



RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS



HOW CHURCHES CAN HELP PEOPLE HEAL
& DEVELOP HEALTHY CONNECTIONS



For more information about this study and to see the complete findings, check out our 2020 report:

Restoring Relationships

The full report is available at [**shop.barna.com**](https://shop.barna.com) or through Barna Access membership.



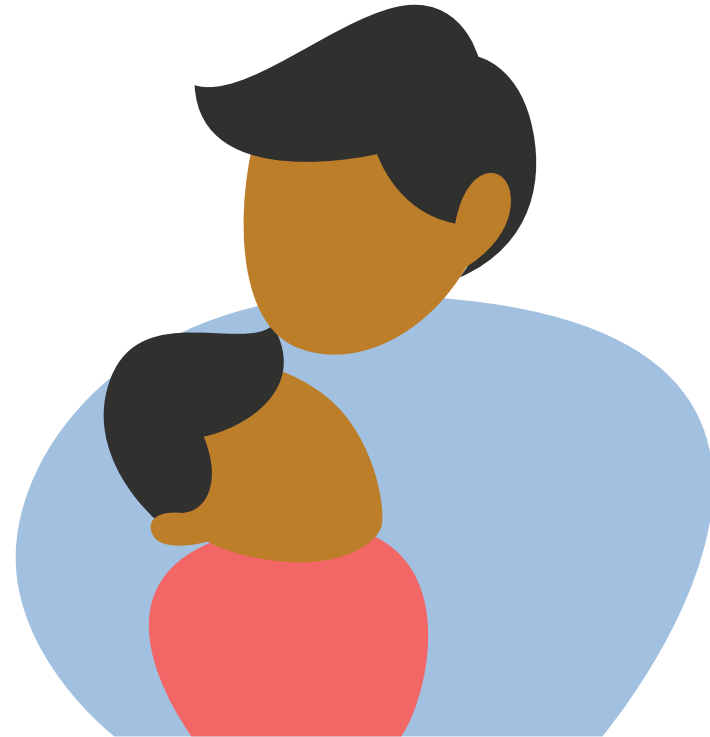
Relational crises happen to just about everybody at one time or another: women and men, younger and older, single and married, Christian and non-Christian

People's longing for transformation is an opportunity to bring good news where people want to hear it: where they're hurting and most in need of healing



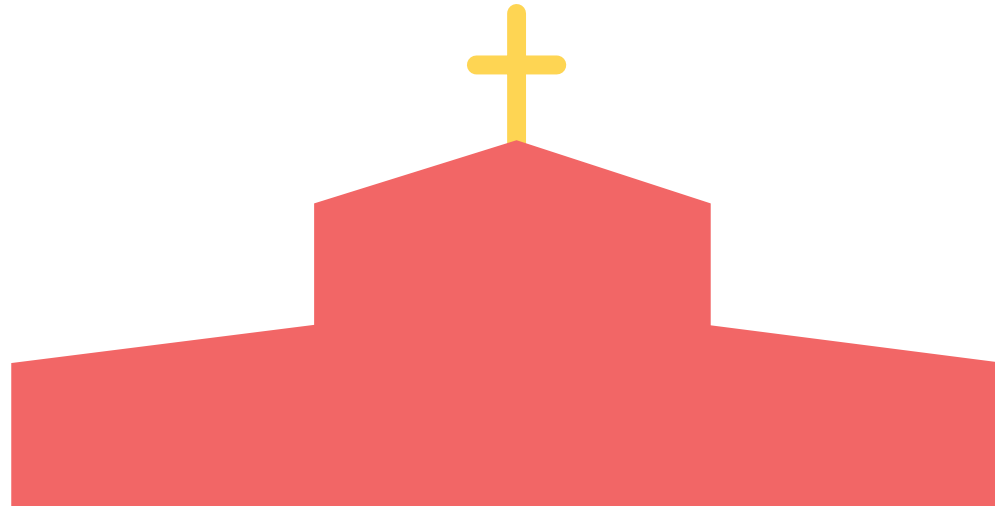
Key Findings Part 1

Relational well-being and satisfaction are high across the board, but married people and parents tend to be more content overall than singles and people without children. Practicing Christians (both married and single) are also more likely than non-Christians to say they are satisfied.



Key Findings Part 2

Single people who belong to a faith community have consistently higher rates of relational and emotional satisfaction than other singles.



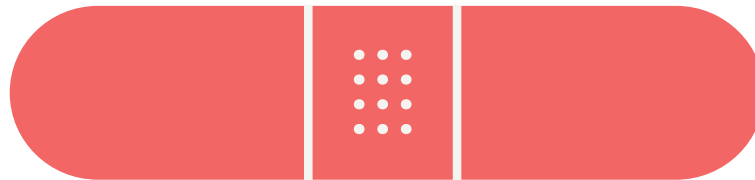
Key Findings Part 3

More than half of all U.S. adults (58%) and practicing Christians (54%) say they have at least one relational or emotional / mental health issue that impacts their most important relationships.



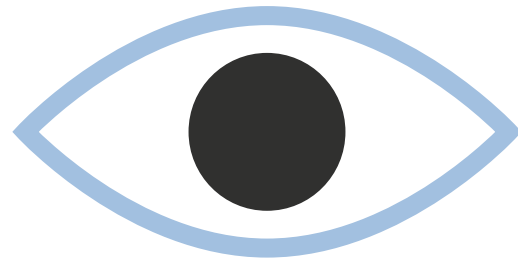
Key Findings Part 4

Anxiety and depression are the most commonly experienced challenges to relational satisfaction, with more than one-third of all adults and practicing Christians saying one or the other (or both) make an impact on their close relationships.



Key Findings Part 5

Relational, emotional and mental health problems often aggravate and intensify each other. For example, a person who says that pornography impacts her most important relationships is also more likely than average to say she's dealing with anxiety, loneliness and problems with sexual intimacy.



Key Findings Part 6

People who seek out spiritual help for their relational and emotional issues are more likely than others to report satisfaction with their life and relationships.



Key Findings Part 7

Practicing Christians
are generally confident
that their church leaders
can help them with their
relational struggles—but
many agree there is room
for improvement.





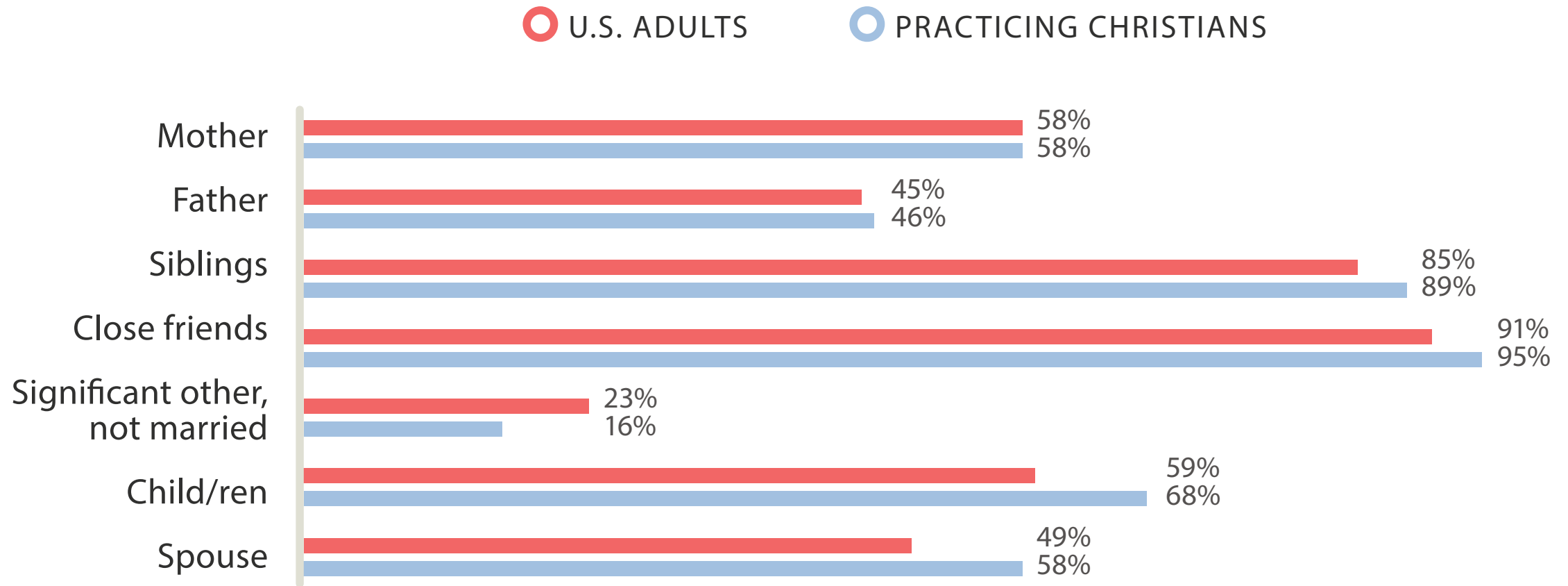
Barna's 2019 study of 18–35-year-olds around the world found that one-quarter of Millennials reports they often feel lonely and isolated; only one in three often feel that someone believes in them

Relationships are where the rubber of the gospel meets the road of everyday life. Christ came to redeem and restore lost and broken people, and our relationships are where redeemed, restored people live the good news



A Relationship Inventory, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians

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Among practicing Christians who have ever been married, 33% have also been through a divorce, compared to 39% of all adults





Practicing Christian Millennials are more likely than young adults in the general population to be married (45% vs. 30%)

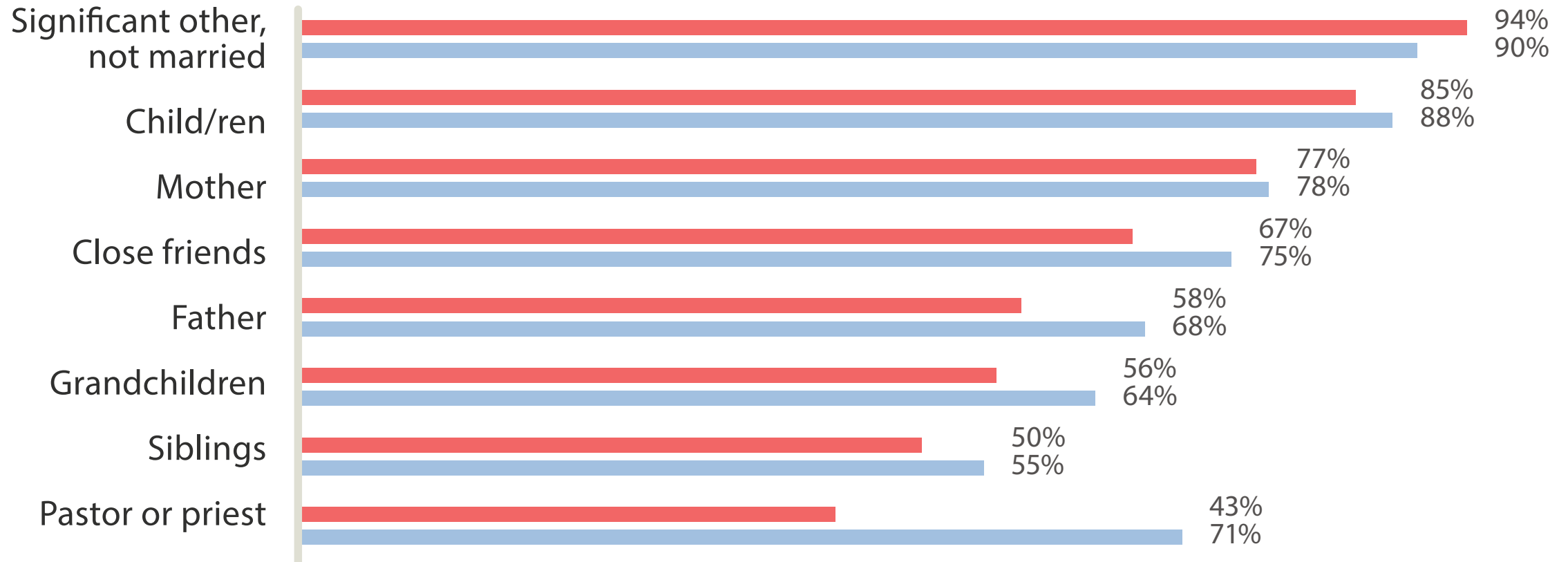
In Touch at Least Once a Week, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians

Barna

(among those who have each relationship)

○ U.S. ADULTS

○ PRACTICING CHRISTIANS



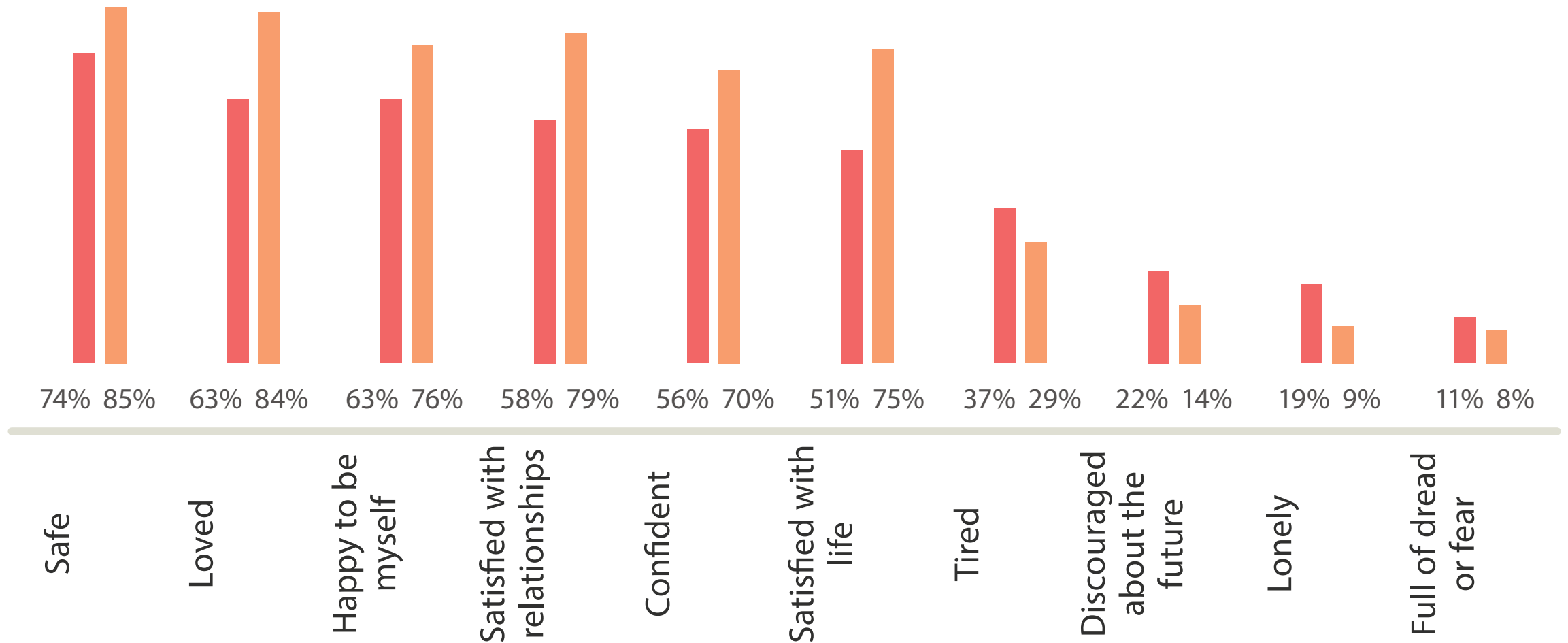
Emotional satisfaction is generally positive, but practicing Christians, married people and parents tend to report greater well-being than U.S. adults overall, singles and people without children



Feelings Inventory, Married vs. Single Part 1

“I always or usually feel . . .”

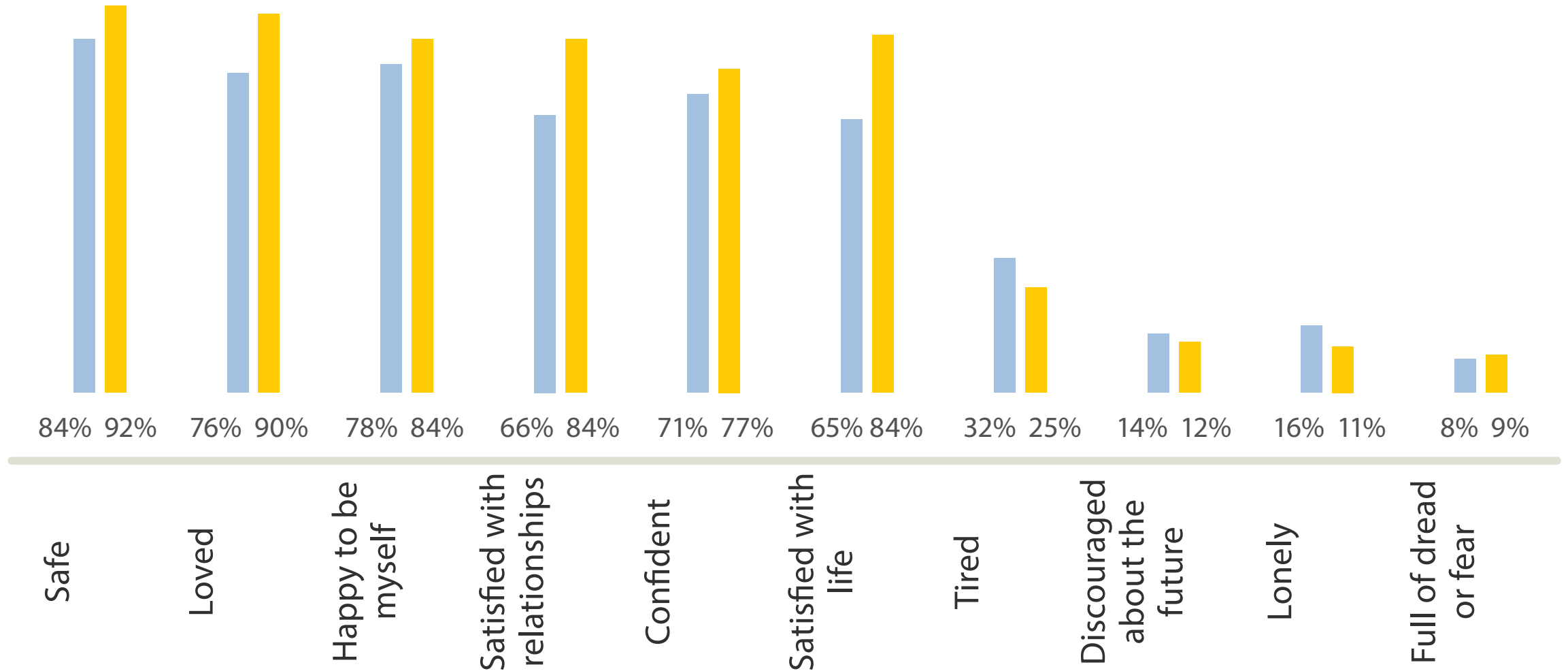
○ SINGLE U.S. ADULTS ○ MARRIED U.S. ADULTS



Feelings Inventory, Married vs. Single Part 2

“I always or usually feel . . .”

○ SINGLE PRACTICING CHRISTIANS ○ MARRIED PRACTICING CHRISTIANS



A comparison of single practicing Christians to their married counterparts indicates there is room for churches' growth in meeting singles' felt needs. If they know relational help is available, they are likely to take advantage of it.



Both single and childless practicing Christians have consistently higher rates of emotional and relational satisfaction than their counterparts in the general population—which may indicate that churches are moving in the right direction

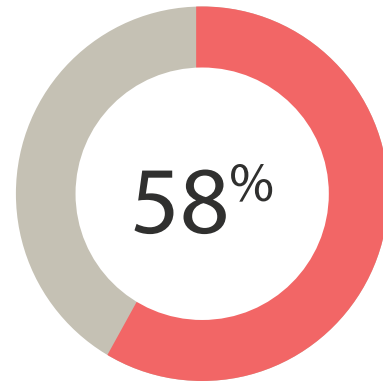


Diving Deep Into the Places People Are Struggling Today

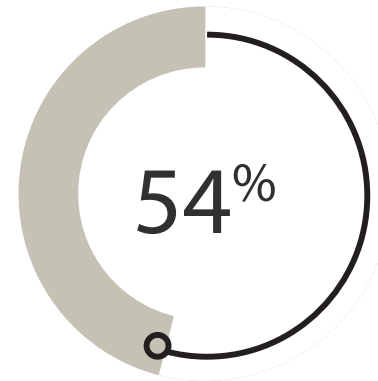
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% among people who report at least one relational or emotional health issue that impacts their most important relationships

U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS



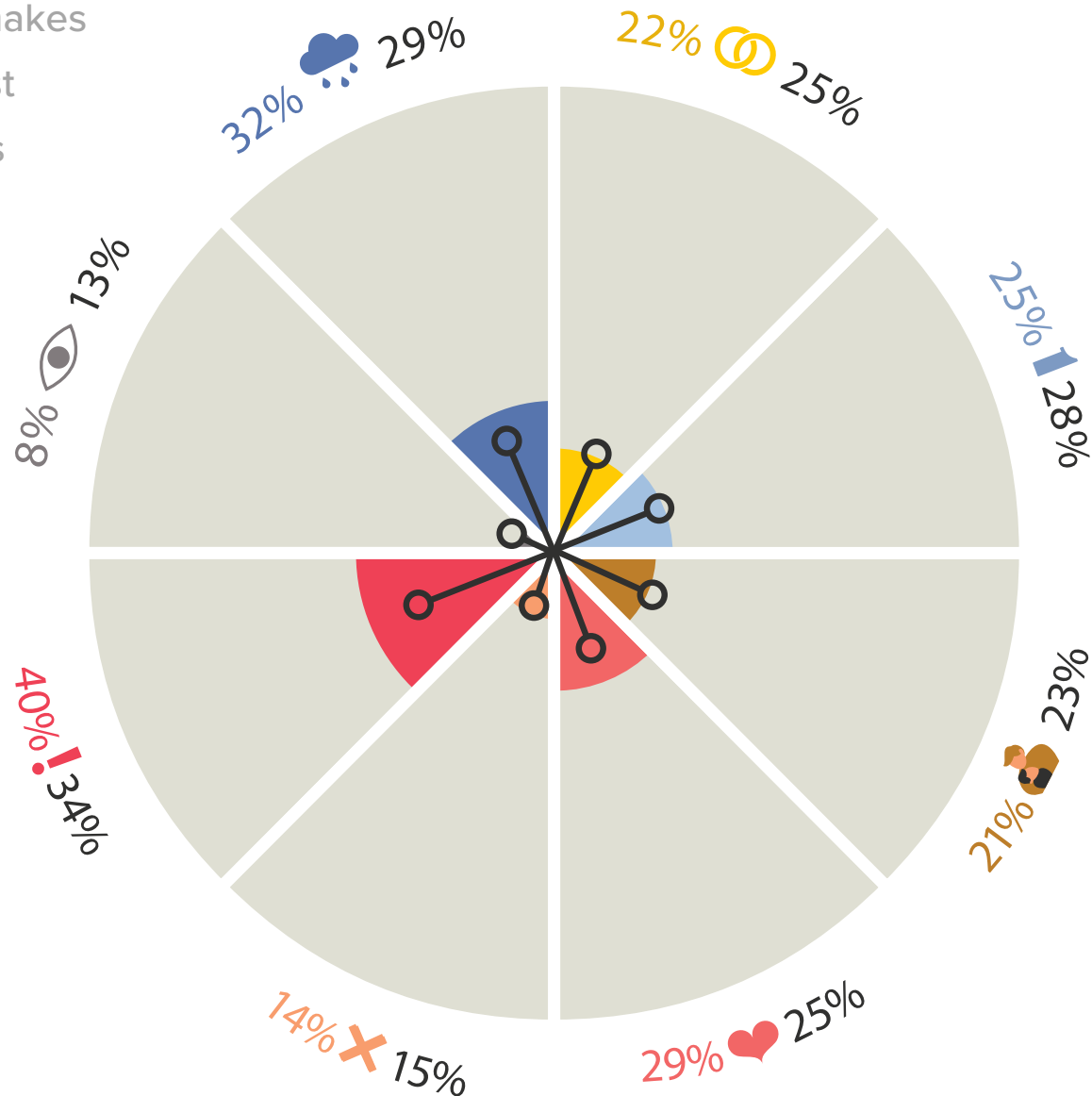


U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS

% who say this issue makes
an impact on their most
important relationships



MARITAL ISSUES
*(among people
who are married)*

1

**UNWANTED
SINGLESNESS**
*(among people who
are not married)*



**PARENTING
ISSUES**
*(among people
who have children)*



SEXUAL INTIMACY



ADDICTION



**ANXIETY /
DEPRESSION**



PORNOGRAPHY



LONELINESS

Ebbing Satisfaction Part 1

“I always or usually feel. . .”

Safe



Loved



Satisfied with my relationships



Satisfied with my life



Happy to be myself

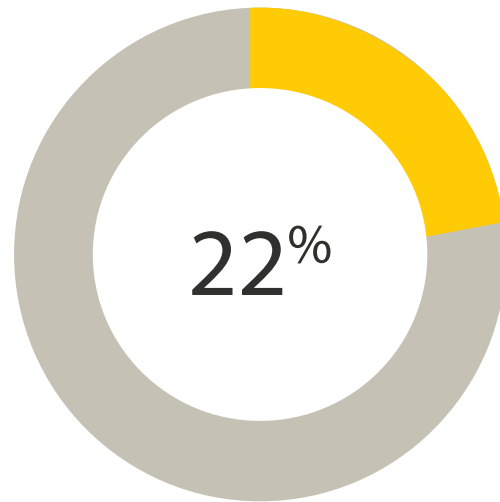


Confident

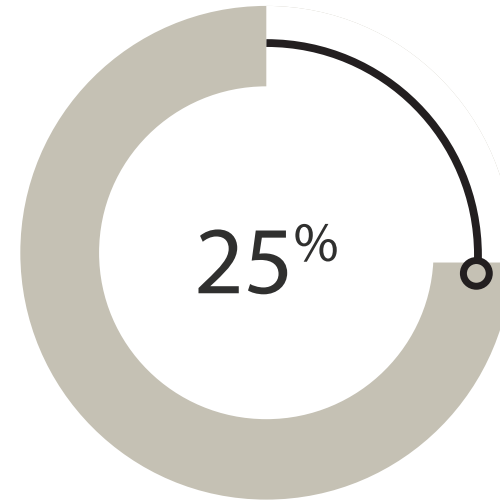


Marital Problems

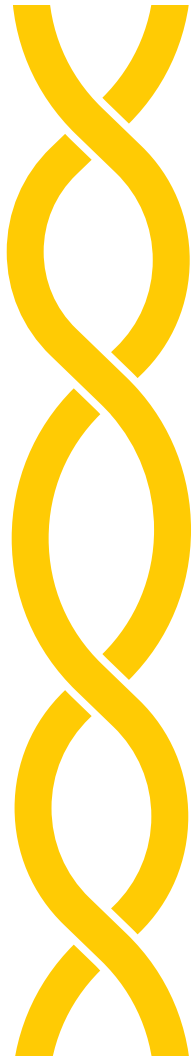
U.S. ADULTS





PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS






Marital Problems



GENDER

Male		19%	26%
Female		25%	25%




AGE*

Millennials		23%	43%
Gen X		27%	32%
Boomers		21%	15%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

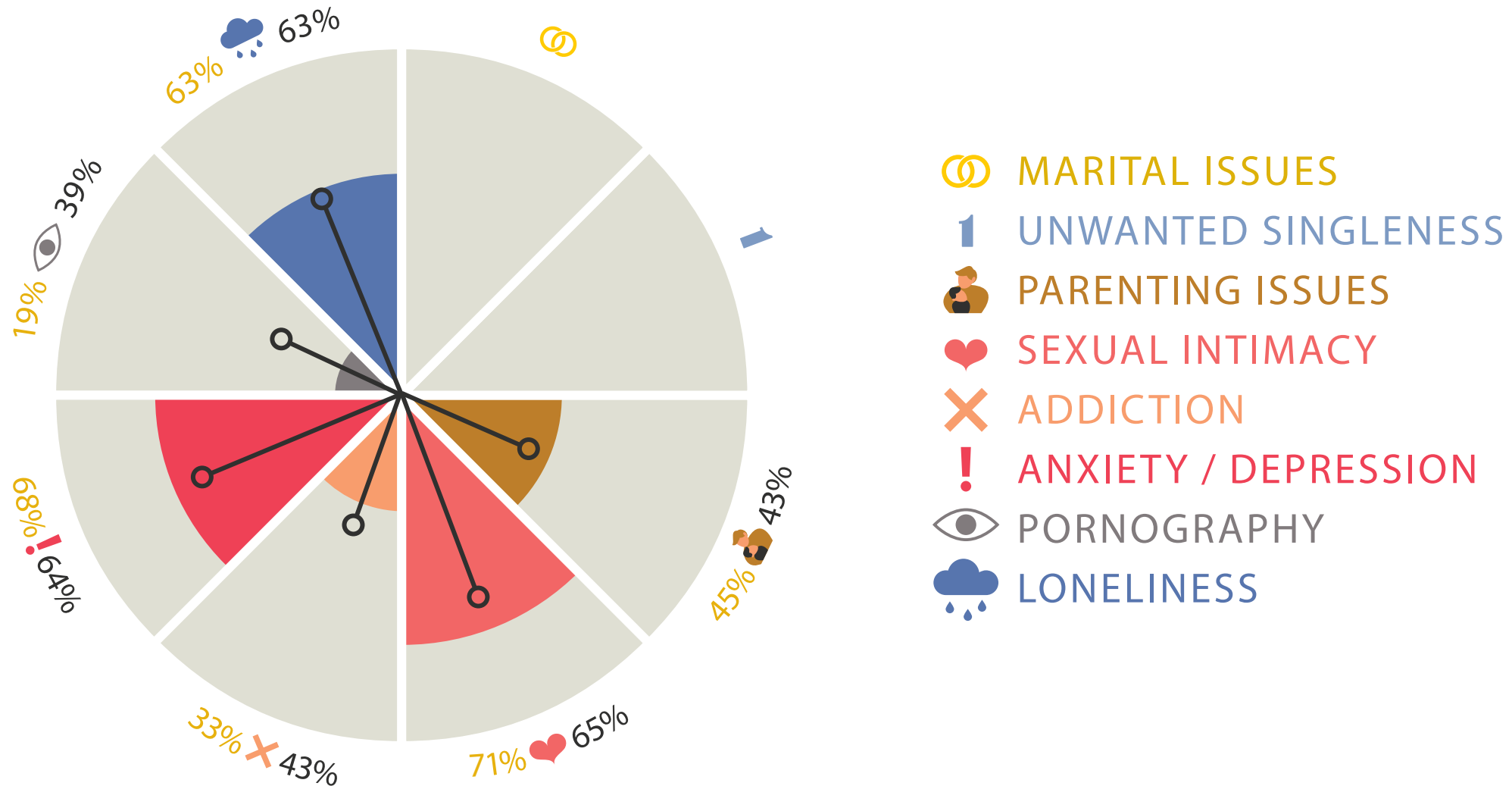
Previously divorced		28%	34%
Parent		24%	24%
Child 18 or under		29%	38%
Child 19+		21%	15%
No children		15%	33%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		20%	25%
Catholic		20%	27%
No faith		27%	n/a

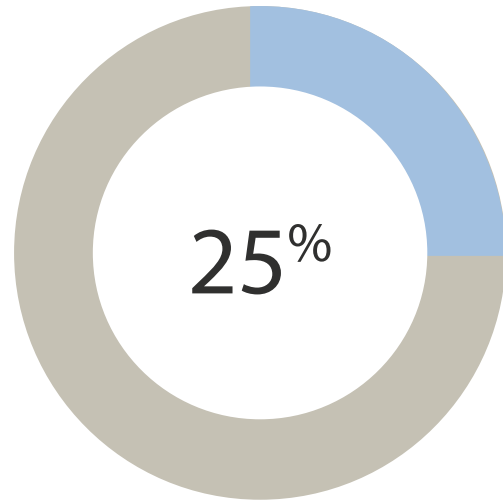
Marital Problems

% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships

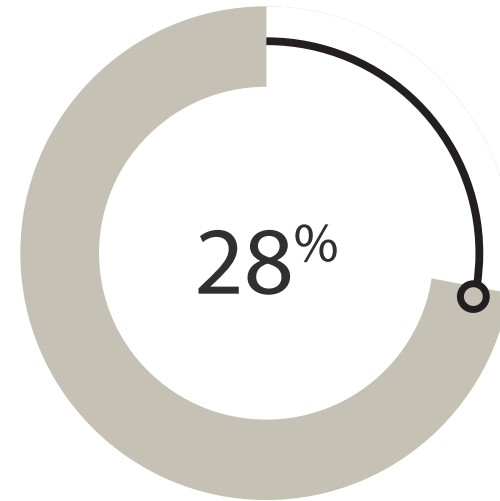


Unwanted Singleness

U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS



Unwanted Singleness



GENDER

Male		29%	30%
Female		22%	26%

AGE

Millennials		32%	36%
Gen X		24%	32%
Boomers		22%	19%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

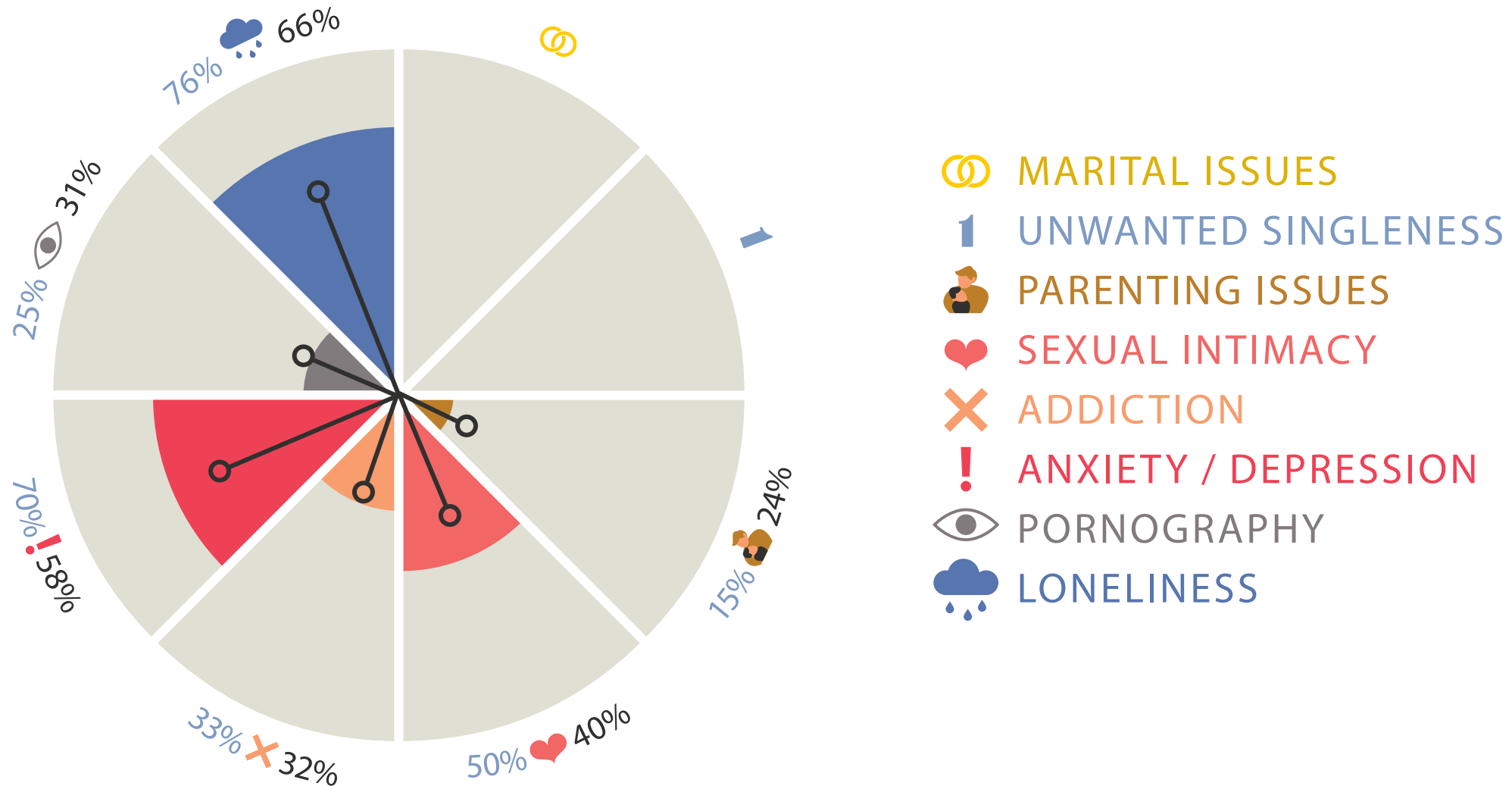
Never married		29%	30%
Ever divorced		19%	24%
Single parent		25%	28%
Child 18 or under		30%	37%
Child 19+		22%	22%
No children		25%	27%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		26%	30%
Catholic		23%	15%
No faith		23%	n/a

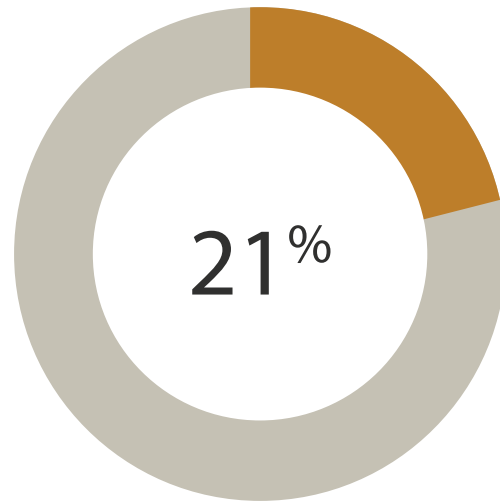
Unwanted Singleness

% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships

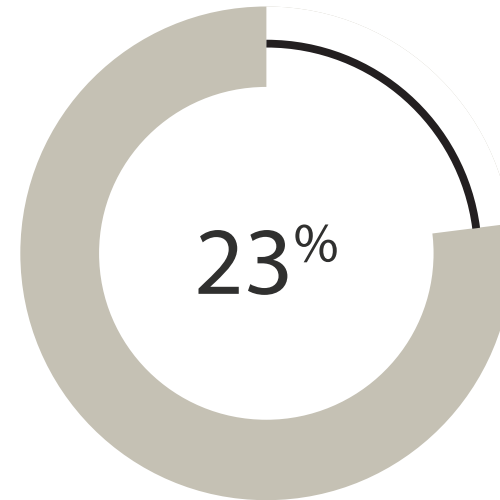


Parenting Issues

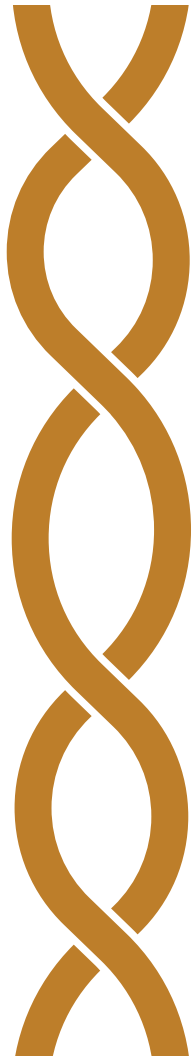
U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS



Parenting Issues



GENDER

Male		20%	25%
Female		22%	22%

AGE

Millennials		35%	39%
Gen X		28%	30%
Boomers		14%	16%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

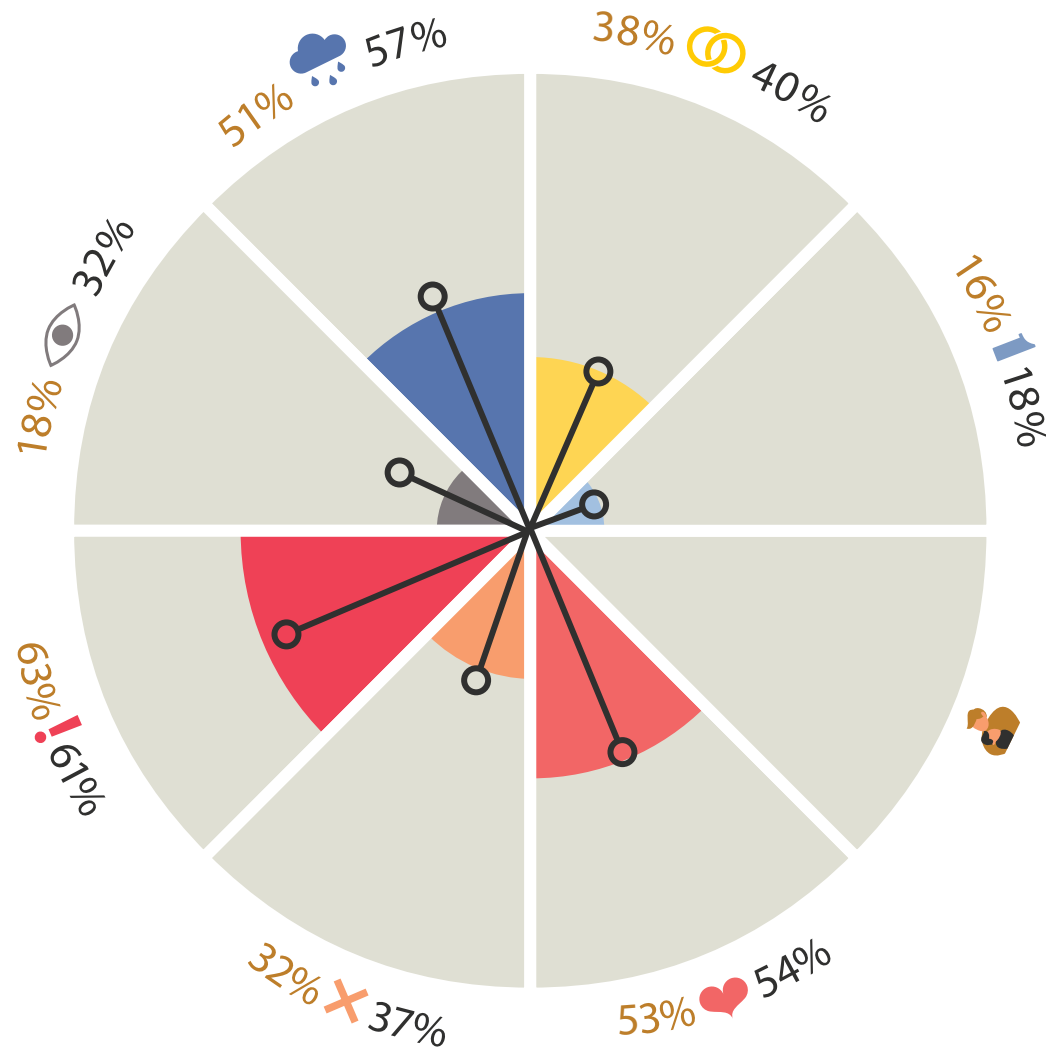
Currently married		20%	23%
Ever divorced		24%	27%
Single parent		24%	24%
Have child 0–5		36%	38%
Have child 6–12		28%	36%
Have child 13–18		35%	34%
Child 18 or under		31%	35%
Child 19+		15%	16%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		19%	23%
Catholic		19%	22%
No faith		28%	n/a

Unwanted Singleness

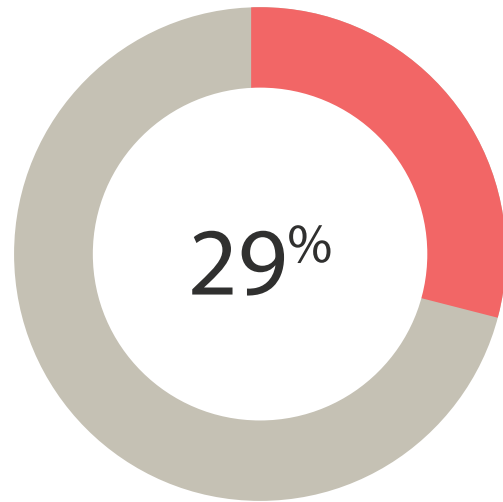
% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships



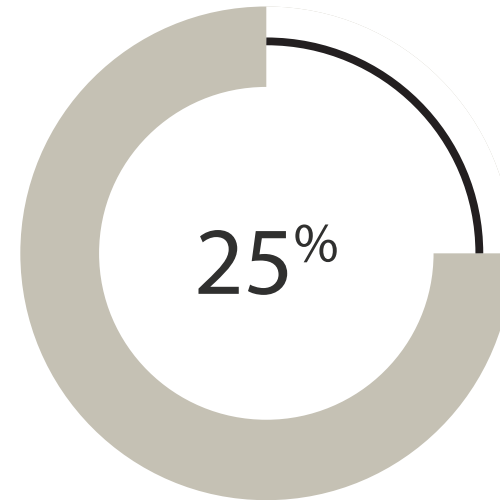
-  MARITAL ISSUES
-  UNWANTED SINGLENESS
-  PARENTING ISSUES
-  SEXUAL INTIMACY
-  ADDICTION
-  ANXIETY / DEPRESSION
-  PORNOGRAPHY
-  LONELINESS

Problems with Sexual Intimacy

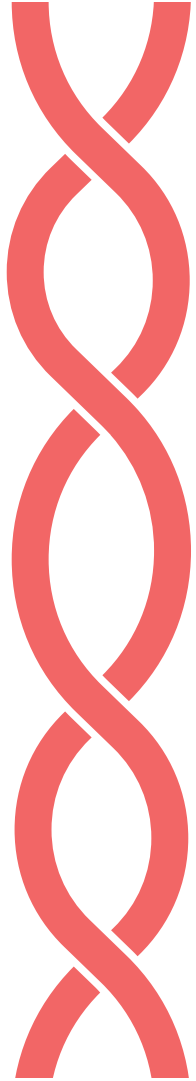
U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS






Problems with Sexual Intimacy










GENDER

Male		27%	27%
Female		31%	23%




AGE

Millennials		31%	31%
Gen X		29%	27%
Boomers		29%	20%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

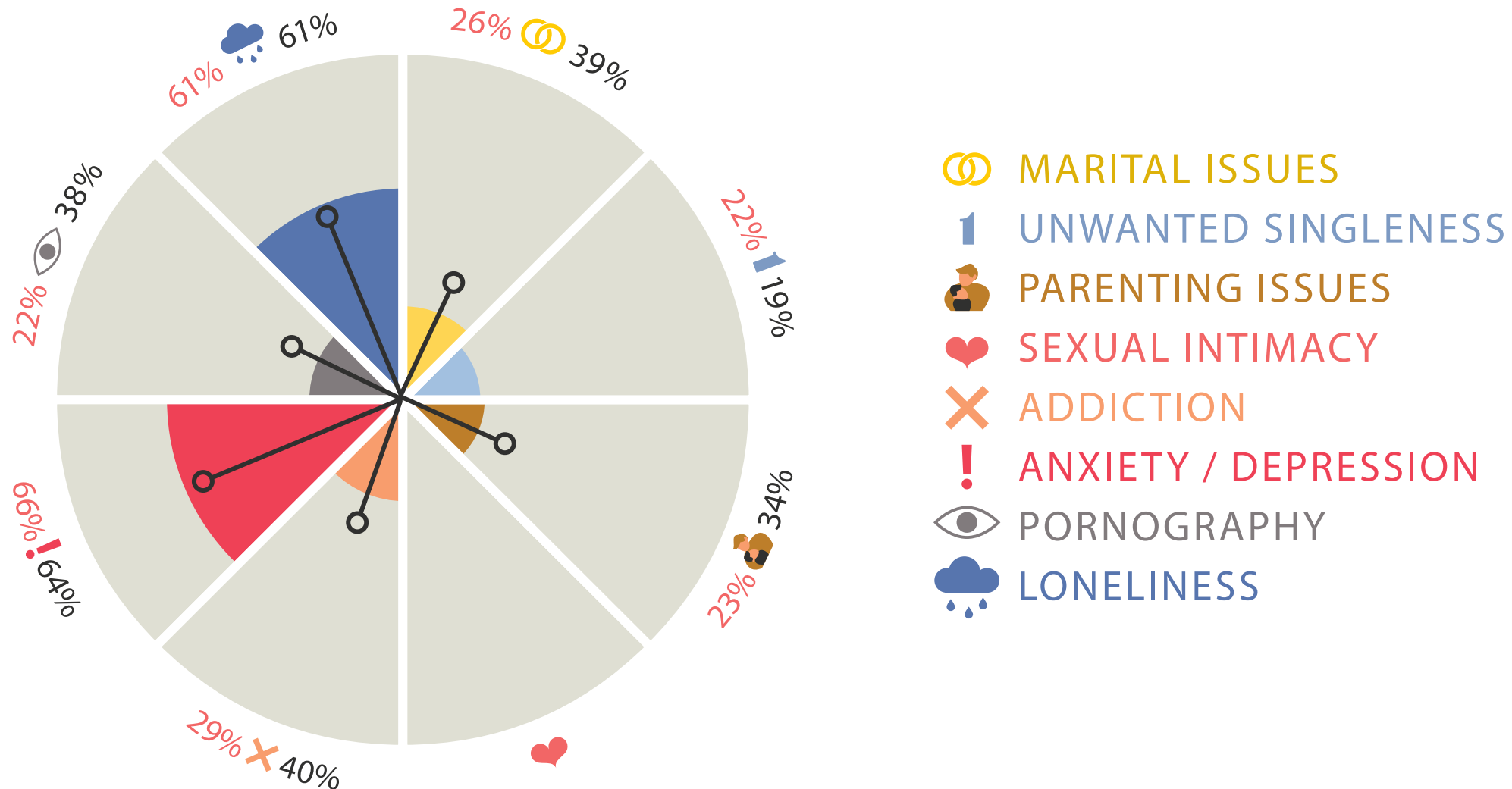
Currently married		33%	28%
Single		26%	20%
Ever divorced		36%	29%
Parent		30%	25%
Child 18 or under		38%	32%
Child 19+		28%	21%
Non-parent		28%	24%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		27%	25%
Catholic		30%	26%
No faith		30%	n/a

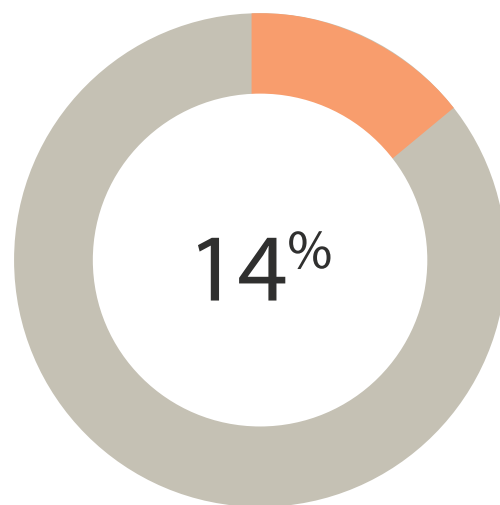
Problems with Sexual Intimacy

% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships

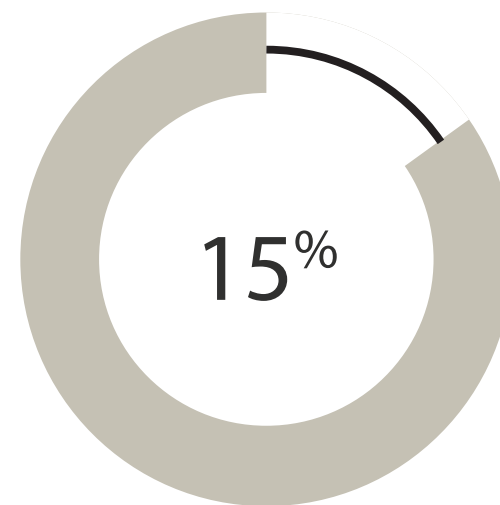


Addiction

U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS





Addiction




Barna










GENDER

Male		15%	21%
Female		13%	10%




AGE

Millennials		19%	27%
Gen X		17%	19%
Boomers		10%	7%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

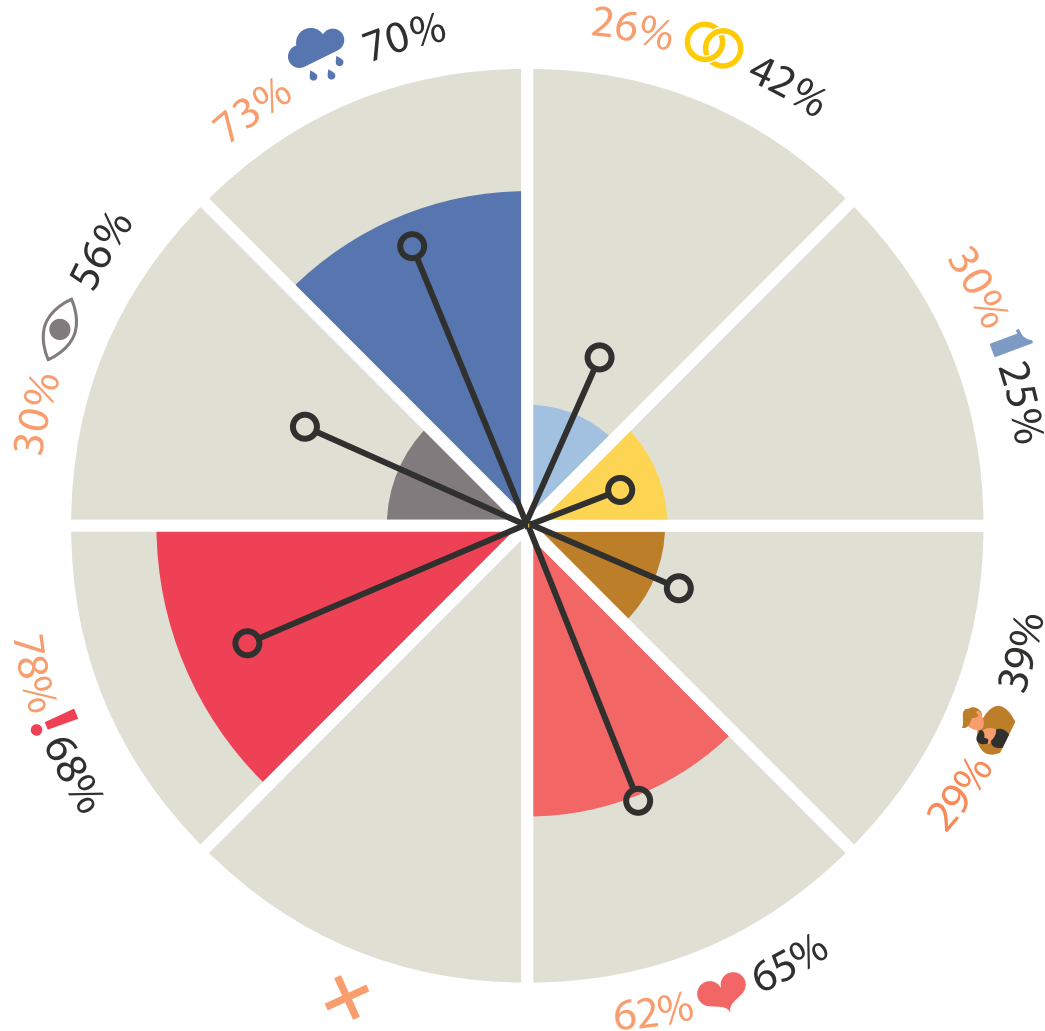
Currently married		10%	14%
Single		17%	17%
Ever divorced		17%	17%
Parent		13%	14%
Child 18 or under		18%	23%
Child 19+		10%	8%
Non-parent		15%	17%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		13%	15%
Catholic		15%	14%
No faith		12%	n/a

Addiction

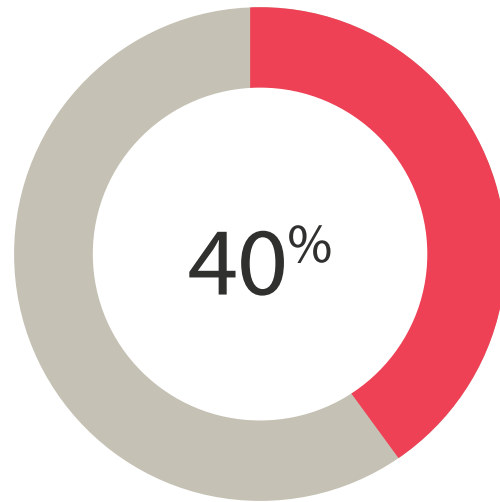
% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships



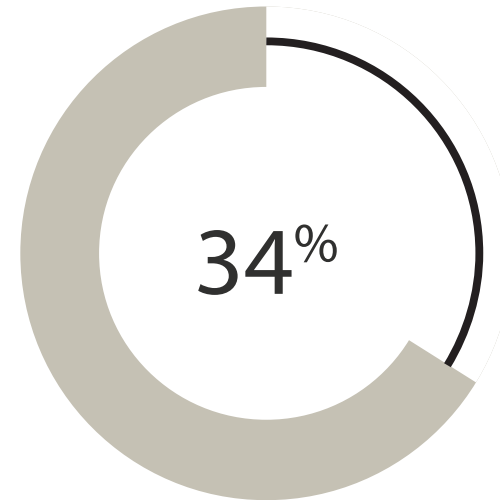
- 🔗 MARITAL ISSUES
- 1 UNWANTED SINGLENESS
- 👤 PARENTING ISSUES
- ❤️ SEXUAL INTIMACY
- ✂️ ADDICTION
- ! ANXIETY / DEPRESSION
- 👁️ PORNOGRAPHY
- ☁️ LONELINESS

Anxiety or Depression

U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS



Anxiety or Depression



GENDER

Male		36%	31%
Female		44%	36%

AGE

Millennials		56%	45%
Gen X		39%	39%
Boomers		32%	26%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

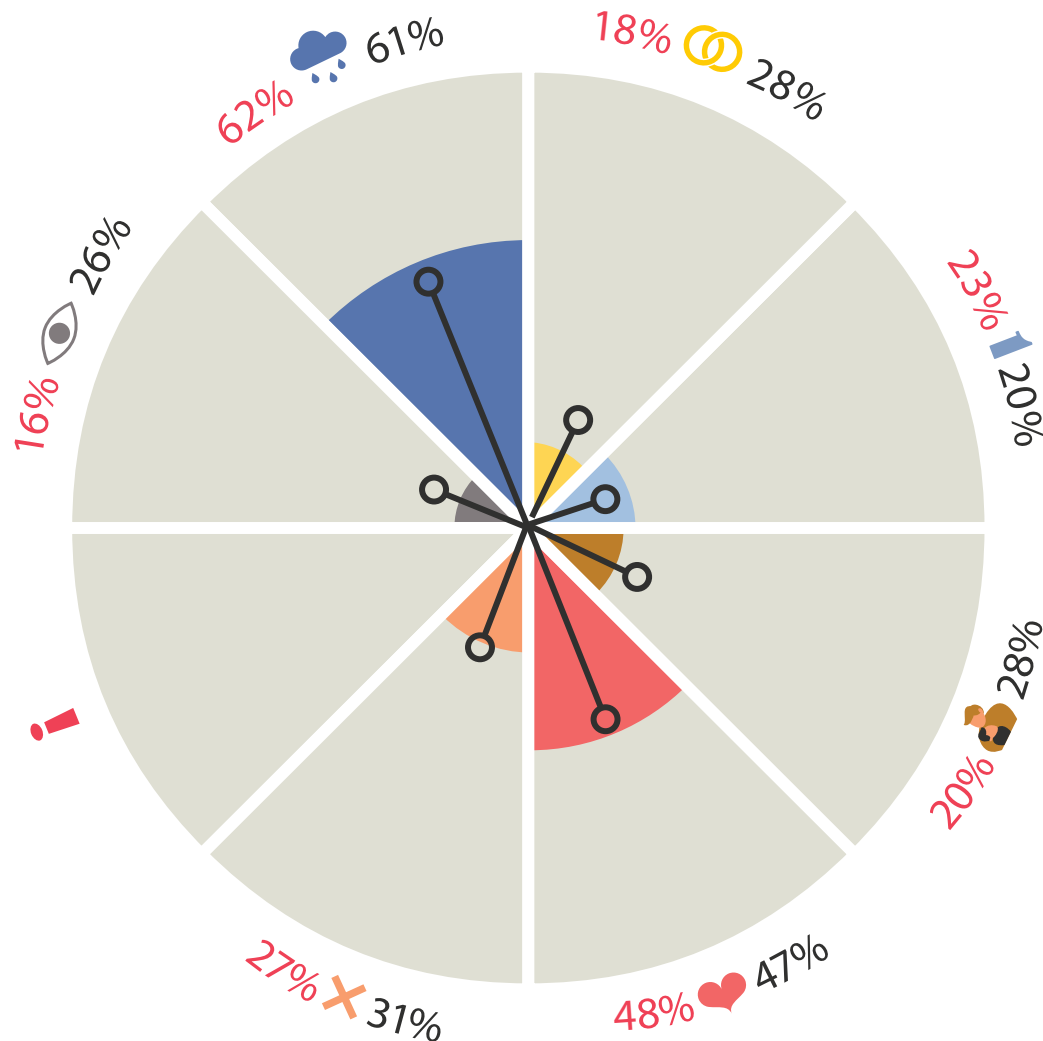
Currently married		33%	32%
Single		47%	36%
Ever divorced		44%	39%
Parent		38%	33%
Child 18 or under		49%	46%
Child 19+		30%	25%
Non-parent		44%	36%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		38%	35%
Catholic		33%	28%
No faith		50%	n/a

Anxiety or Depression

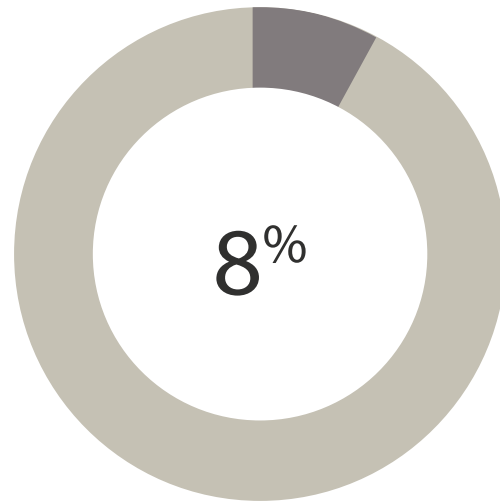
% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships



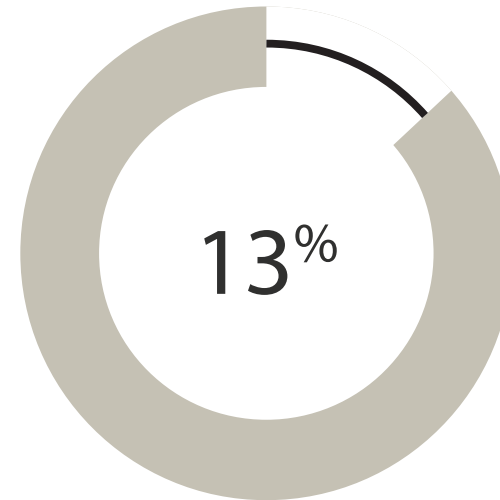
-  MARITAL ISSUES
-  UNWANTED SINGLENESS
-  PARENTING ISSUES
-  SEXUAL INTIMACY
-  ADDICTION
-  ANXIETY / DEPRESSION
-  PORNOGRAPHY
-  LONELINESS

Pornography

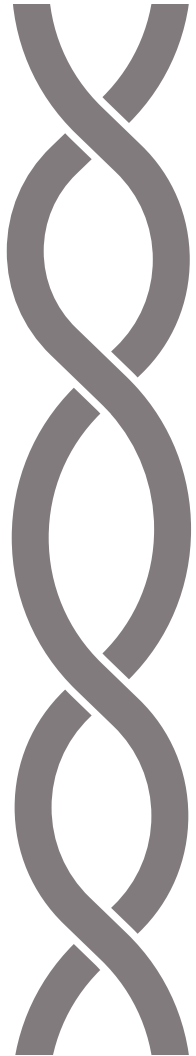
U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS



Pornography



GENDER

Male		11%	20%
Female		5%	7%

AGE

Millennials		12%	26%
Gen X		10%	17%
Boomers		5%	4%

RELATIONSHIPS

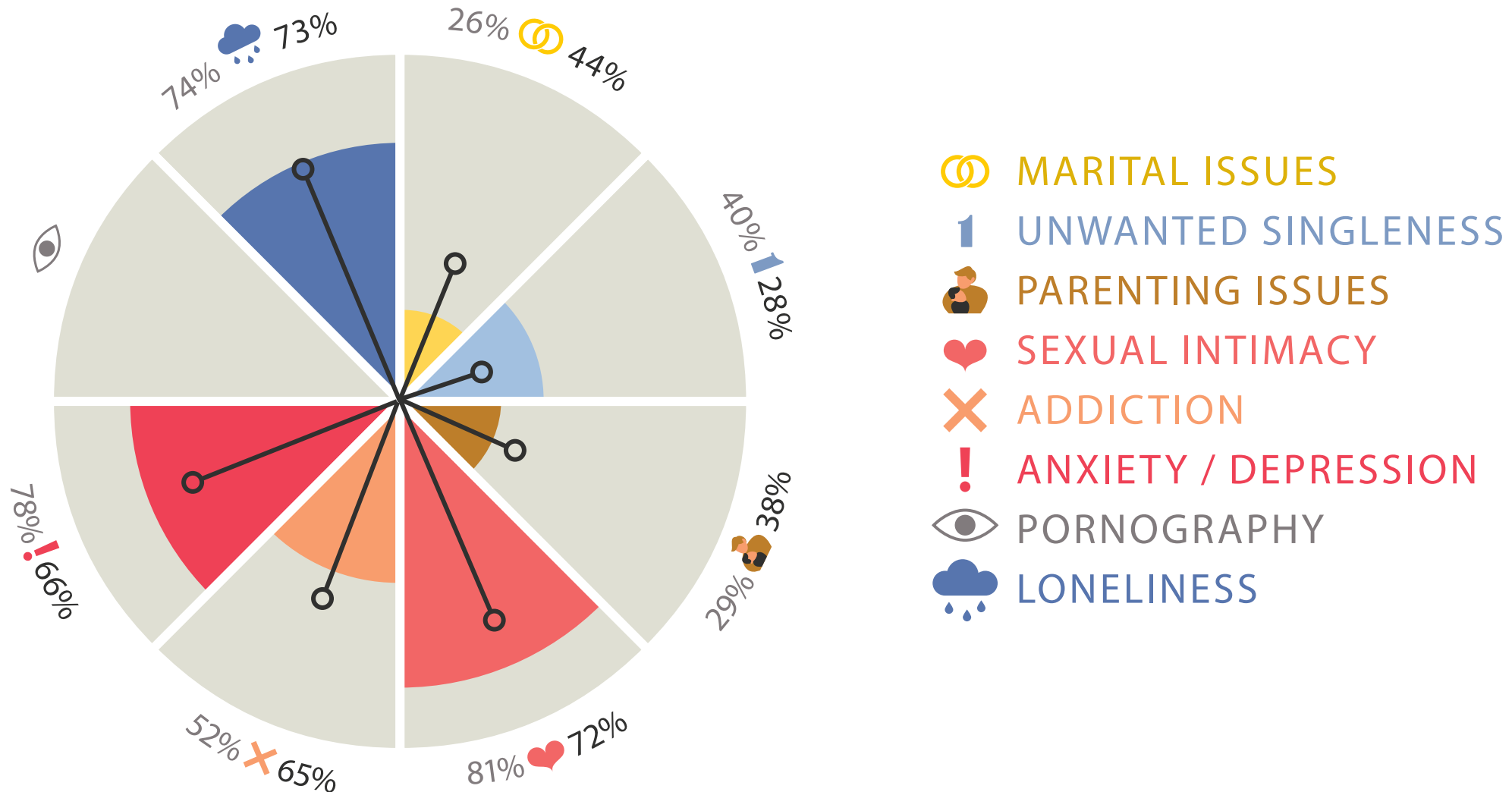
Currently married		6%	13%
Single		10%	13%
Ever divorced		8%	12%
Parent		6%	11%
Child 18 or under		8%	21%
Child 19+		4%	4%
Non-parent		12%	17%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		8%	13%
Catholic		8%	12%
No faith		7%	n/a

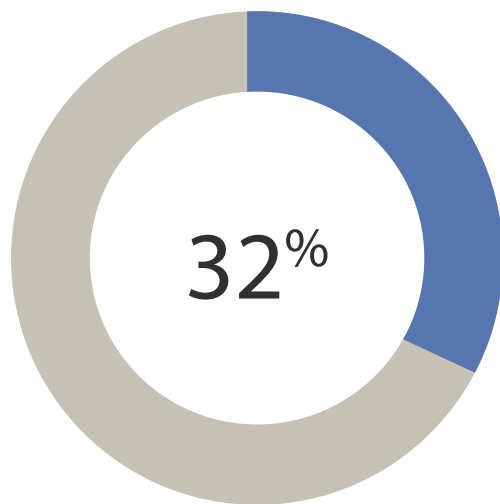
Pornography

% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships

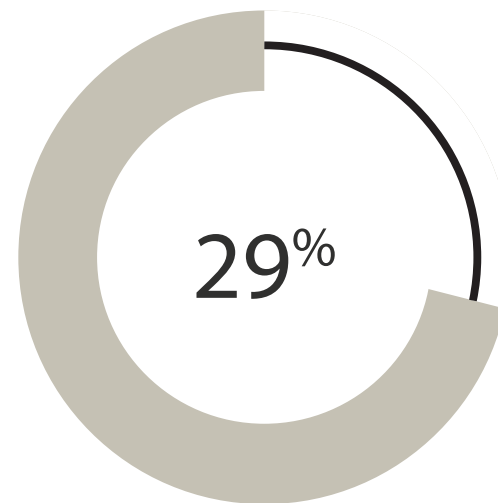


Loneliness

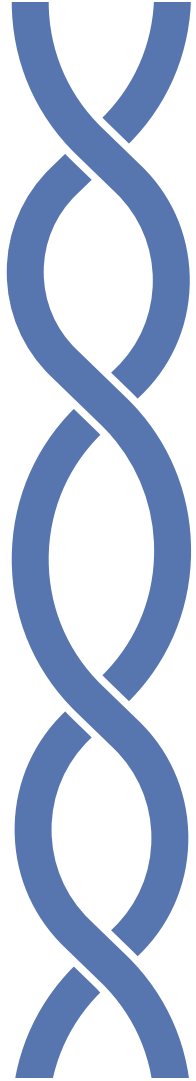
U.S. ADULTS



PRACTICING
CHRISTIANS



Loneliness



GENDER

Male		29%	30%
Female		35%	28%

AGE

Millennials:		43%	39%
Gen X		35%	35%
Boomers		25%	20%

RELATIONSHIPS

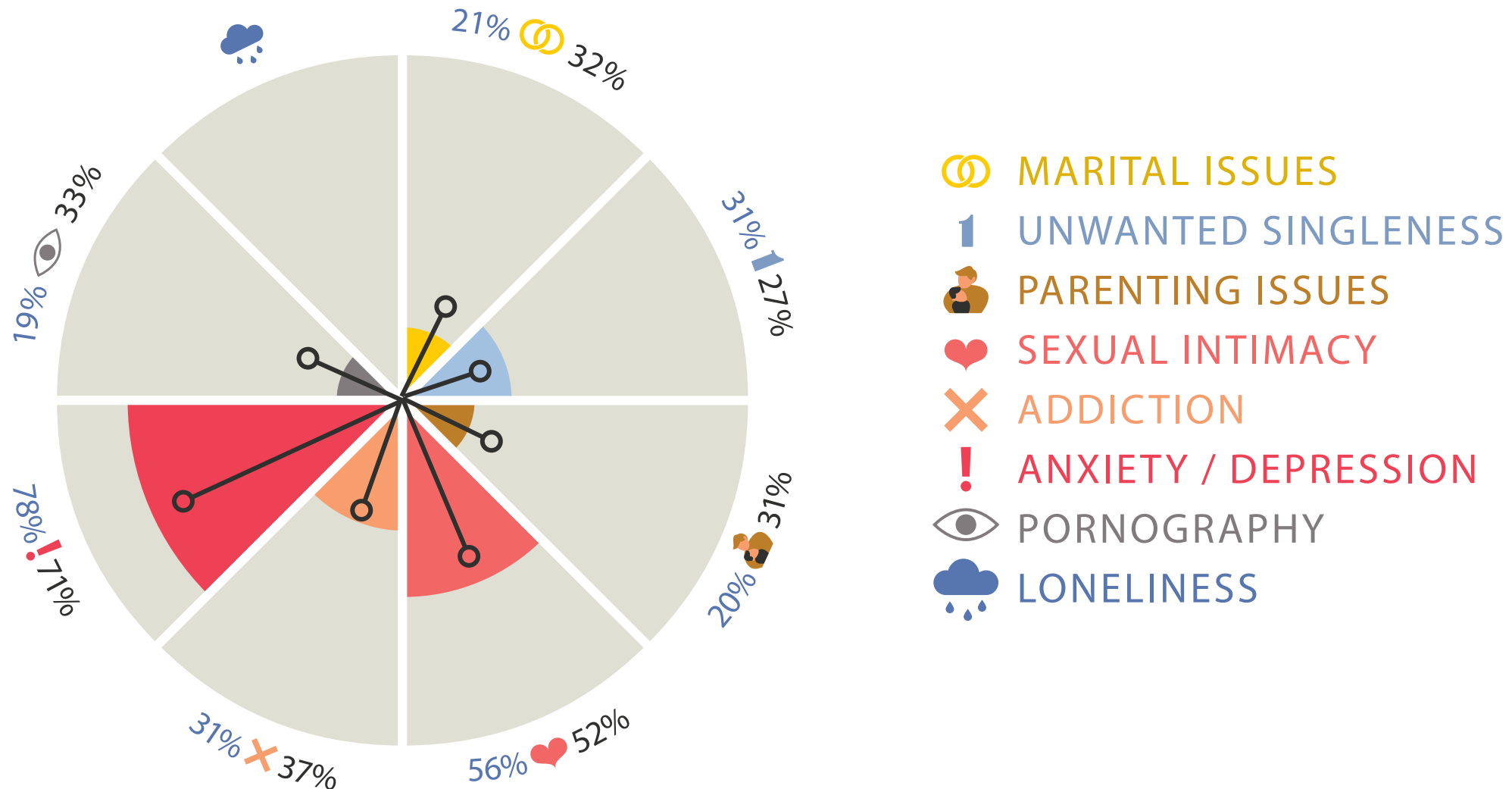
Currently married		22%	24%
Single		42%	36%
Ever divorced		33%	33%
Parent		30%	26%
Child 18 or under		36%	38%
Child 19+		26%	19%
Non-parent		35%	34%

FAITH IDENTITY

Protestant		31%	30%
Catholic		28%	23%
No faith		38%	n/a

Loneliness

% impacted by marital problems who say this issue also makes an impact on their most important relationships

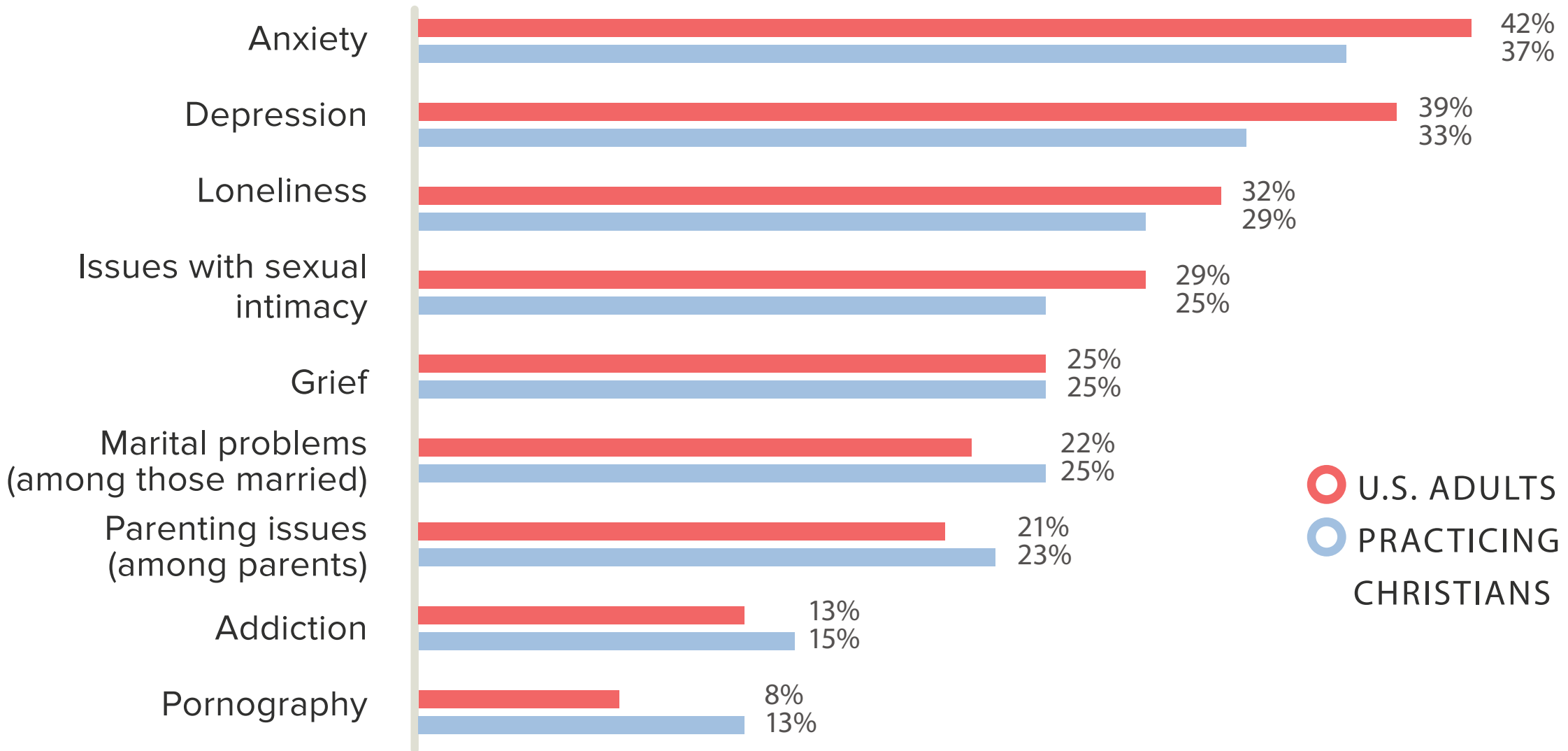




Three out of four people are experiencing relational pressure of some kind

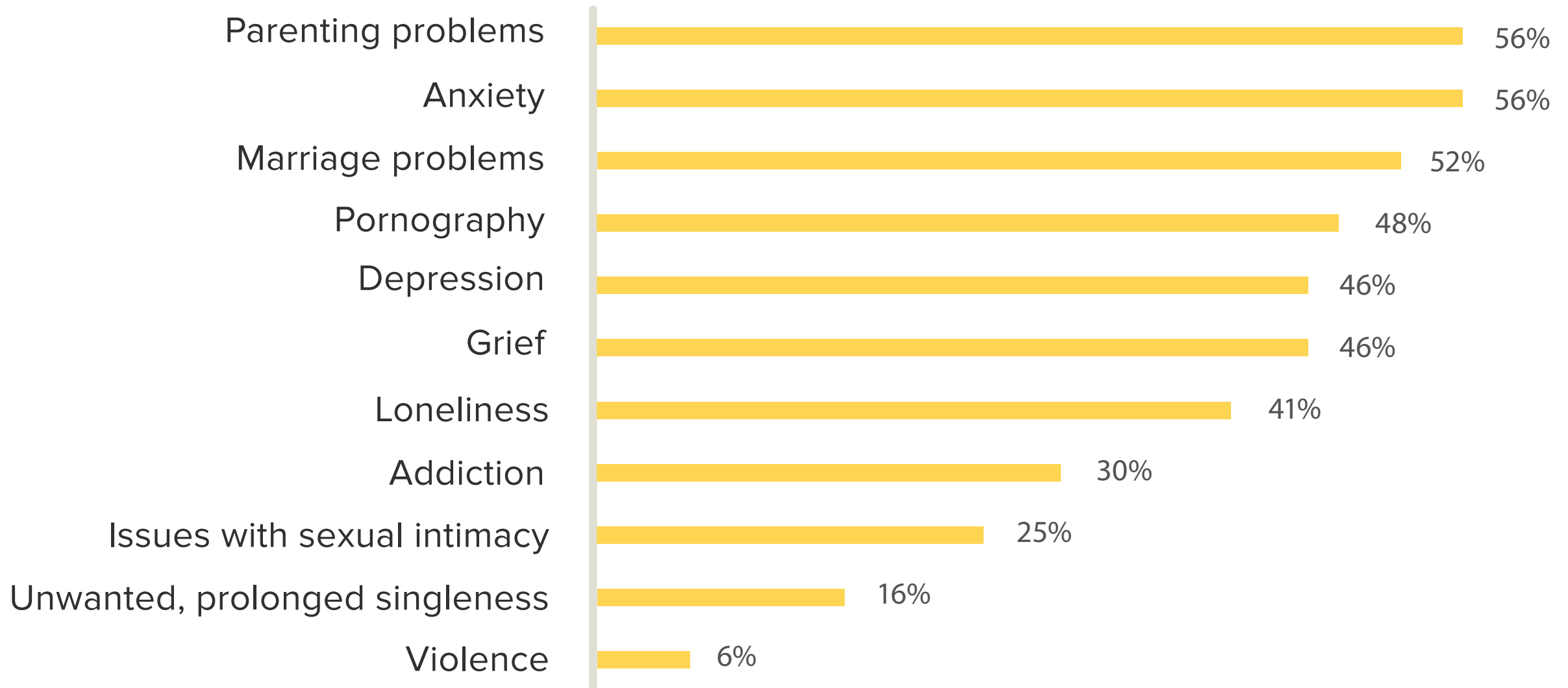
Issues That Make an Impact on My Relationships, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians

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Issues That Make an Impact on Congregants' Relationships, U.S. Pastors / Priests

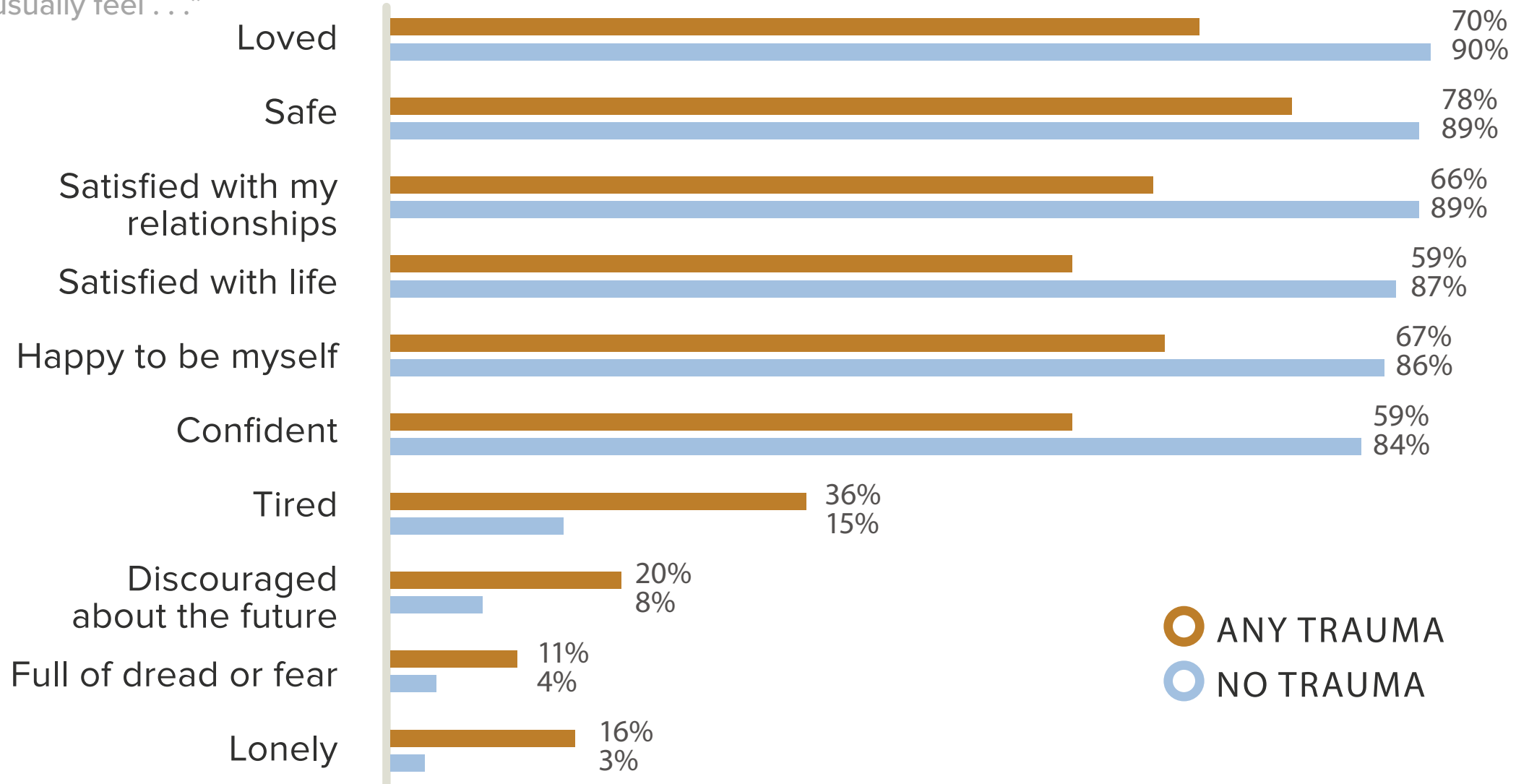
Barna



Feelings Inventory, by Experience of Trauma

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“I always or usually feel . . .”



Anxiety and depression are the most widely reported relational issues—due at least in part to the increasing ease people feel with discussing mental health



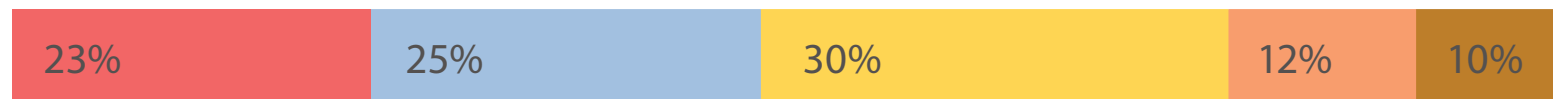
The Morality of Divorce, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians

Barna

○ ALWAYS ○ OFTEN ○ SOMETIMES ○ SELDOM ○ NEVER

Divorce can be permitted for a Christian.

U.S. adults



Divorce is morally acceptable.

Practicing Christians

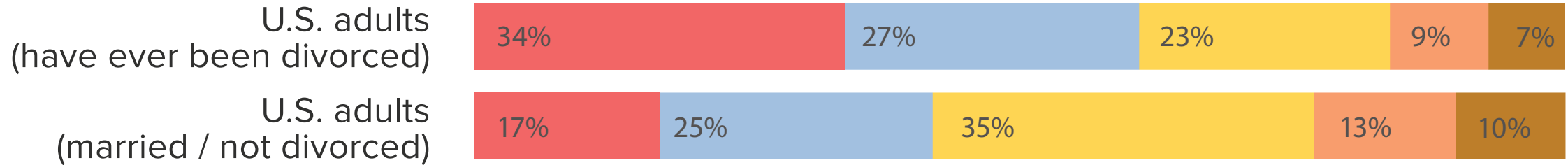


The Morality of Divorce, Married vs. Divorced Adults

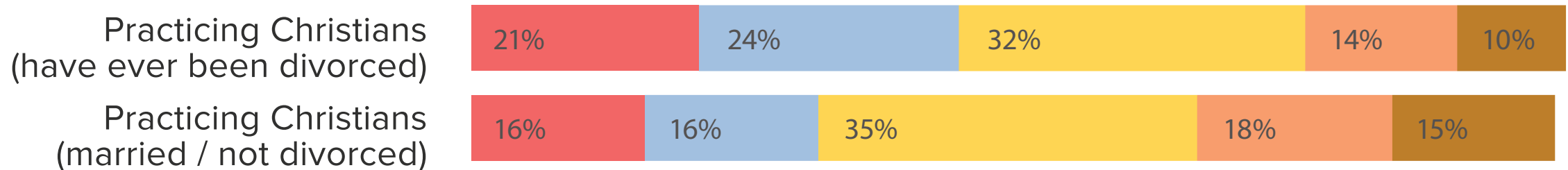
Barna

○ ALWAYS ○ OFTEN ○ SOMETIMES ○ SELDOM ○ NEVER

Divorce can be permitted for a Christian.



Divorce is morally acceptable.





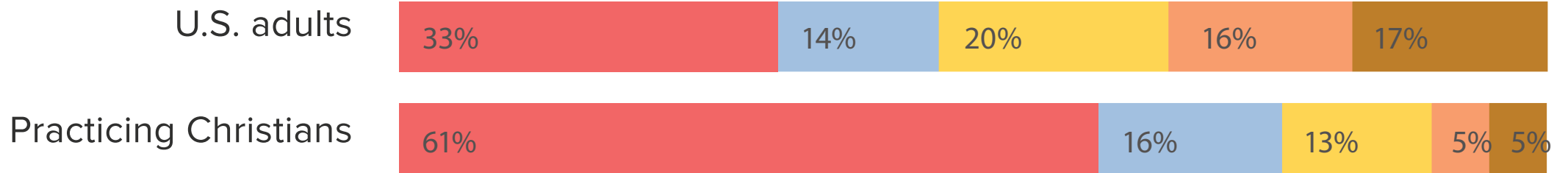
Younger generations are more accepting of pornography use, but the majority of practicing Christian Millennials and Gen Z still says it is morally wrong

The Morality of Porn Use, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians

Barna

○ ALWAYS ○ OFTEN ○ SOMETIMES ○ SELDOM ○ NEVER

Pornography use is morally wrong.

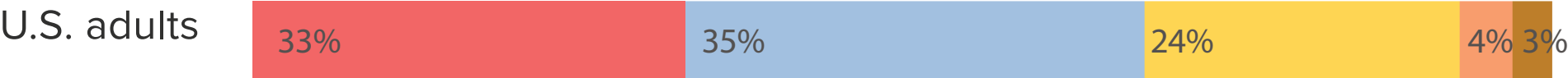


Perceptions About Mental & Emotional Health, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians Part 1



○ ALWAYS ○ OFTEN ○ SOMETIMES ○ SELDOM ○ NEVER

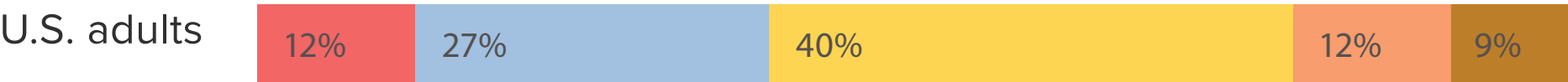
Anyone or everyone might face a relationship crisis.



In a fallen world, anyone or everyone might face a relationship crisis.



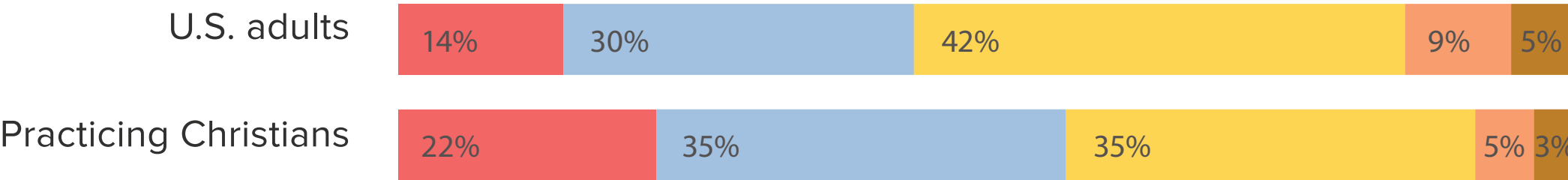
Physical, mental, sexual and spiritual health increase together.



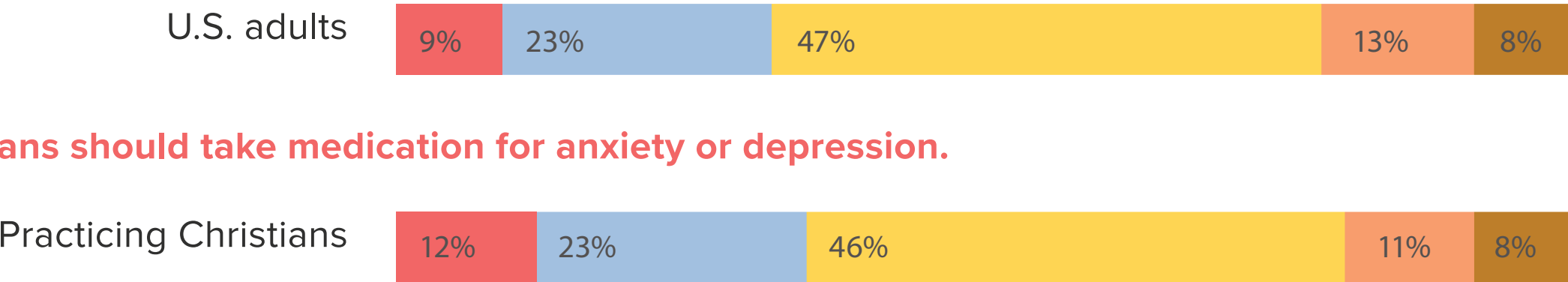
Perceptions About Mental & Emotional Health, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians Part 2

○ ALWAYS ○ OFTEN ○ SOMETIMES ○ SELDOM ○ NEVER

Counseling should be a part of any restoration or healing of relationship issues.



People should take medication for anxiety or depression.



Perceptions About Mental & Emotional Health, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians Part 3

Barna

○ ALWAYS ○ OFTEN ○ SOMETIMES ○ SELDOM ○ NEVER

The solution to mental health problems is Bible reading and prayer.

Practicing Christians



Christians should stick exclusively to things the Bible says or recommends when receiving counseling.

Practicing Christians



Perceptions About Mental & Emotional Health, U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians Part 4

Barna

○ ALWAYS ○ OFTEN ○ SOMETIMES ○ SELDOM ○ NEVER

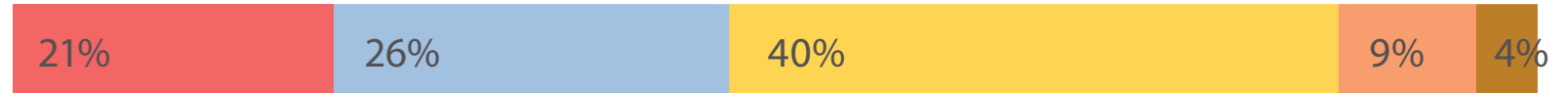
The solution to mental health problems is faith.

U.S. adults



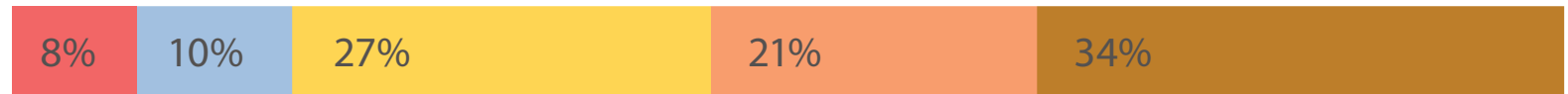
The solution to mental health problems is a closer walk with God.

Practicing Christians



Mental health problems are caused by evil spirits.

Practicing Christians



As young adults seek emotional well-being,
Christians who can speak the language of mental
and emotional health can help them connect to
their spiritual lives, as well





Practicing Christians with trauma experience are more likely to affirm that counseling should be a part of healing relationship issues

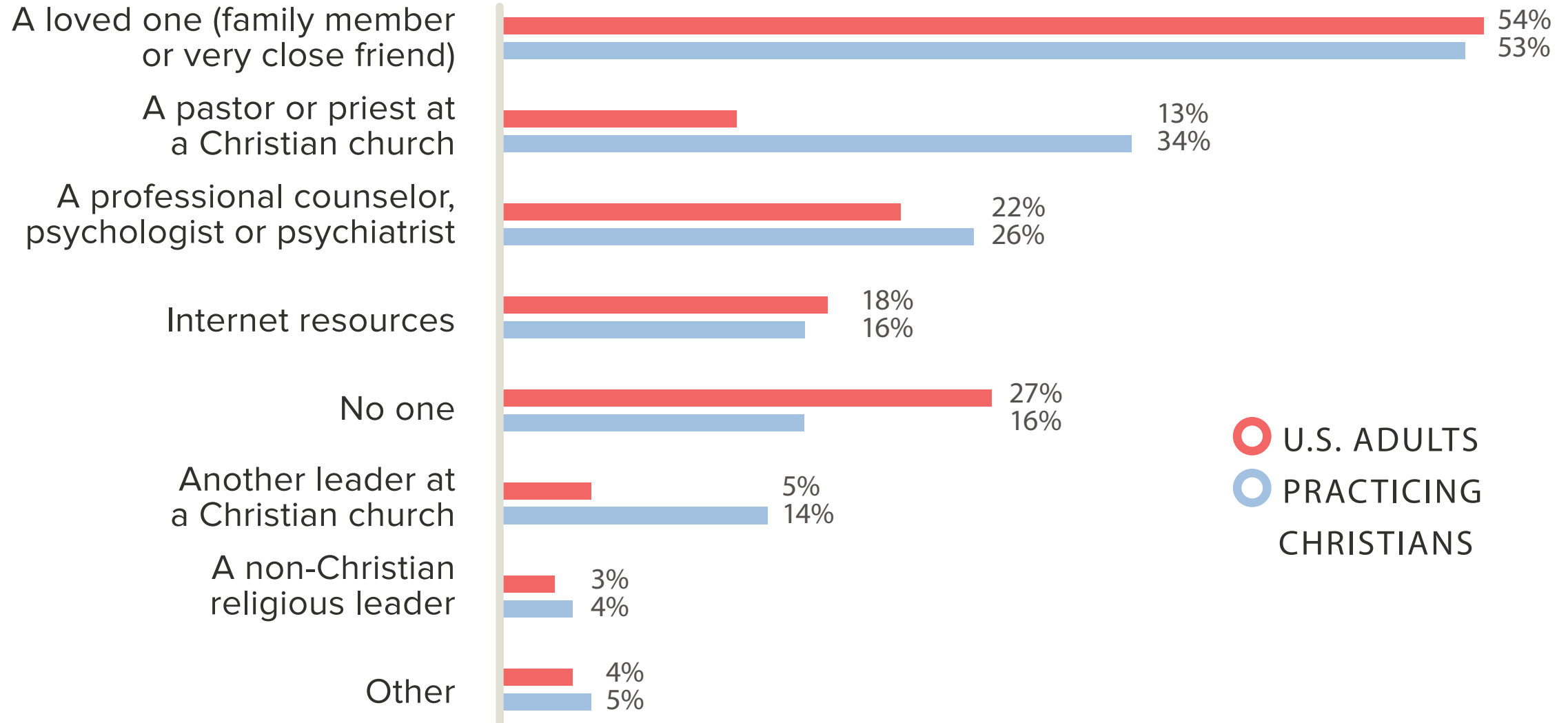


Practicing Christians are more likely than U.S. adults overall to turn to a pastor or priest for relational support—and are also more likely to seek help from a professional counselor or therapist

Where Do You Turn for Help? U.S. Adults vs. Practicing Christians

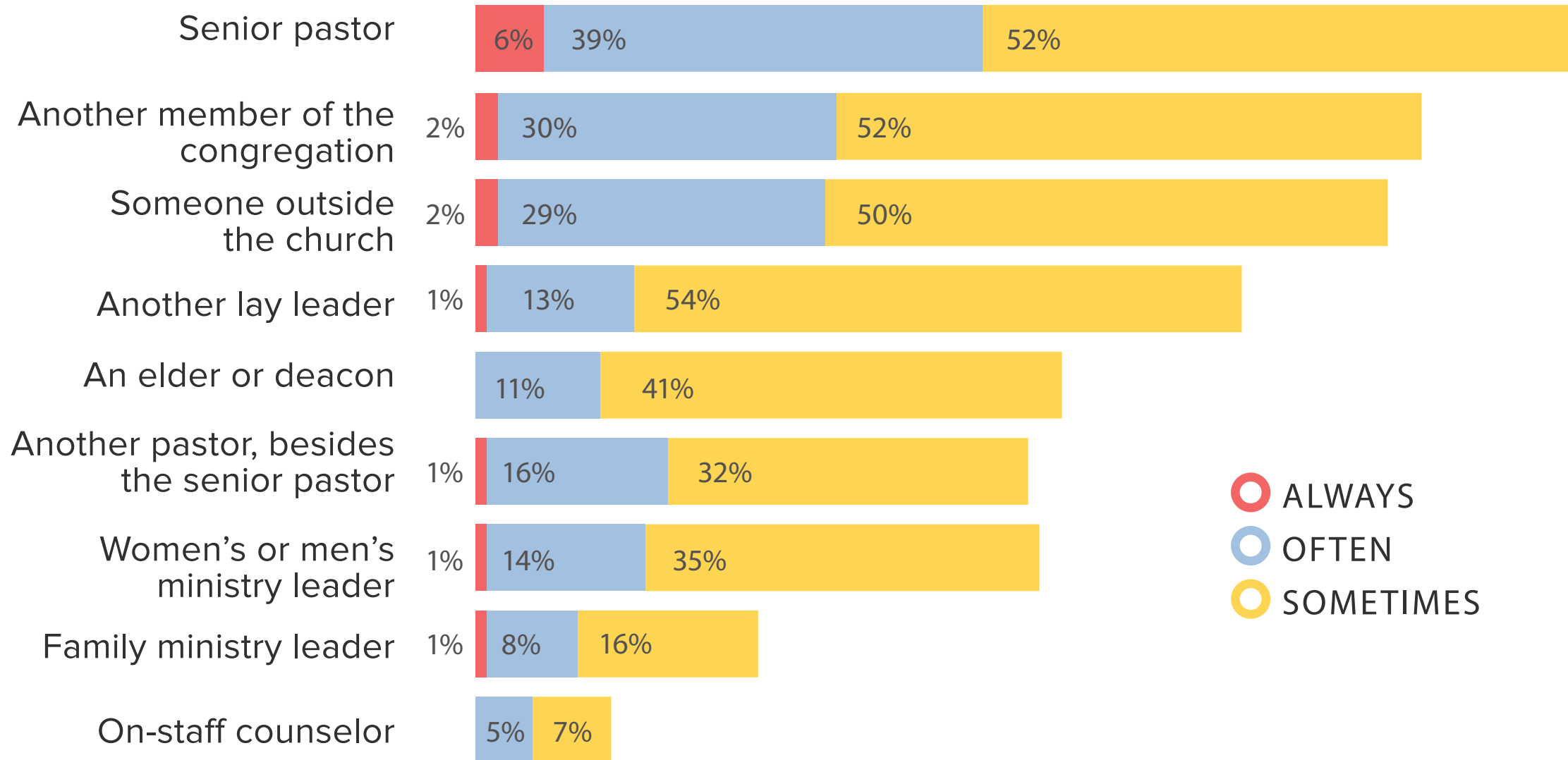
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% among those who have experienced a relationship hardship



Where Congregants Turn for Help, According to U.S. Pastors / Priests

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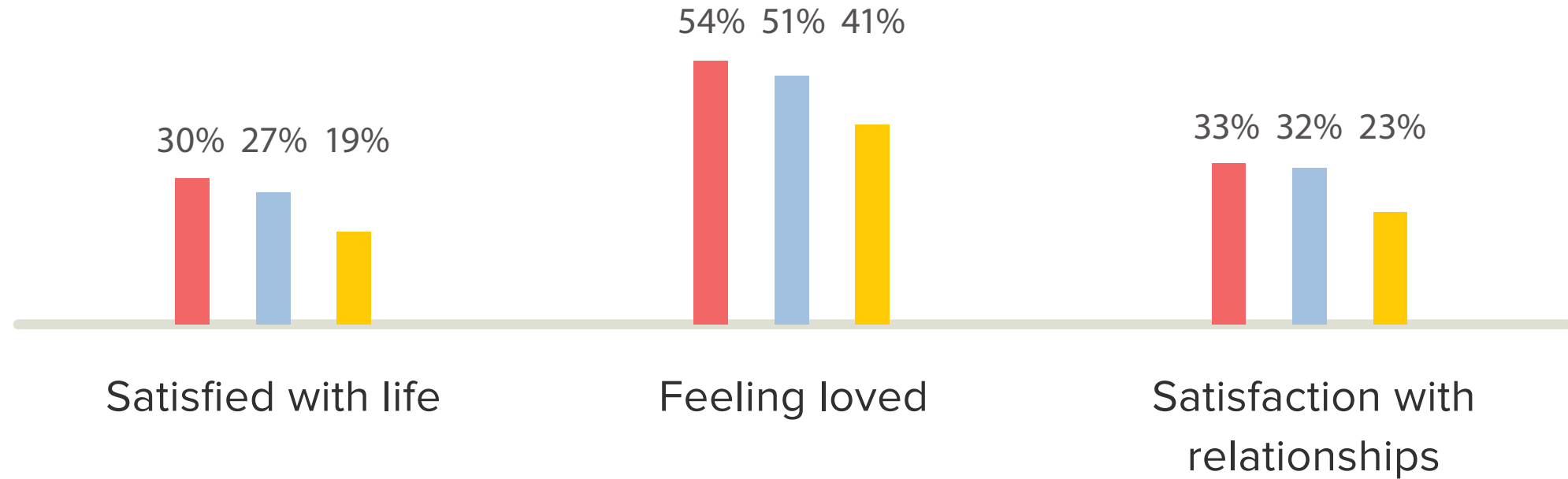


Well-Being Among Those Who Have Sought Help

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% “always” among practicing Christians

SOUGHT SPIRITUAL HELP SOUGHT RELATIONAL HELP SOUGHT PROFESSIONAL HELP



Turning to a spiritual source of support consistently correlates with more positive reports of satisfaction in relationships, of satisfaction with life and of feeling loved



How Often Do You Teach on Each Topic?

U.S. Pastors / Priests Part 1

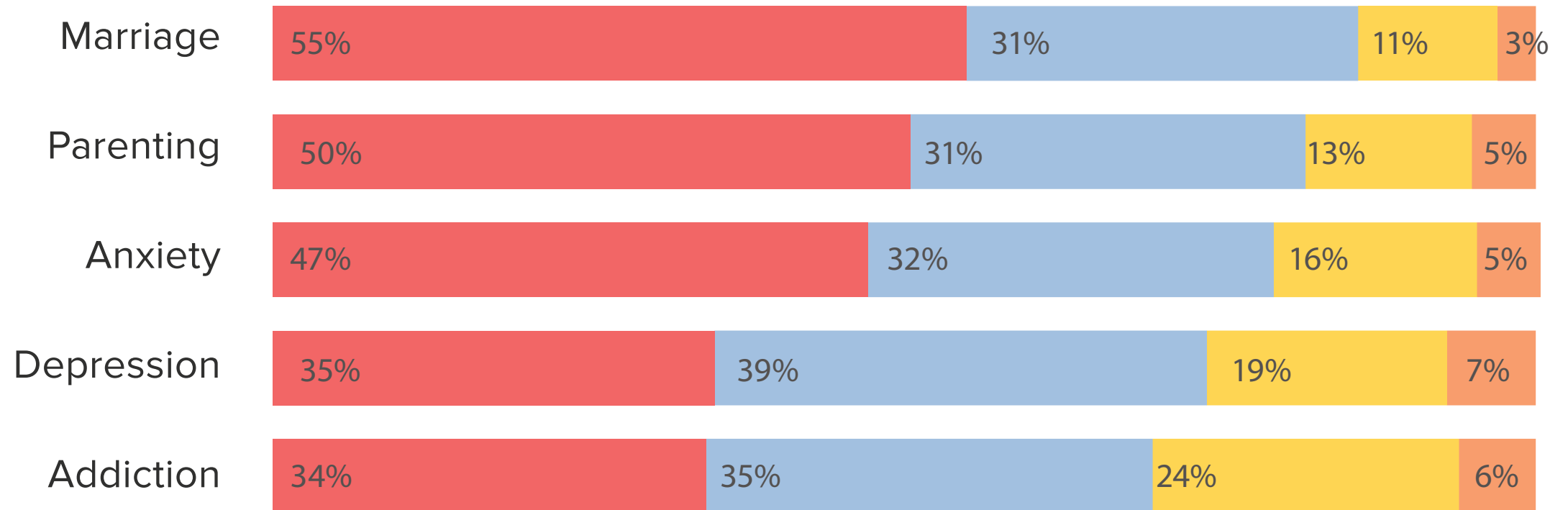
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● MORE THAN TWICE A YEAR

● LESS THAN ONCE A YEAR

● ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR

● NEVER



How Often Do You Teach on Each Topic?

U.S. Pastors / Priests Part 2

Barna

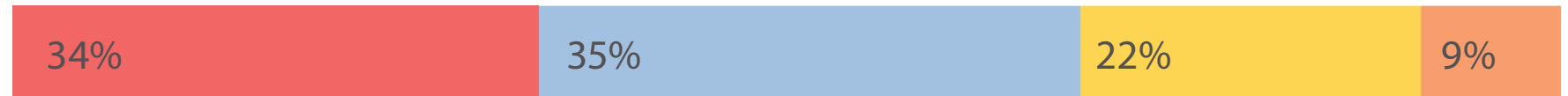
● MORE THAN TWICE A YEAR

● ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR

● LESS THAN ONCE A YEAR

● NEVER

Relationship crises



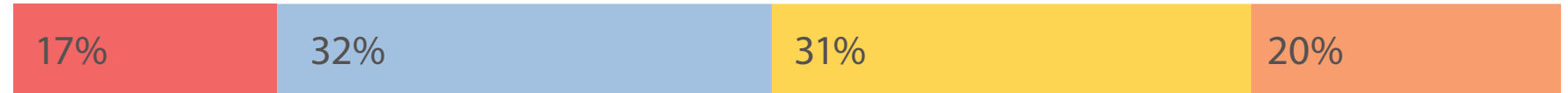
Loneliness



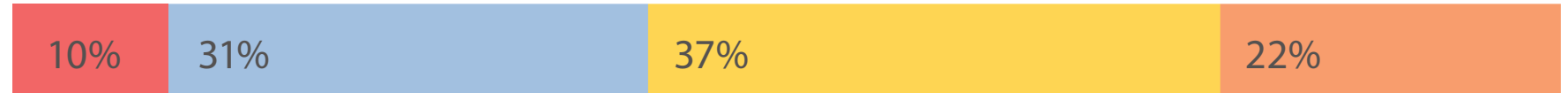
Pornography



Healthy sexuality



Singleness



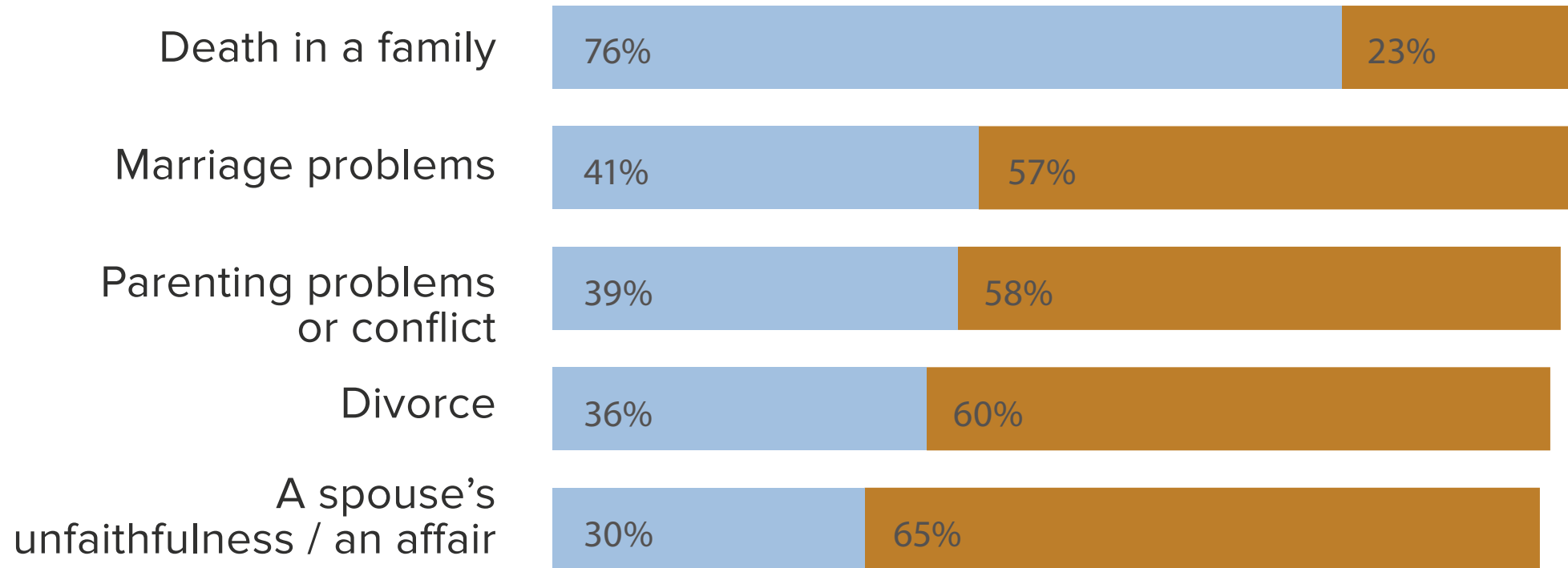
Pastors who feel equipped to talk about mental health teach about it at least once a year, but those who don't feel confident teach about it less frequently



How Well Equipped Are You to Address Each Topic? U.S. Pastors / Priests Part 1

Barna

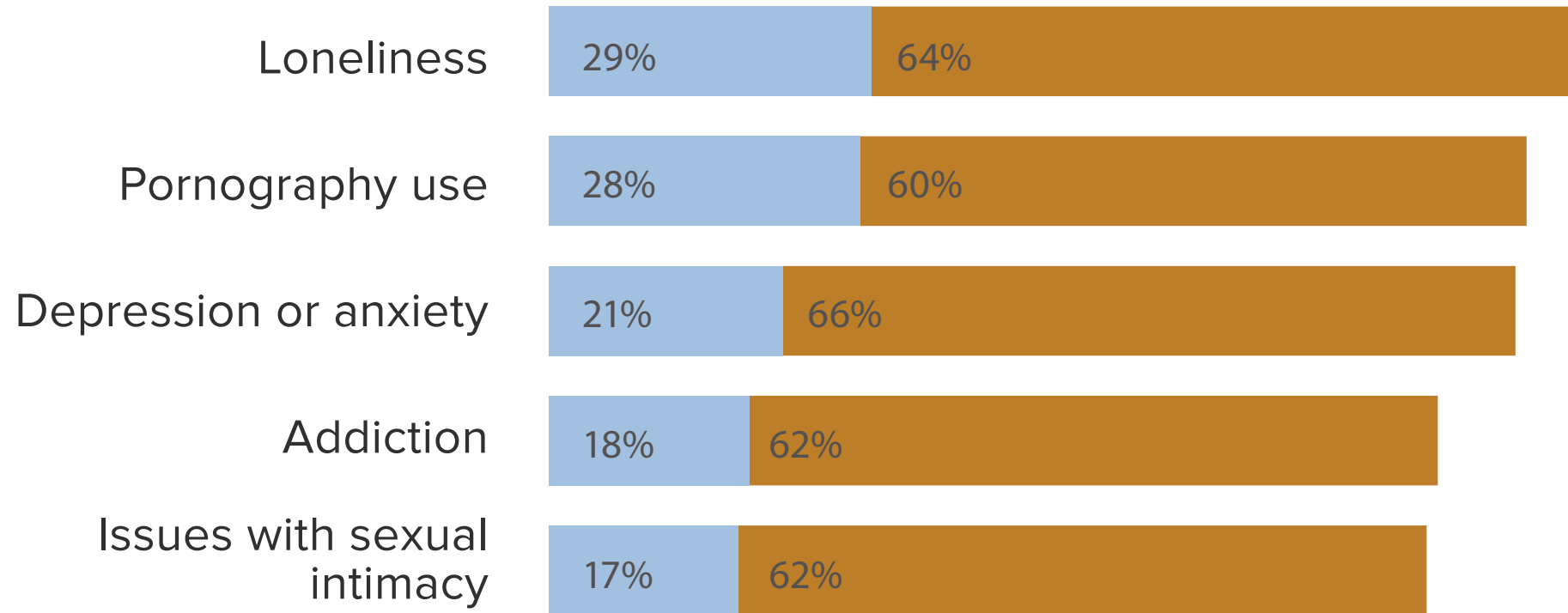
○ VERY EQUIPPED ○ SOMEWHAT EQUIPPED



How Well Equipped Are You to Address Each Topic? U.S. Pastors / Priests Part 2

Barna

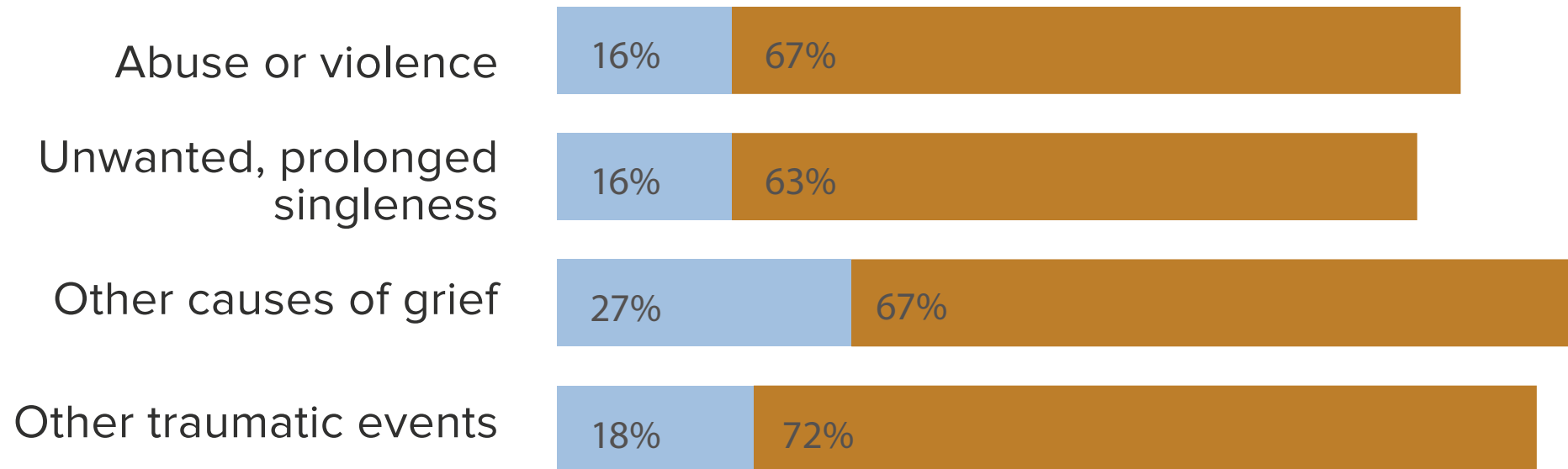
○ VERY EQUIPPED ○ SOMEWHAT EQUIPPED



How Well Equipped Are You to Address Each Topic? U.S. Pastors / Priests Part 3

Barna

○ VERY EQUIPPED ○ SOMEWHAT EQUIPPED



When churches offer some kind of in-house counseling services, practicing Christians show greater confidence in the trustworthiness of their church as a source of relational support





Good leadership means leading by example. The more pastors honestly talk about the real stuff of relationships, the more people will know that honest talk is how it's supposed to be done

Partners in Restoration

- Find a partner
- Use all your resources
- Connect groups
- Train
- Focus on anxiety and depression
- Talk about the hard stuff
- Get the word out



For more information about this study and to see the complete findings, check out our 2020 report:

Restoring Relationships

The full report is available at [**shop.barna.com**](https://shop.barna.com) or through Barna Access membership.