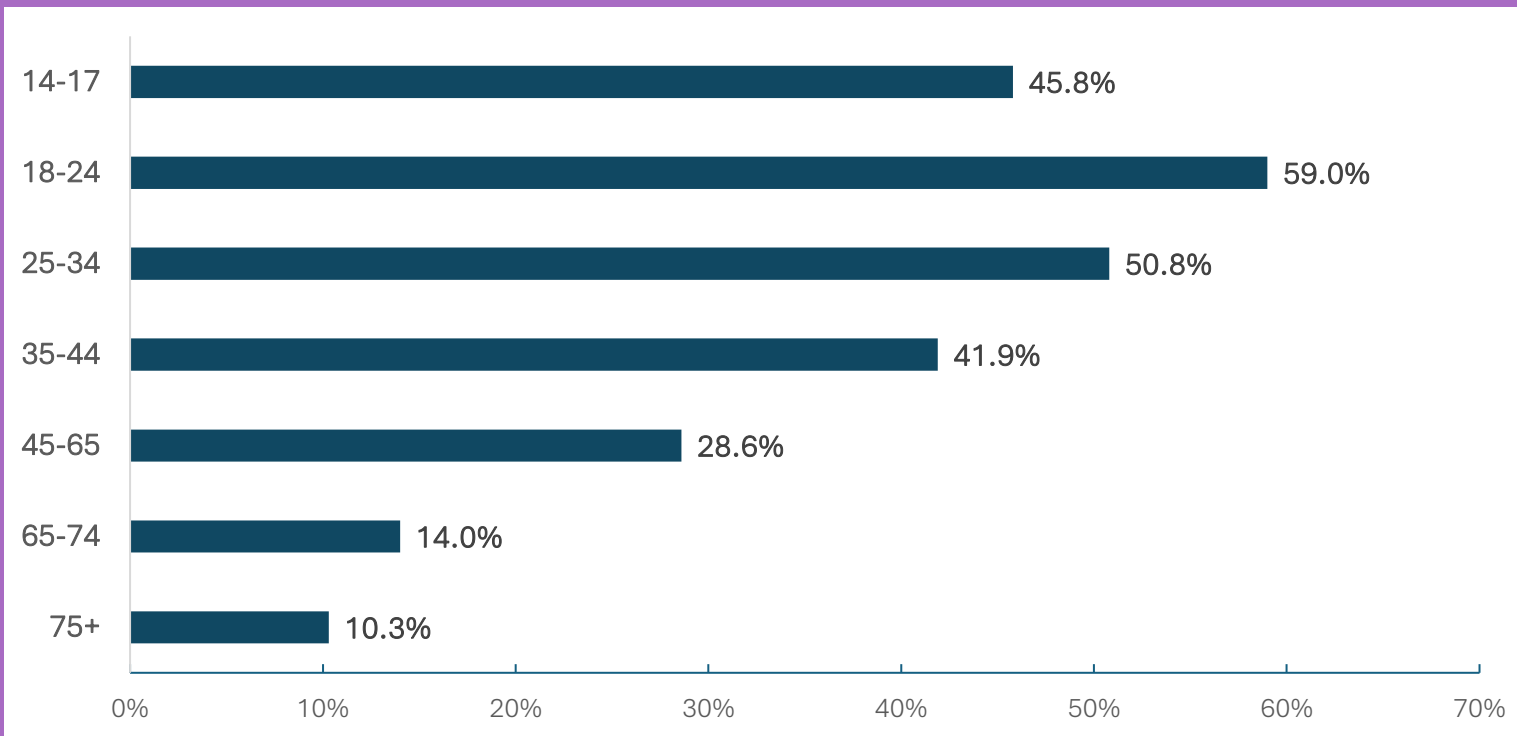
\* The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale is a validated scale to assess non-specific psychological distress. The 2023 CHES used a 5-question version of the scale.

# MENTAL HEALTH IN MASSACHUSETTS



The overall burden of poor mental health in MA is high and inequities exist

## Psychological Distress by Age Group (Years)



- Nearly 1 in 3 adults and 1 in 2 youth reported psychological distress.
- Youth and younger adult age groups reported the highest rates of psychological distress.



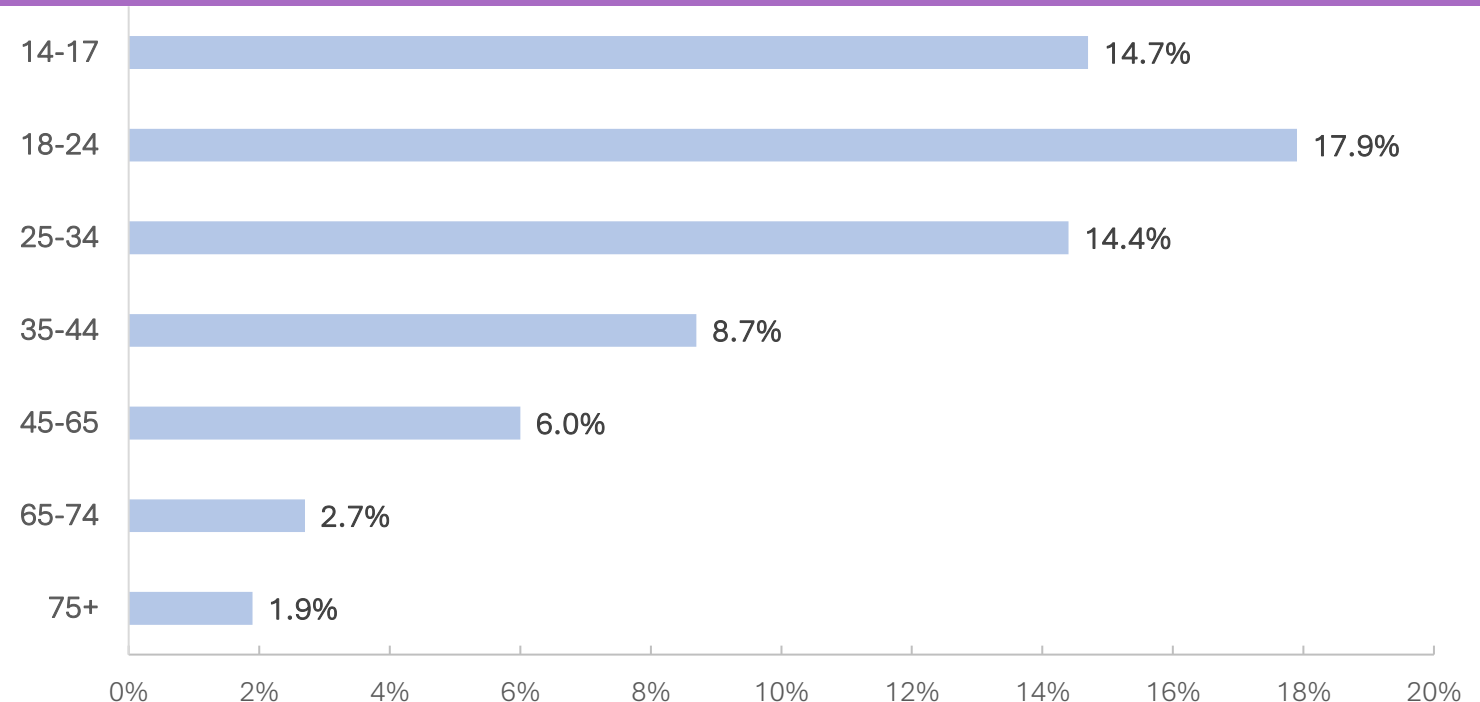
# MENTAL HEALTH IN MASSACHUSETTS



The overall burden of poor mental health in MA is high and inequities exist

- Overall, 7.4% of adults aged 18 and older and 14.7% of youth aged 14-17 reported suicidal ideation in the past year.
- Young adults aged 18-24 had the highest reported rates of suicidal ideation.

Suicidal Ideation by Age Group (Years)

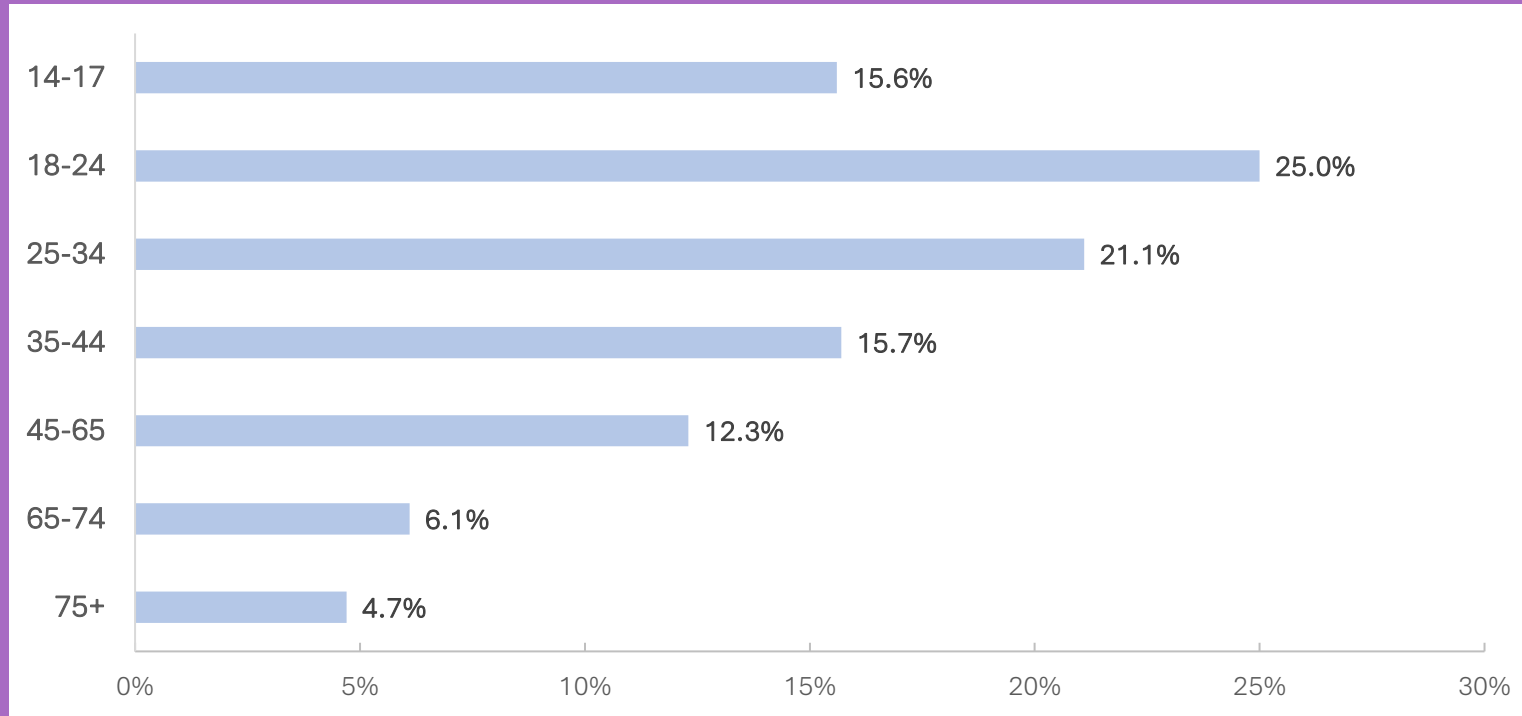


# MENTAL HEALTH IN MASSACHUSETTS



The overall burden of poor mental health in MA is high and inequities exist

## Social Isolation by Age Group (Years)



- Overall, 13.2% of adults aged 18 and older and 15.6% of youth aged 14-17 reported usually or always feeling isolated from others.
- Social Isolation was highest among young adults aged 18 to 24. Older adults reported the lowest rates of social isolation.