

Understanding and improving trans peoples' experiences of seeking and receiving meaningful support in relation to their own alcohol and/or other drug use

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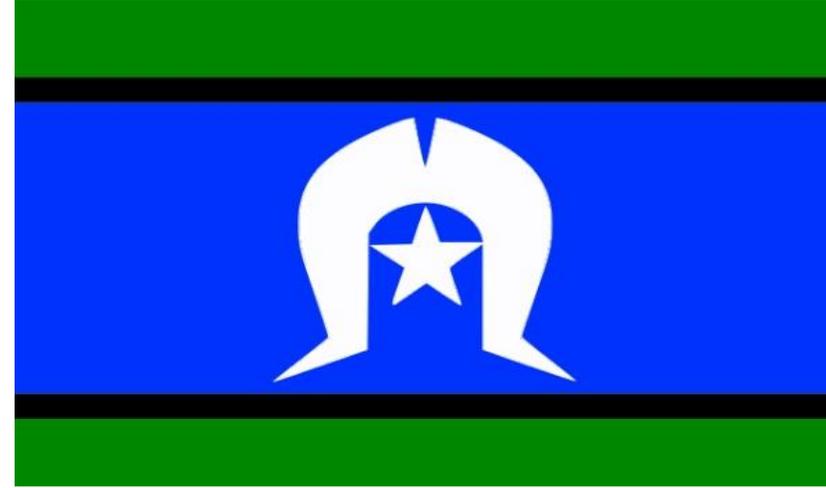
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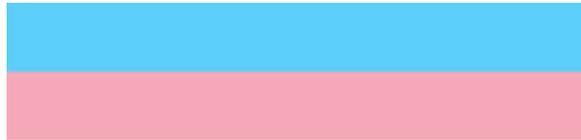
¹⁰ *The Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies*



I want to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land we are meeting on today, and pay my respects to Ancestors, Elders, and leaders of the future, who live their lives spiritually connected and in relationship with Country and all the living systems.

Background

- Trans and gender diverse ('trans') people have a gender different to their birth-recorded sex



RECORD OF BIRTH	
	Family Name
	Given Name(s)
	Date of Birth
	Queen Alexandra Hospital
	Male

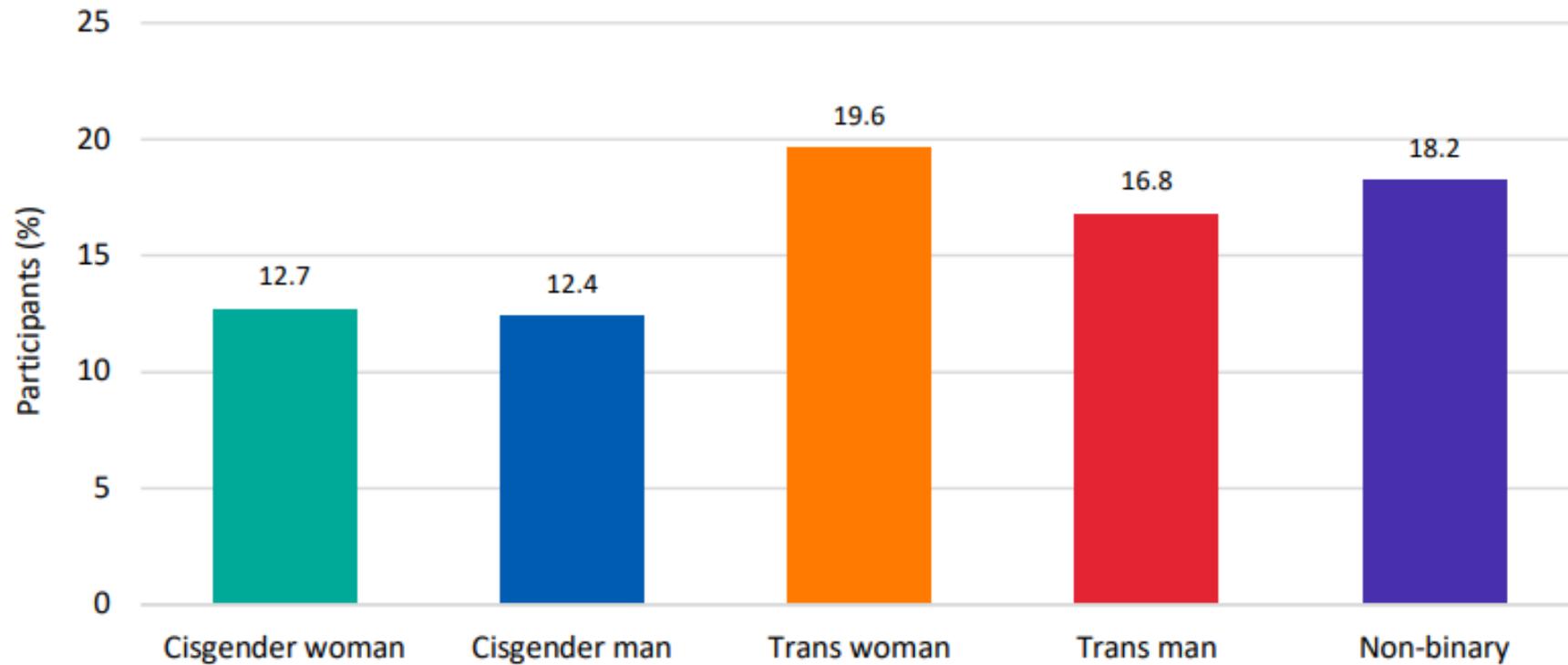
Higher burden of substance use though motives vary



Discussion and Conclusions: While substance use among trans young is largely circumstantial, hedonistic and altruistic, facilitating self-exploration, friendship and community connectedness, substance use among trans young people is highly prevalent and may be used to cope with sleep difficulties, depression/anxiety and cisnormativity, including delays and waitlists for accessing gender-affirming care.

Greater substance use harms

Figure 34: Experienced a time where they have struggled to manage drug use or when it negatively impacted their everyday life in the past 6 months among drug users by gender (n = 2,754)



Few access formal supports

23.5%

of those using drugs reported ever being concerned about their use but only 11.8% of these same participants had accessed professional support in relation to their drug use in the past six months

Support-seeking toward informal, digital sources remains unclear



Research aims and questions

Two primary research questions guide this project:

1. How do trans people in Australia seek support for their AOD use?
2. How can these experiences be improved?

Methods

- Survey and interviews/focus groups with:
 1. Trans and/or gender diverse,
 2. Aged 18+ years
 3. Currently living in Australia
 4. Ever wanted to be more mindful about their use of alcohol and/or other drugs **OR** ever wanted to reduce the negative consequences associated with their alcohol and/or other drug use **OR** ever had a concern about their alcohol and/or drug use.

Governance and participatory methods

- Initiated by NADA Gender and Sexuality Diverse AOD Worker Network
- 3 trans researchers, 1 trans clinician
- Independent consultations with 2 trans people with relevant lived experience
- Peer researcher
- Ethics approval from USyd, ACON, and Thorne Harbour Health

Measures

- Demographics
- Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test
- Cannabis Use Disorder Identification Test
- Severity of Dependence Scale
- Substance use help-seeking behaviours (**27 total**, *adapted from the Actual Help-Seeking Scale*)
- Substance use help-seeking barriers (*bespoke*)
- Substance use help-seeking negative experiences (*bespoke*)
- Substance use harm reduction, mindful consumption, and benefit maximisation perspectives (*bespoke*)

Results

Sample

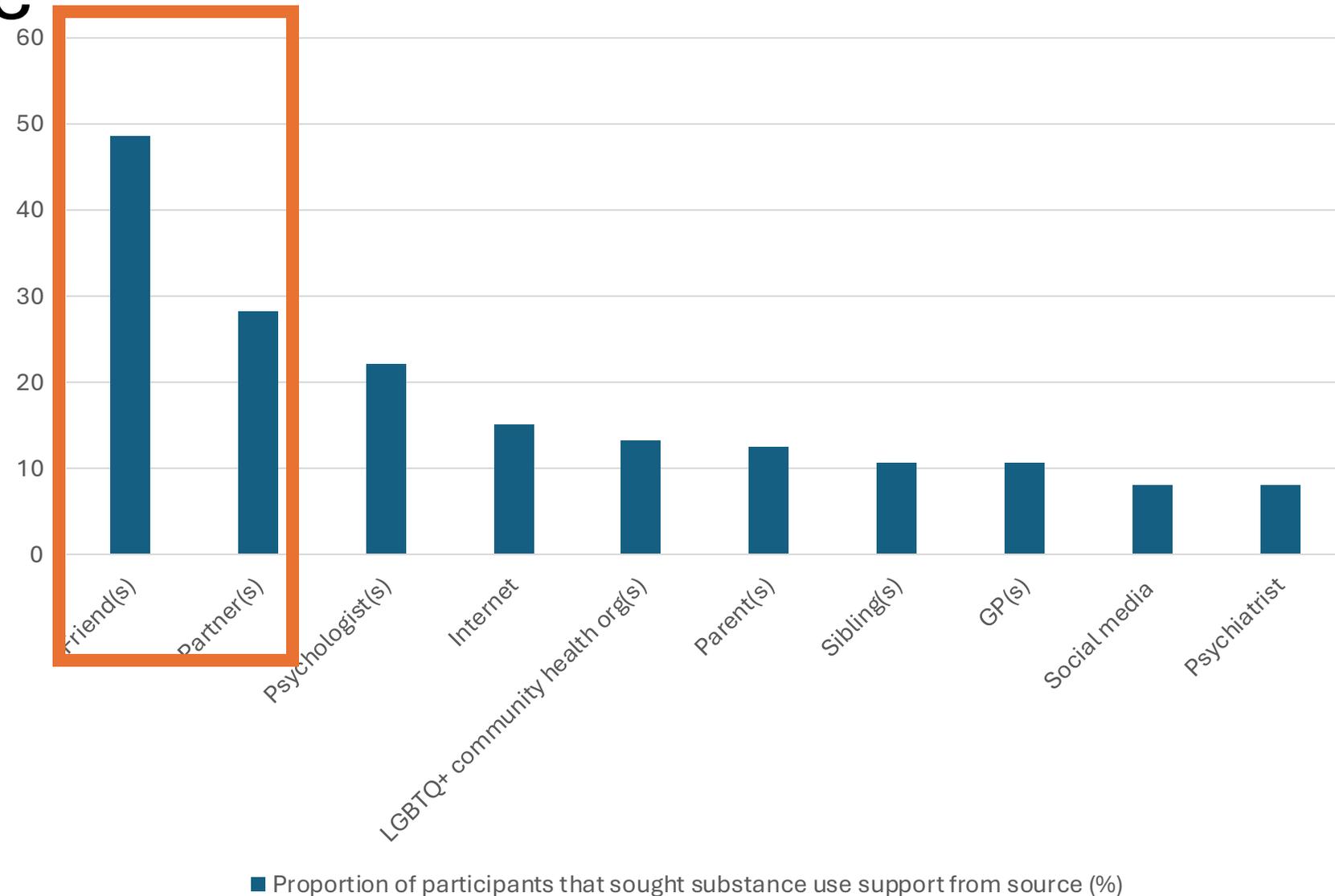
- Interviews/focus groups with 25 trans people
- Survey
 - 113 trans people
 - Mage = 34.2yrs
 - Mostly from NSW (33%) and Queensland (29%)
 - ~40% earning <\$41,600 p.a.
 - One in two had an undergraduate degree or higher

Gender (select all that apply)	
Man	16 (14.2)
Woman	19 (16.8)
Non-binary	42 (37.2)
Genderfluid	10 (8.8)
Trans masculine	28 (24.8)
Trans man	30 (26.5)
Trans feminine	9 (8.0)
Trans woman	25 (22.1)
Women of trans experiences	3 (2.7)
Man of trans experiences	6 (5.3)
Transgender	29 (25.7)
Agender	9 (8)
Genderqueer	16 (14.2)
Intergender	1 (0.9)
Multigender	1 (0.9)
Pangender	0
Polygender	0
Gender Nonconforming	1 (0.9)
Gender Questioning	1 (0.9)
Genderless	12 (10.6)
Gender Bender	3 (2.7)
Gender variant	3 (2.7)
Greygender	0
Brotherboy	0
Sistergirl	0
Two-spirit	1 (0.9)
Other cultural gender identity	0
Other gender identity	1 (0.9)
None of the above	1 (0.9)
Unsure	2 (1.8)
Prefer not to respond	0
Transsexual	12 (10.6)

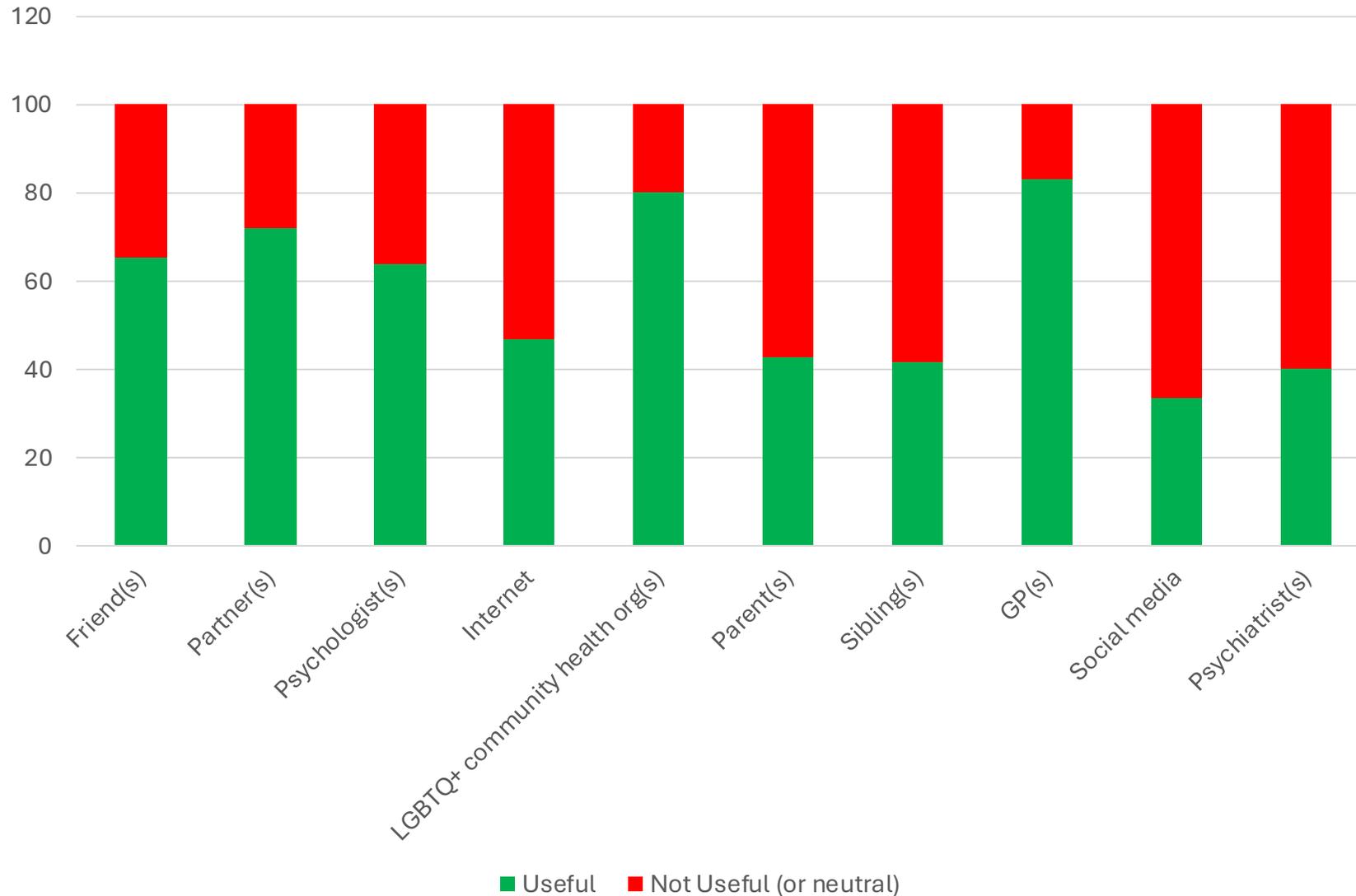
Substance use dependence

- One in two (47%) reported a concern about their drug use in the past year
- Most common concerns about ketamine (14%), pharmaceutical opioids (12%), ecstasy/MDMA (12%)

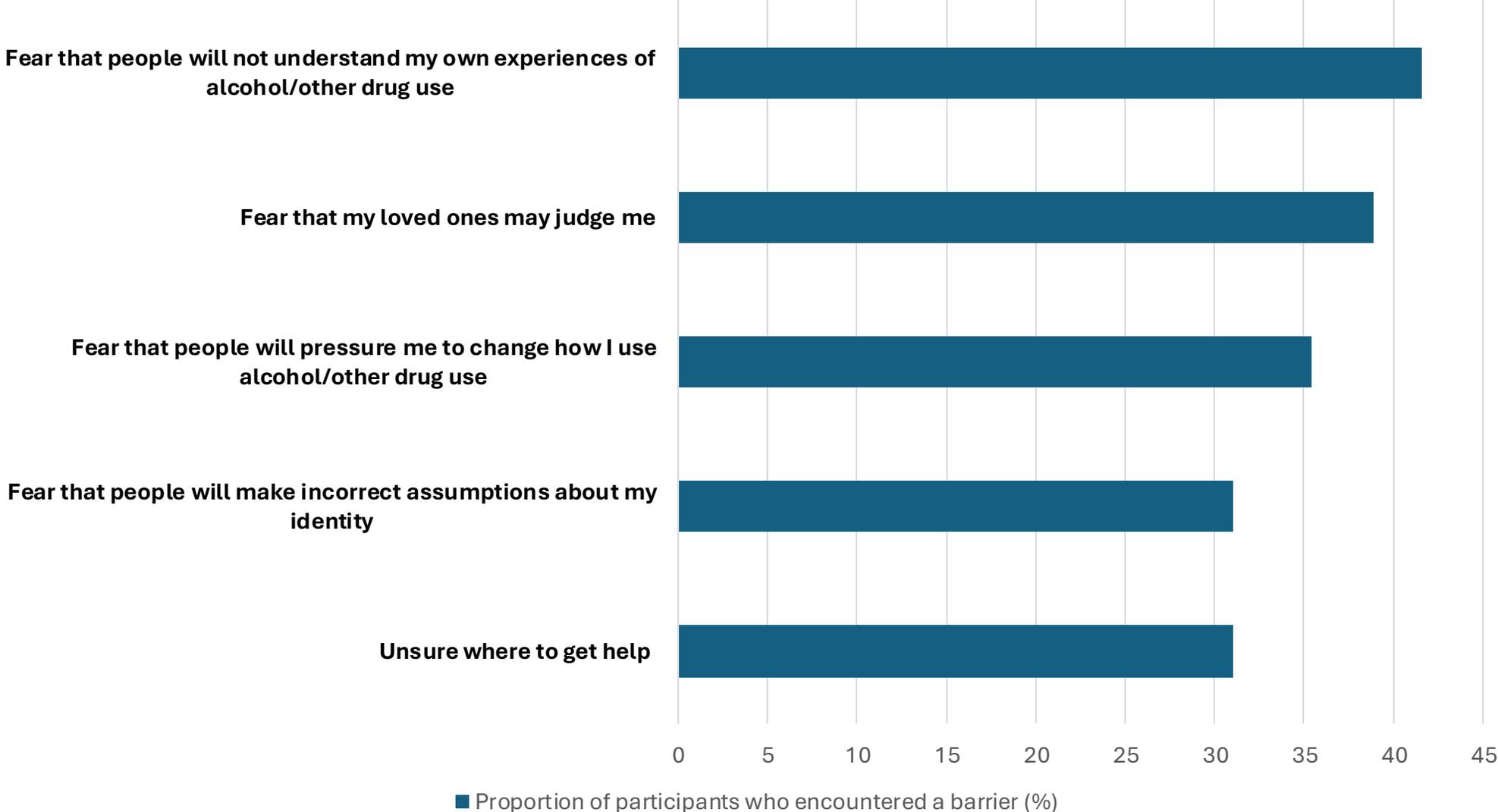
Friends and partners most common support source



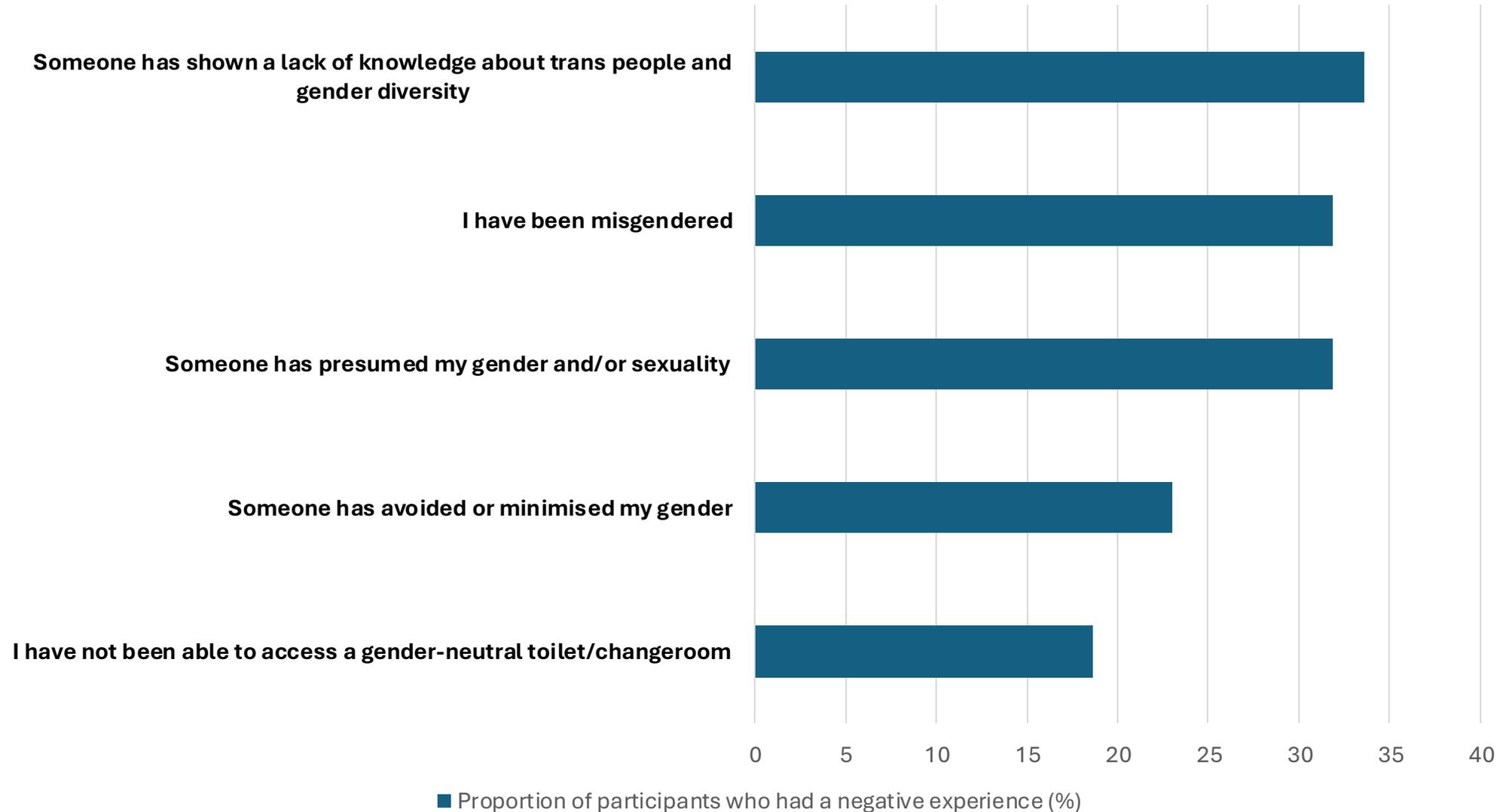
What made support good or bad?



Common barriers to seeking support



Common past negative experiences



Conclusion

Key messages

- Informal support sources more common than formal
- Digital support sources are common too, for better or for worse
- Judgement-free trans-affirming harm reduction is critical

Thank you for listening!

