

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Peer Support in Juvenile Services: Preliminary Findings from Maine's Expand ME Initiative

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Goals for Today

- ▶ Describe peer support within juvenile services
- ▶ Share preliminary outcomes among youth and families
- ▶ Discuss implications for service delivery



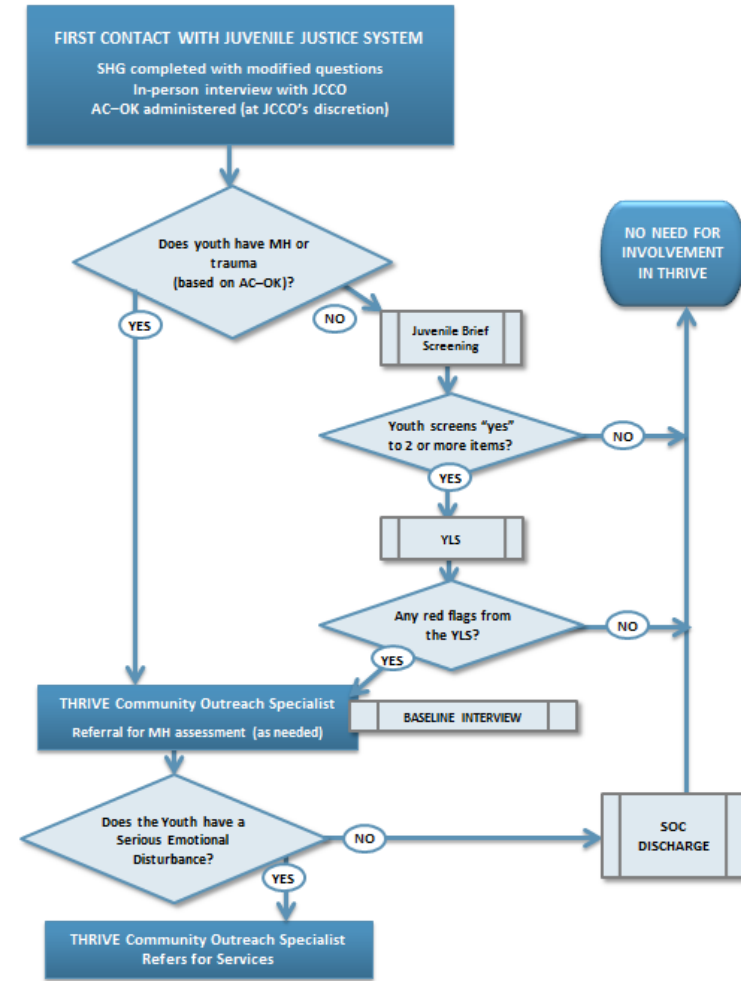
History of SOC, Planning and Expansion

- ▶ **2005** - Maine Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) awarded SOC grant to focus regionally on developing trauma-informed SOC.
- ▶ **2011** – ME OCFS received SOC planning grant to expand statewide and to new partners (including Corrections).
- ▶ **2012** - Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC), Juvenile Services awarded expansion grant to bring trauma-informed care to field services and youth development facilities (2).



Grant Goals

- ▶ *Create an infrastructure within Juvenile Services for providing trauma-informed services;*
- ▶ *To reinforce trauma-informed system of care practices statewide through training, technical assistance and social marketing ;*
- ▶ *Disseminate trauma-informed system of care practices nationally through partnership with the juvenile corrections standards setting group, PbS Learning Institute, Inc.;*
- ▶ **Ensure youth involved with juvenile justice are screened, assessed and referred to effective services in a way that promotes family driven and youth guided principles;**
- ▶ **Help Juvenile Services better engage youth and families with mental health needs and help them access longer-term services and supports, including Wraparound and Peer Support.**



Direct Service Interventions

Stories from the Field

Community Outreach Specialist

- ▶ Short-term (~3 months) peer navigators offered to youth and families entering the juvenile justice system
 - ▶ Families choose to be involved.
- ▶ Co-located in Region 1 and Region 3 offices
 - ▶ South Portland, ME
 - ▶ Bangor, ME



Community Outreach Specialist

- ▶ Facilitate early identification of youth with trauma and mental health needs
- ▶ Help empower youth and families as they navigate the juvenile justice system
- ▶ Link youth and families to needed services and supports (including Wraparound and Youth Peer Support)

“The function of the Community Outreach Specialist is making sure that the case plan is used and effective.”



Success From The Field



Youth Peer Support

- ▶ Youth MOVE Maine

- ▶ One-on-one model of peer support for youth that lasts ~6 months

- ▶ Youth Support Partners (YSP)

- ▶ have lived experience within the system and are now able to support other youth
- ▶ complete 3 days of training based on multiple models of from adult peer support

- ▶ Referrals for YSP are made by COS



Youth Support Partner: What Makes It Different?

- ▶ No “agenda” compared to formal services (e.g., no treatment plan or goals to meet)
- ▶ Relationship allows for discussion around many aspects of personal life
- ▶ Provide voice, healthy relationship skills and connection to community



Youth and Family Outcomes

Findings from the Evaluation

Methodology

▶ Youth and Family Interviews

▶ Client-level NOMs

plus:

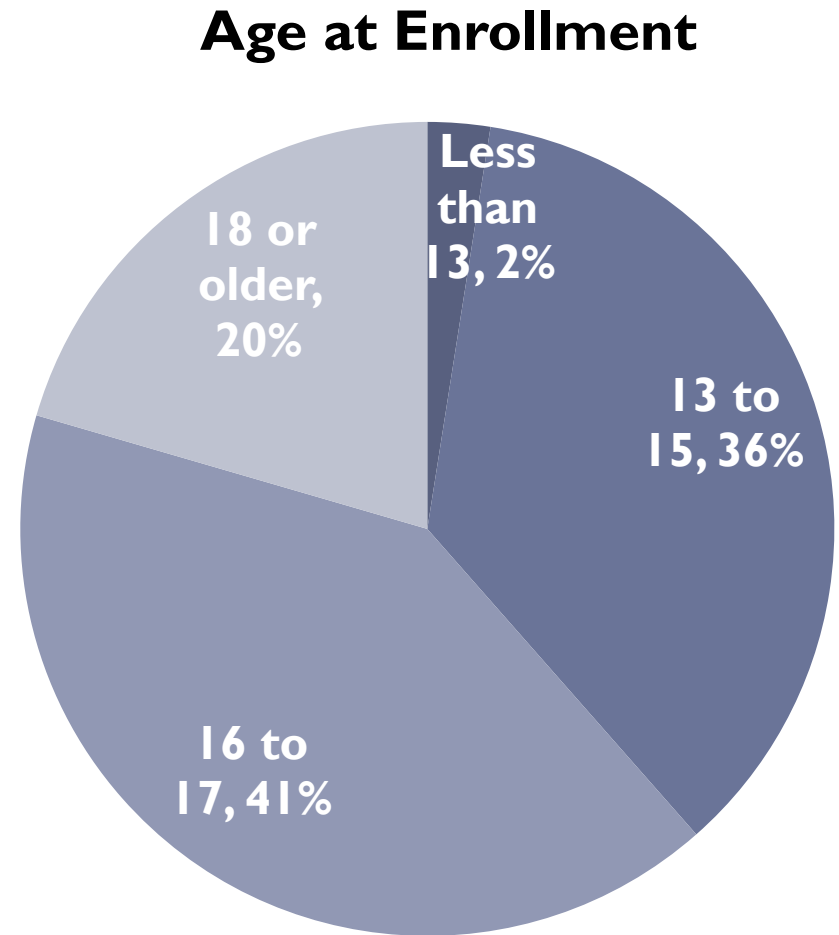
- ▶ Empowerment (YES/FES)
- ▶ Family Life (FLQ)
- ▶ Trauma Events (LITE/TESI)

- ▶ *What are the characteristics of youth and families enrolled?*
- ▶ *To what extent have youth and families experienced trauma?*
- ▶ *Do youth and families improve after being involved with COS?*



Characteristics of Direct Service Population

- ▶ More likely male (66%)
- ▶ Most between 13 and 17 (range 11-20)
- ▶ SED Diagnoses:
 - ▶ 34% ADHD
 - ▶ 14% PTSD
 - ▶ 7% Anxiety



- ▶ Youth and their primary caregivers had very different perceptions about their family life
- ▶ 1 in 5 youth reported feeling nervous, or hopeless (in the past month)
- ▶ Half (or less) reported being engaged in treatment services
- ▶ **40 percent** had experienced **3 or more types of trauma exposure**

Youth and Families at Intake

Caregivers:

Experienced the most stress in the following areas:

- *worry about child's future
- *sadness about child's behavior
- *strain stemming from child's behavior

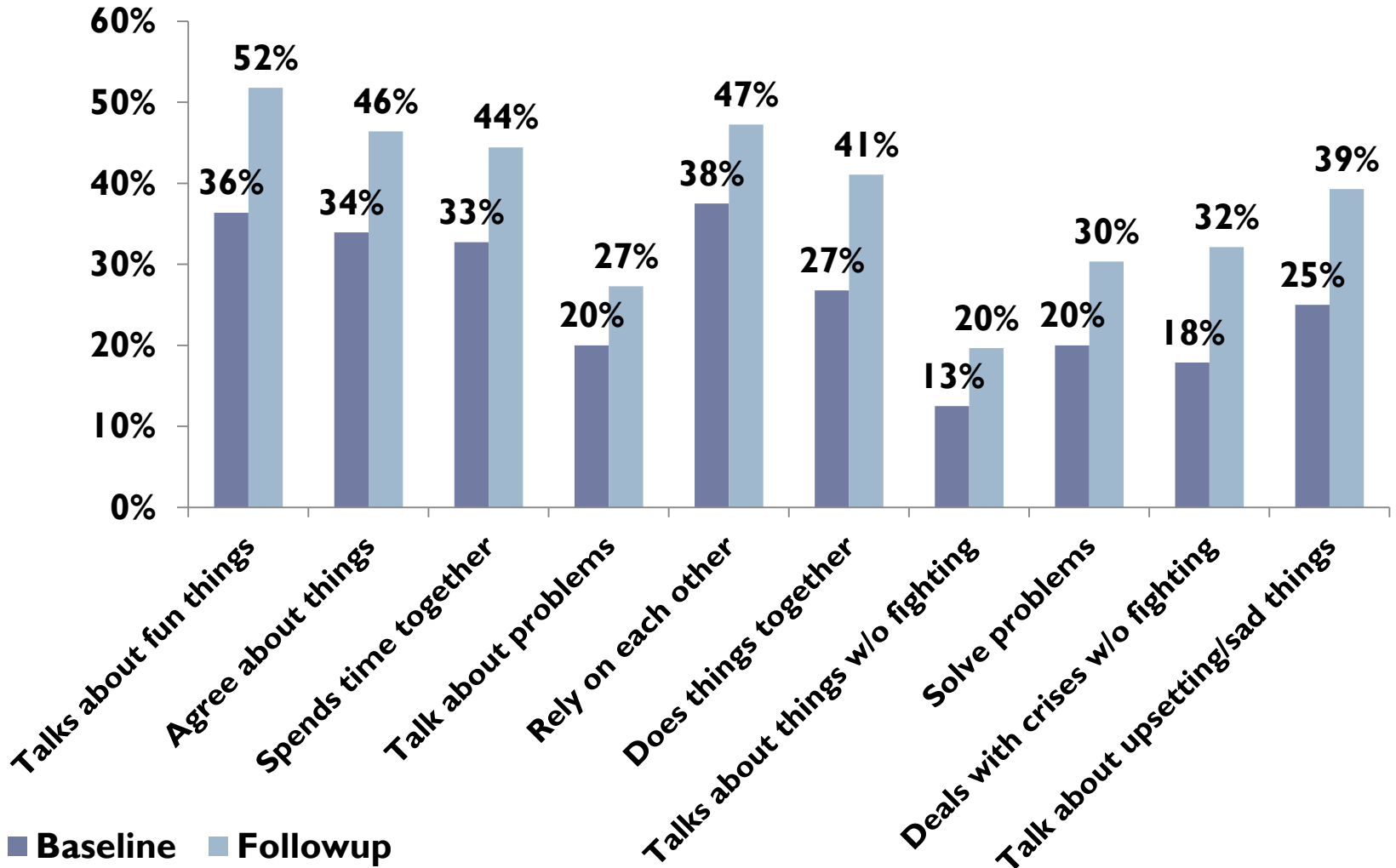
Less than one-third agreed that they:

- *felt like family life is under control
- *could solve problems with child
- *knew what services child needed

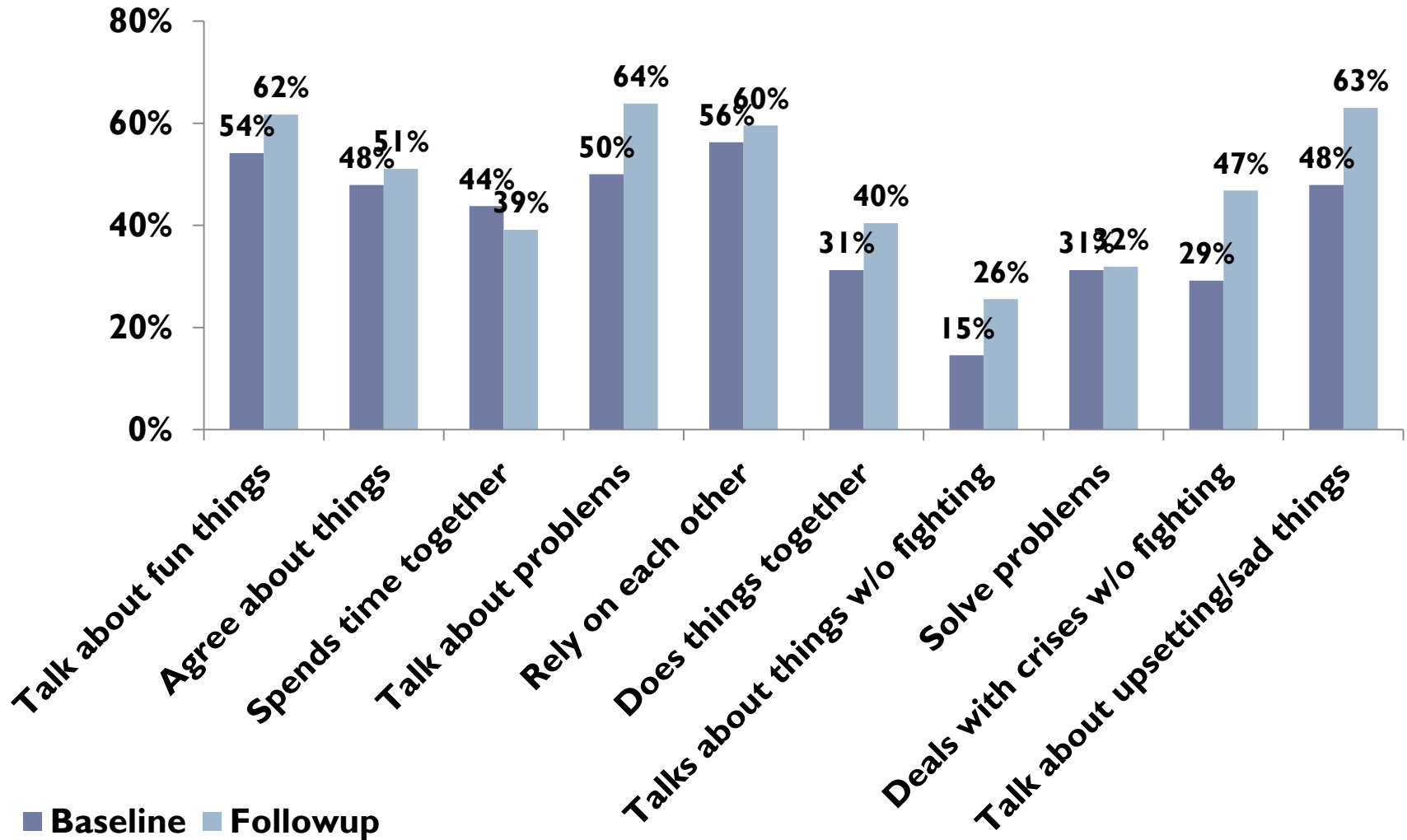
One-third had experienced three or more types of trauma before the age of 18.



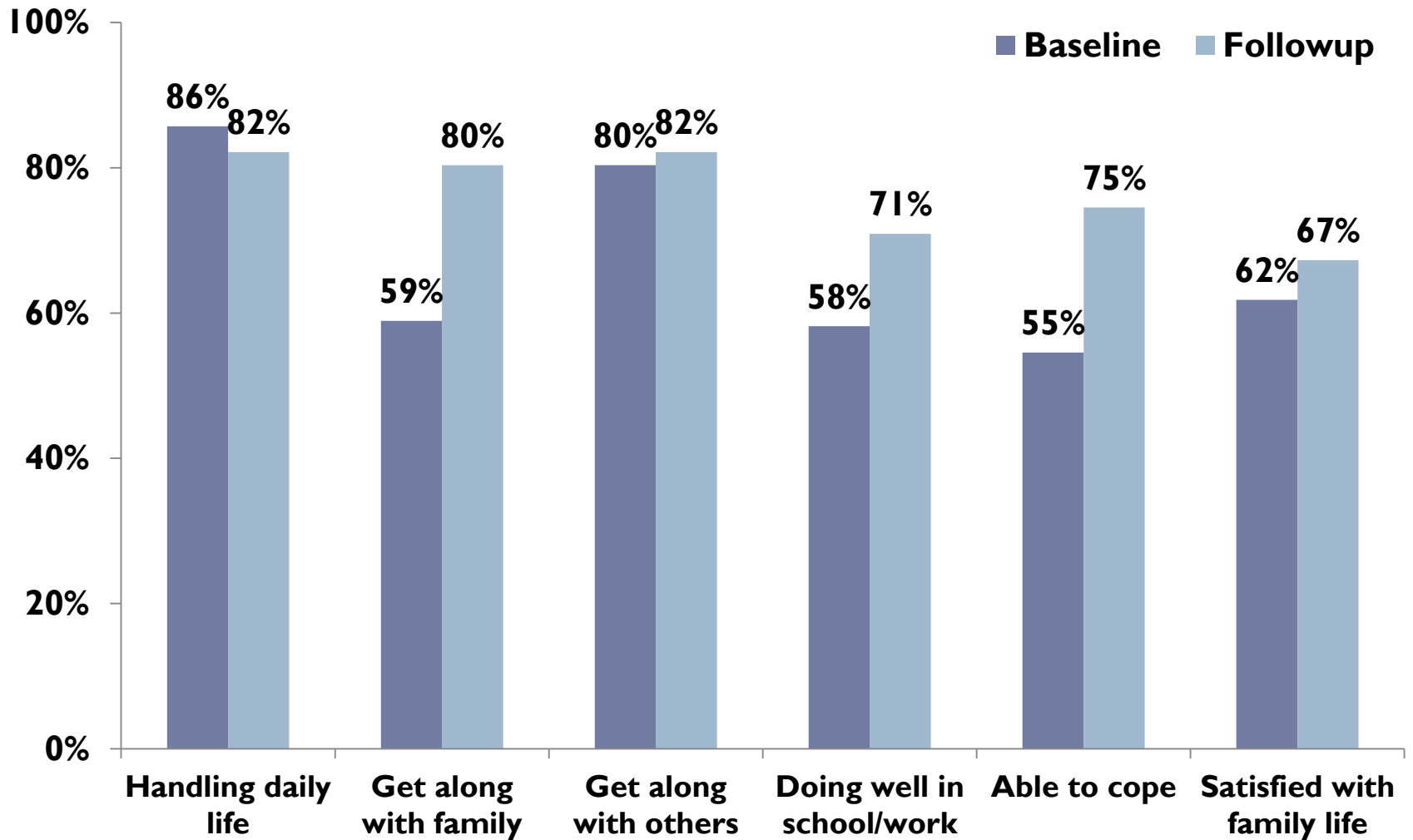
Youth Perceptions of Family Life



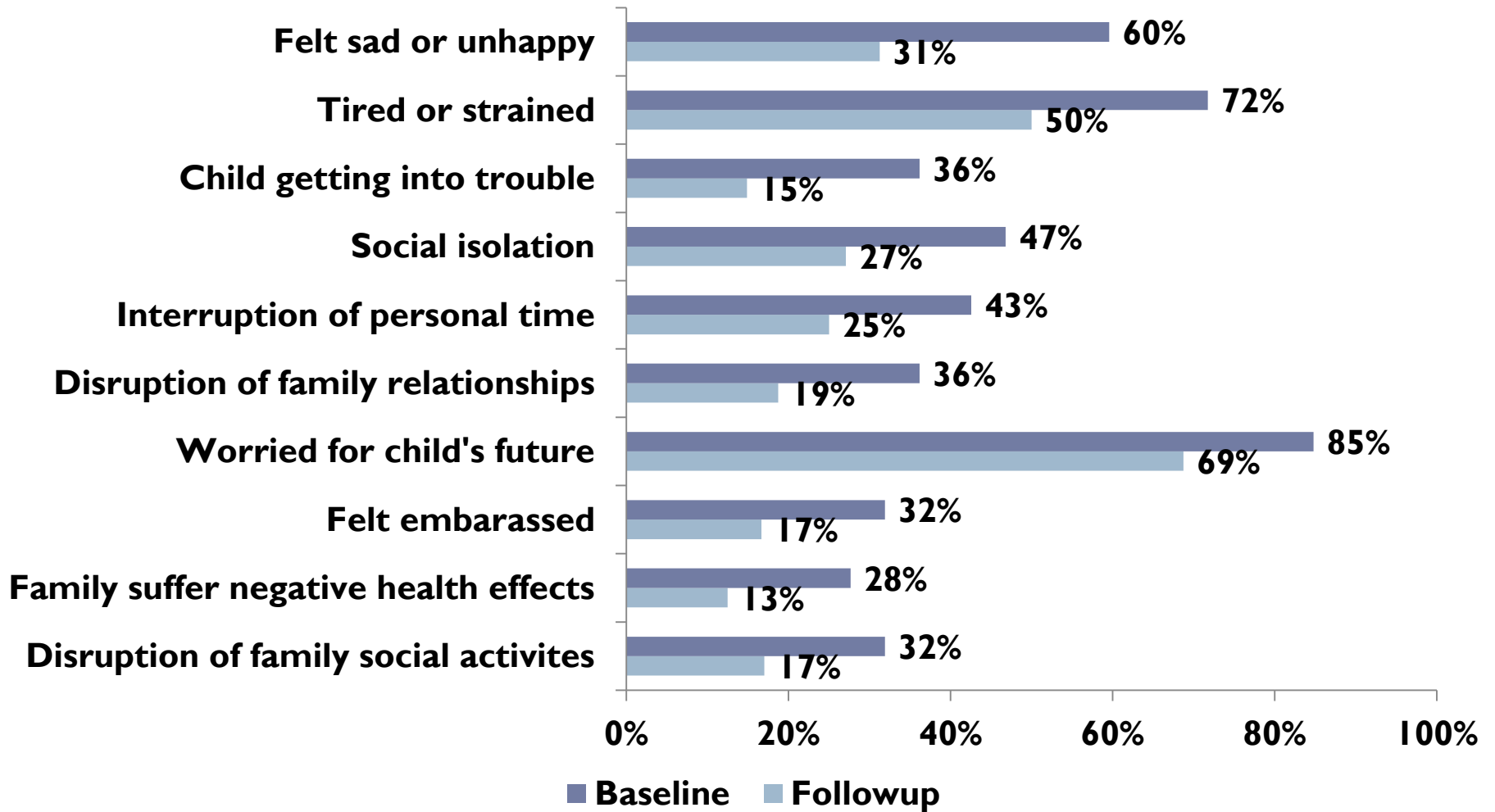
Caregiver Perceptions of Family Life



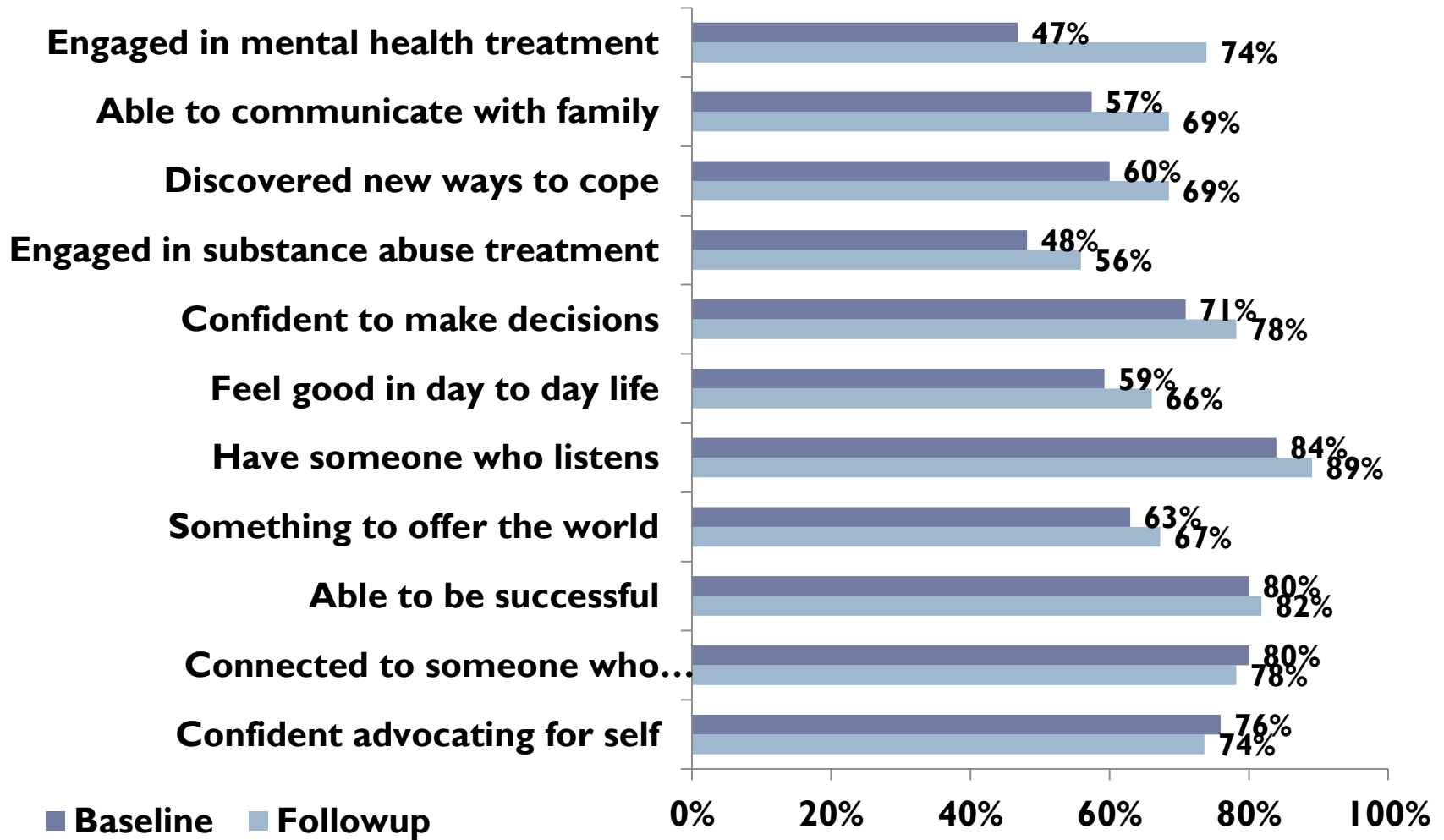
Youth Daily Functioning



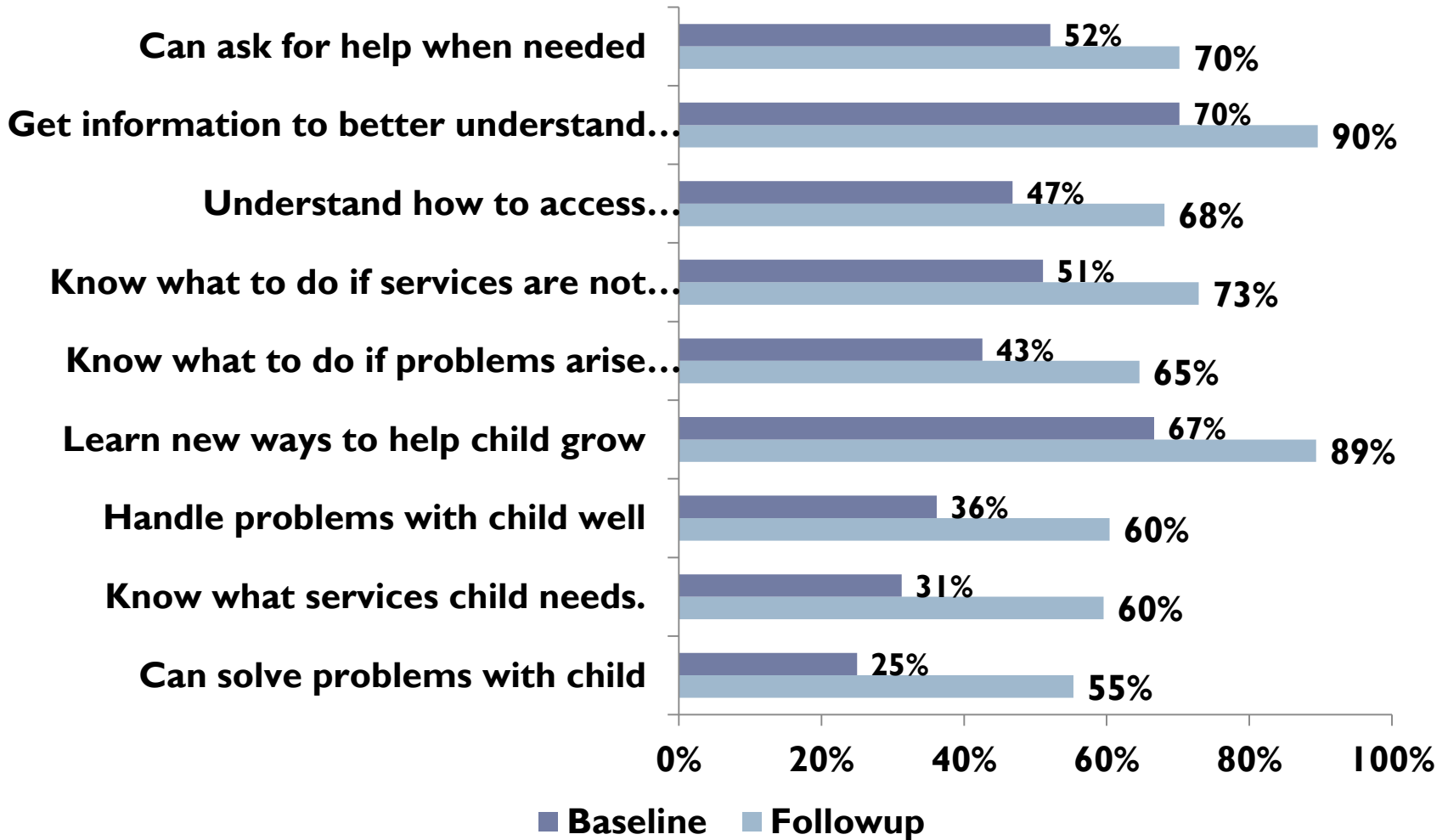
Caregiver Stress



Youth Empowerment



Caregiver Empowerment





Conclusions

Discussion and Implications

Conclusions

- ▶ Youth and families enter services feeling stressed out, not communicating, not engaged, and carrying a substantial trauma history
- ▶ Preliminary findings suggest that after engaging with COS and/or YSP in addition to other supports, youth and families show *improvement*

Next up:

Tease out individual service effects

Do these gains result into reduced recidivism..?



Discussion of Implications

- ▶ How does this information confirm or conflict with what you have observed?
 - ▶ *What would you like to know more about?*
- ▶ How can these findings inform our work?
 - ▶ *How/with whom should the information be shared?*



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