

FOOTHILLS COUNTY FCSS SOCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT & PRIORITIZATION PLAN



UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL NEEDS & ISSUES FACING
FOOTHILLS COUNTY RESIDENTS





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, we honour and acknowledge that this project took place on the traditional and ancestral territories of the peoples of Treaty 7. This includes the Blackfoot Confederacy — comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai Nations — as well as the Tsuut'ina Nation, and the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations of Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley (now collectively known as the Stoney Nakoda). We also recognize the Métis people of Region 3, who have deep connections to this land. We honor and respect the enduring presence, knowledge, cultures, and contributions of all Indigenous peoples who have been caretakers of this land for generations and whose presence continue to enrich our lives and our communities.



ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Social Needs Assessment and Prioritization Plan was created with the valuable support, guidance and participation of many, without whom this project would not have been possible. A sincere thank you is extended to the residents of the Foothills County, local community service organizations, the staff of Foothills County FCSS and Kimberly Kueber, the consultant hired to guide and support the implementation of this project.

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PART 1:
THE
PROCESS

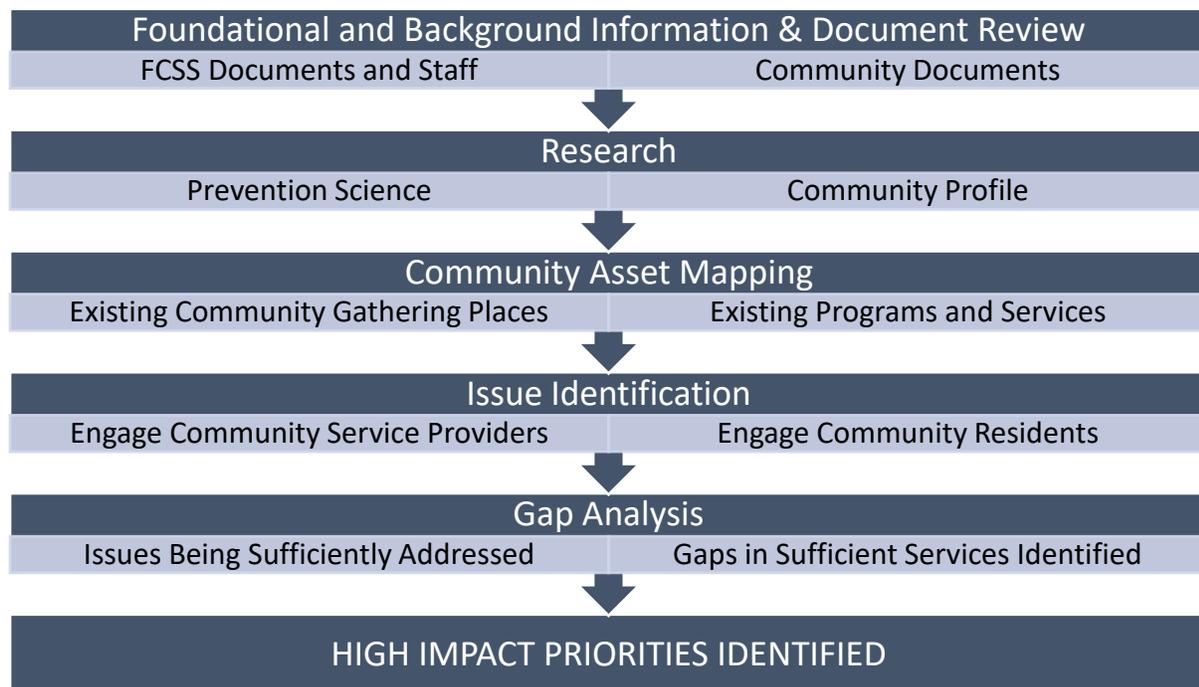
PART 1: THE PROCESS

Family Community and Support Services (FCSS) has a provincially legislated mandate of prevention, helping to build the social well-being of individuals, families and community.

Foothills County FCSS staff and board wanted to develop a better understanding of County specific community issues and needs as they relate to prevention and social well-being. It was hoped that this information would help to clarify the role Foothills County FCSS can play, given its mandate, and provide direction for future strategies and investment to support residents and help prevent and address the most prevalent social issues. It was also hoped that this understanding would help to set priorities and would support evidence-based decision making to ensure that any investments in preventive social services provided in Foothills County have the biggest impact possible, given the current community context and resources available.

Foothills County FCSS board secured consulting services at the end of 2024 to support County FCSS staff in implementing a Social Needs Assessment and Prioritization Plan to identify local social issues and potential areas of priority, based on evidence and prevention research. This is the first Social Needs Assessment conducted by Foothills County FCSS and will provide a baseline of information to support the tracking of trends over time, if further Social Needs Assessments are conducted in the future.

Foothills County FCSS identified what information would be most valuable and which pieces of the potential process were most critical for this initial SNAP. Given the priorities and budget available, the following process was developed and undertaken in 2024-2025, with FCSS staff and the consultant sharing responsibility for various pieces of the process.



Part 1: The Process

Foundational Background Info & Document Review

Initially, County FCSS staff were interviewed and a number of foundational documents were reviewed to better understand the local community context and the FCSS mandate. Some of the documents reviewed included:

- FCSS Act
- FCSS Regulation
- FCSS Accountability Framework
- FCSS Program Advice Inventory Listing
- Foothills County (DRAFT) Strategic Plan – 2024
- Joint Planning Area 3 Context Study – Community Engagement Phases 1 & 2 – What we Heard Report – March 2024
- What We Heard: Planning Area 4 Context Study Phase I Engagement – June 2024
- What We Heard: Foothills Regional Airport Land Use Project - 2024
- M.D. of Foothills Recreation Facility Development Plan – 2016
- Foothills County FCSS Strategic Plan – 2025
- High River FCSS - Social Wellbeing Assessment 2023-2024

Part 1: The Process

Research

Research was conducted to better understand the FCSS mandate of prevention and what current prevention science identifies as being the most critical factors associated with the prevention of the Provincial Prevention Priorities outlined the Government of Alberta’s FCSS Accountability Framework and some of the higher-level social issues facing Foothills County.

Data was gathered to better understand the demographics and population of Foothills County, with a focus on data that relates to the FCSS mandate and the social well-being of individuals, families and community. Data was primarily sourced from Statistics Canada census information, but also included other sources like the Alberta Health Community Profiles for the Foothills County area, the Alberta Early Development Instrument Community Profile Report for Foothills County, local school divisions’ Annual Education Results Report and others.

For comparison purposes, where possible, Foothills County data was compared with Alberta as a whole and Sturgeon County, a county of similar size and proximity to a major urban centre.

Part 1: The Process

Community Asset Mapping

Like other large, rural municipalities encircling or abutting other towns and cities where the majority of resources and services exist, Foothills County residents rely heavily on the

community assets, including social programs and services, that are available in other municipalities.

One potential issue identified in the initial phase of this project was that some County residents access all services, socialize and identify with living in one of the nearby towns, or the city of Calgary, as opposed to the municipality they technically live in – Foothills County.

Due to project limitations, a full asset mapping process could not be undertaken, however, as an initial step in mapping Foothills County specific assets, taking into account the points made above, it was decided to focus on mapping Foothills County FCSS funded programs and services that are available directly in the County, as well as the services provided by those who responded to the Community Service Provider Survey, with hopes that they may be assets that may be able to be leveraged in the future to deepen County FCSS's impact.

Potential public community gathering places, including sports venues, schools, churches and various community halls and associations located directly in Foothills County, were also identified and assessed to determine how active they currently are and whether they are currently offering community-based social programming for County residents. Again, taking into account the points made above, these assets were mapped in hopes they could potentially be leveraged in the future to support the social well-being of County residents.

Part 1: The Process

Issue Identification

A community engagement process was undertaken to gather additional evidence of the current social issues facing Foothills County residents. The majority of questions used in this engagement process directly aligned with the prevention science research findings to ensure that evidence gathered was supported by research as being highly relevant to the prevention of prevalent high level social issues.

Information was sought from community residents and community service providers, using various community surveys, as well as in-person community consultations with specific demographic groups. Community residents were asked about their own personal experience, whereas Community Service Providers were asked about their observations, based on their experience of serving Foothills County residents.

Part 1: The Process

Gap Analysis

Community service providers were asked to not only identify the level of prevalence of a number of risk factors facing different demographic groups in Foothills County, but also to identify, based on their knowledge of the social service landscape and experience supporting County residents, whether those risk factors were currently being sufficiently addressed with the current programs and services available for County residents.

Potential gaps in services were identified based on high to medium level of prevalence of a specific risk factor and community service providers identifying that the risk factor is not currently being relatively sufficiently addressed.

Although a fulsome gap analysis could not be completed due to project constraints, and there are limitations to any gap analysis, all of the data collected, especially the information provided by the community service providers can still provide valuable insight into the current need and potential gaps in services.

Part 1: The Process

High Impact Priorities Identified

High impact priorities were identified from examining the prevention science research and associated high impact opportunity protective and risk factors, data from the Community Profile, and data from the community engagement efforts, including the Household/Adult Survey, Youth Survey and Community and Social Service Provider Survey.

The degree of evidence, as well as any related identified gaps in services, were taken into account when identifying the priorities, with any potential opportunities for Foothills County FCSS taking into consideration the FCSS mandate and the FCSS Accountability Framework.

The remainder of this report contains the highlights, findings and resulting recommendations from this process.

Part 1: The Process

Limitations to the Process

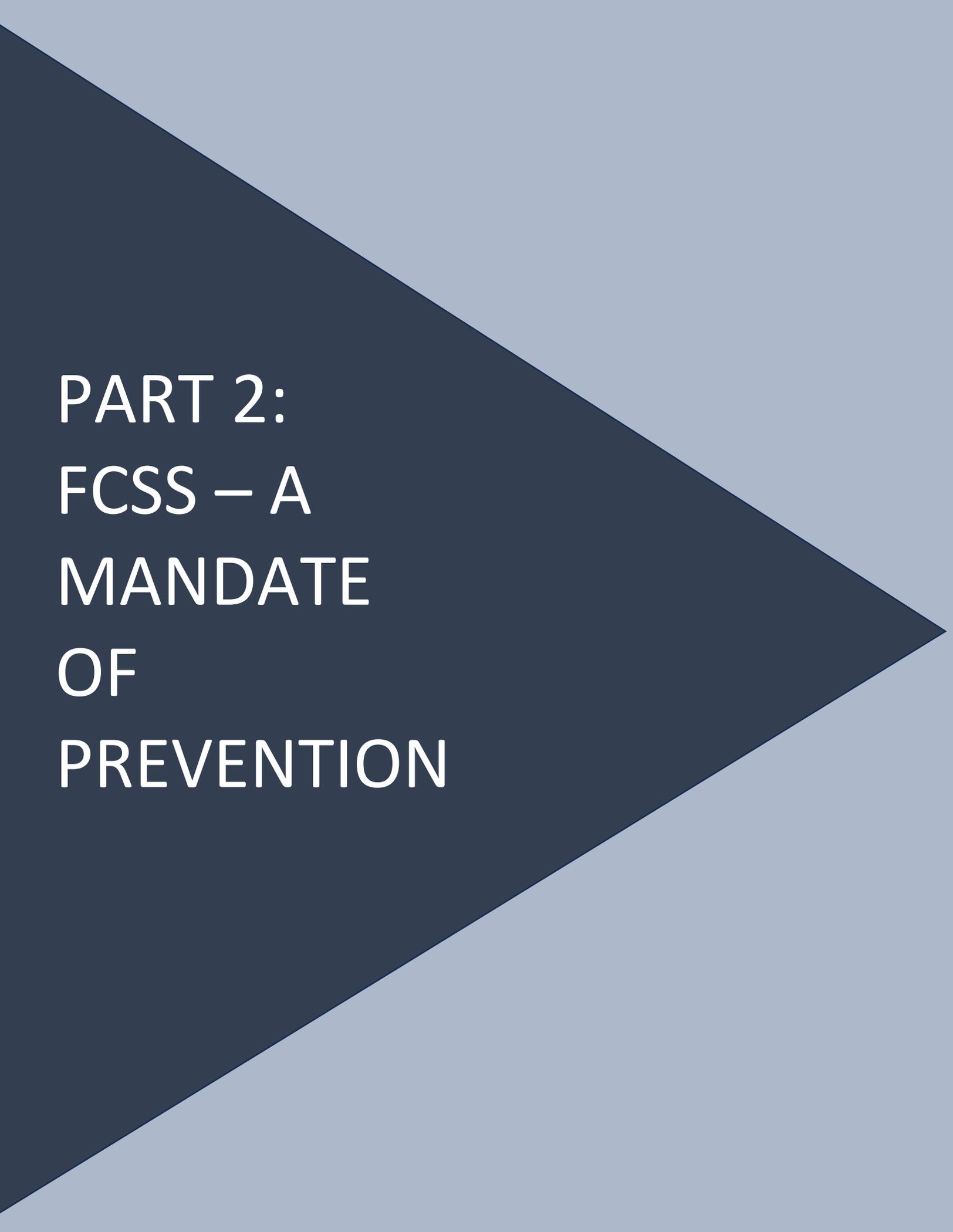
It is important to acknowledge that there were limitations to the process design, as well as challenges to implementing the process that may influence the final result.

The process was designed taking into account budget constraints, which only allowed for a limited amount of asset mapping, a rudimentary gap analysis and limited in-person resident consultations.

As the project unfolded, there were challenges encountered around a lack of existing relationships and communication channels with community residents, making awareness of the community engagement portion of the project more difficult. Strategies were put into place to reach as many community residents as possible, with unforeseen circumstances negatively impacting those strategies as well.

Youth engagement in rural areas often is supported through the local schools. However, during the engagement phase of this project, school support staff were on strike, making reaching County youth much more difficult.

Focus groups (community conversations) were organized for Foothills County older adults to share their perspectives on what issues they are experiencing. Unfortunately, very few County seniors attended, making the data gathered not overly reliable and only usable to support other data, not draw conclusions from.



PART 2:
FCSS – A
MANDATE
OF
PREVENTION

PART 2: FCSS - A MANDATE OF PREVENTION

FCSS is a legislated funding agreement between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities and Métis Settlements, where the Government of Alberta provides 80% of the funding and the participating municipality or Métis Settlement provides 20% of the funding. There is an FCSS Act and Regulation outlining the parameters of this agreement and an FCSS Accountability Framework outlining the priorities, strategies and outcomes for the FCSS Program.

Foothills County FCSS is required to adhere to the parameters and limitations set out by the Government of Alberta when it comes to any activity, service or program it undertakes that is supported with FCSS funding.

The FCSS Regulation states that services MUST:

...be of a preventive nature that enhances the social well-being of individuals and families through promotion or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity.ⁱ

In addition, it also states that FCSS must NOT:

1. Provide primarily for the recreational needs or leisure time pursuits of individuals,
2. Offer direct assistance, including money, food, clothing or shelter, to sustain and individual or family,
3. Be primarily rehabilitative in nature, or
4. Duplicate services that are ordinarily provided by a government or government agencyⁱⁱ

Part 2: FCSS - A Mandate of Prevention

The Prevention Continuum

The FCSS Accountability Framework defines prevention as:

A proactive process that strengthens the protective factors of individuals, families and communities to promote well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life, and empowers them to meet the challenges of life.ⁱⁱⁱ

To better understand prevention and the role FCSS is mandated to play, the FCSS Accountability Framework highlights the Prevention Continuum and states that any FCSS funded services must focus on Primary and Secondary Prevention. Primary Prevention focuses on building protective factors, whereas Secondary Prevention focuses on preventing and mitigating risk factors.

Protective factors focus on building and promoting factors that support healthy development and well-being of individuals, families and communities. They can be considered assets that

can support and buffer people from the challenges of life. Risk factors can be anything that increases the likelihood of negative outcomes for an individual, family and/or community.

Although still within the prevention continuum, Tertiary Prevention is outside the scope of the FCSS mandate and can only be considered under a declared public health emergency.

FCSS services	Primary Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address root causes of social issues with focus on the general population or a specific population. • Promote protective factors in the physical and social environment (including social relationships). • Can include awareness programs, enhancing connections among community organizations and promoting community volunteerism.
	Secondary Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address issues at an early stage for specific groups or at-risk populations. • Strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to prevent or reduce risk factors and build resilience. • Can include connecting those in need with appropriate resources and skill development.
Additional services permitted only during a public health emergency or extenuating circumstance, as determined by Minister	Tertiary Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address immediate needs with intent to prevent long-term impacts. • Support individuals or groups already affected by social issues by providing direct services. • Can include direct assistance such as food and shelter.

Family and Community Support Services Accountability Framework (2022)

Part 2: FCSS - A Mandate of Prevention

Provincial Prevention Priorities

The FCSS Accountability Framework highlights five high level Provincial Prevention Priorities that local FCSS Programs are tasked with addressing from a Primary and Secondary Prevention perspective. The current Provincial Prevention Priorities are:

1. Homelessness and Housing Insecurity
2. Mental Health and Addictions
3. Employment
4. Family and Sexual Violence Across the Lifespan
5. Aging Well in Community^{iv}

It is important to note that FCSS is prohibited from addressing some of these issues directly and, again, must approach these issues from a Primary and Secondary Prevention perspective.

Part 2: FCSS - A Mandate of Prevention

Prevention Science & High Impact Opportunities

Given that Primary Prevention focuses on building protective factors and Secondary Prevention focuses on preventing and mitigating risk factors, it is important to understand the research and science around the protective and risk factors that support the prevention of the five high level Provincial Prevention Priorities.

A review of the research was undertaken and a number of different protective and risk factors were identified for each of these five high level issues. A large number of protective and risk factors were identified as being critical to the prevention of more than one of these issues, and were often linked to the prevention of the majority of these issues.

Given the limited resources communities have, it is important to prioritize and focus prevention efforts on high impact areas. Protective or risk factors that research identified as contributing to the prevention of multiple Provincial Prevention Priorities were identified as “High Impact Opportunities” and became the foundation for the issue identification portion of this project.

The data gathered for the specific High Impact Opportunity protective and risk factors was examined and categorized based on the amount of evidence supporting that the protective factor was lacking and/or the risk factor was prevalent. Categories of low, medium, high and extreme levels of evidence were created, with high and extreme levels highlighting where community residents are currently struggling the most, or are most at-risk. For more detail regarding the High Impact Opportunities and evidence rankings, see Appendix A.

Part 2: FCSS - A Mandate of Prevention

Provincial Prevention Strategies

When developing a community response to the issues identified in this Social Needs Assessment and Prioritization Plan, a variety of strategies will need to be implemented supporting both prevention and intervention efforts.

However, it is important to remember that any program or service provided through FCSS funding must fall under either primary or secondary prevention and must also align with at least one of the Provincial Prevention Strategies outlined in the FCSS Accountability Framework:

1. Promote and encourage active engagement in the community
2. Foster a sense of belonging
3. Promote social inclusion
4. Develop and maintain healthy relationships
5. Enhance access to social supports; and
6. Develop and strengthen skills that build resilience^v

PART 3:

**COMMUNITY
PROFILE**

PART 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

This Community Profile provides some of the quantitative data available for Foothills County and is primarily sourced from the 2021 federal census, with some additional supplementary sources also being used. It focuses on highlighting information and data that is most relevant to the FCSS mandate and the provision of preventive social services.

As mentioned previously, where possible, Foothills County data has been compared to Sturgeon County and Alberta as a whole. While comparative analyses can be helpful, caution needs to be utilized, as although there are similarities between Foothills County and Sturgeon County, there are significant differences, including the fact that Foothills County is approximately 80% larger than Sturgeon County covering 3,605 square kilometres versus 2084 square kilometres.^{vi}

Part 3: Community Profile

Highlights: County & Population Characteristics

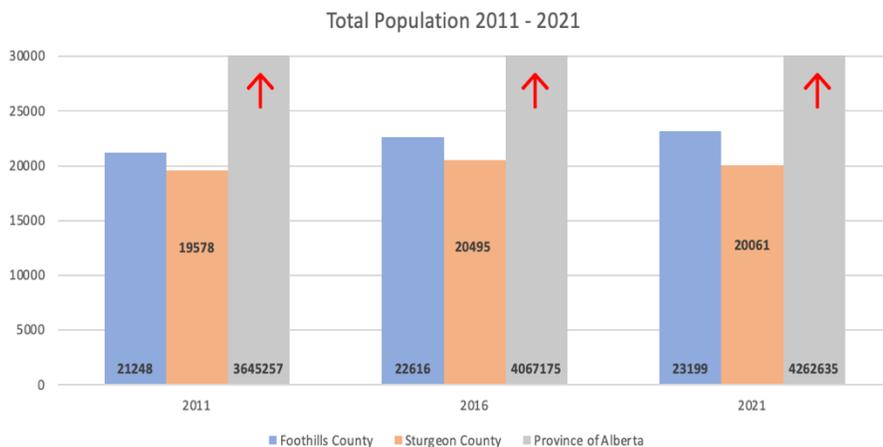
- Foothills County population was 23,199 in 2021
- Between 2011 and 2021, County population grew by 9.2%
 - Okotoks population grew by 24% during the same time period and Alberta population grew by 17%
- Foothills County has an older population than Alberta as a whole
 - 40% is 55 years and older
 - Alberta as a whole is 27%
- High level of income inequality throughout the County
 - Average individual income in 2019 was \$104,000, yet over half of residents had an income lower than \$52,400
- 7.2% of County residents were living on low-income with largest percentage of residents (10%) living on low-income being those 0-17 years of age
- 20% of all Foothills County residents, and 36% of renter households, were facing housing insecurity, with those percentage most likely being higher in 2025
- Foothills County shows low levels of diversity
 - Lower percentage of indigenous identifying residents in Foothills County
 - Lower percentage of immigrant residents in Foothills County
 - Significant proportion of immigrants come from countries where English is either an official language or widely spoken, and which are predominantly white-majority nations
- Crime Severity Index of approximately 55.71, making it the 12th lowest in Alberta in 2023
- Significant disparity between different areas of the county in regards to population density and average incomes
- Majority of County residents access services in adjacent municipalities
- Lower unemployment, lower percent of population receiving government transfers and those who receive transfers, the transfer made up a smaller percent of total income

- Higher rates of emergency room visits related to mood and anxiety disorders than Alberta as a whole
- Rates of intimate partner violence are 75% higher for rural women, and have a severe or extreme danger of being killed by their partner, than women in urban centres.

Part 3: Community Profile

Population Size and Growth

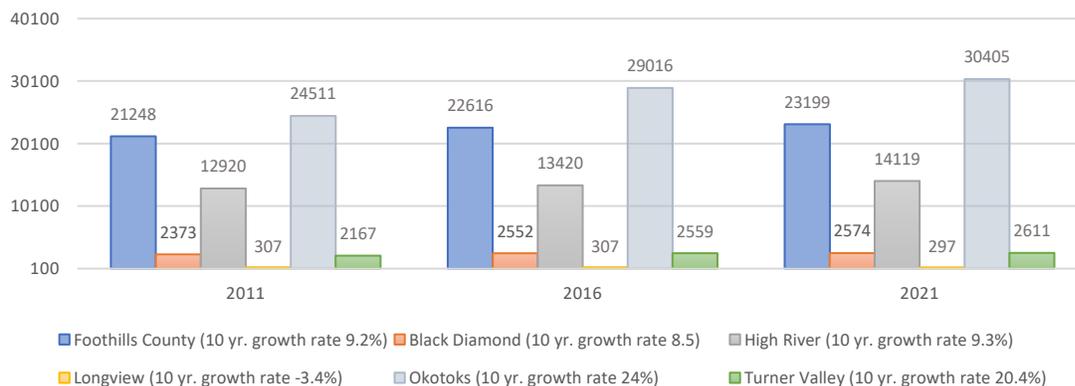
The population of Foothills County in 2021 was 23,199, which had grown by 9.2% between 2011 and 2021. Comparatively, Okotoks had a 24% population increase during that same time frame, Sturgeon County experienced a 2.5% increase and Alberta as a whole experienced a 17% population increase.^{vii}



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Census Profile

It is interesting to note that although Foothills and Sturgeon Counties have similar population sizes, not only have they had different growth rates, they also have different population densities, due to the fact that Foothills County is approximately 80% larger in land size. In 2021, Foothills County had a population density of 6.4 people per square kilometre versus 9.6 in Sturgeon County and 6.7 in Alberta.^{viii} Foothills County’s population density varies greatly depending on where in the County it is being measured, with the southwestern and south eastern parts of the county having a much lower population density than the north part of the County, for example Heritage Pointe.

Regional Population 2011 - 2021



Projected population numbers in the future are dependent upon a multitude of factors, including federal immigration policies and municipal develop plans. However, if its growth rate is similar to the past, Foothills County can expect its population to grow to just over 25,000 by 2031.

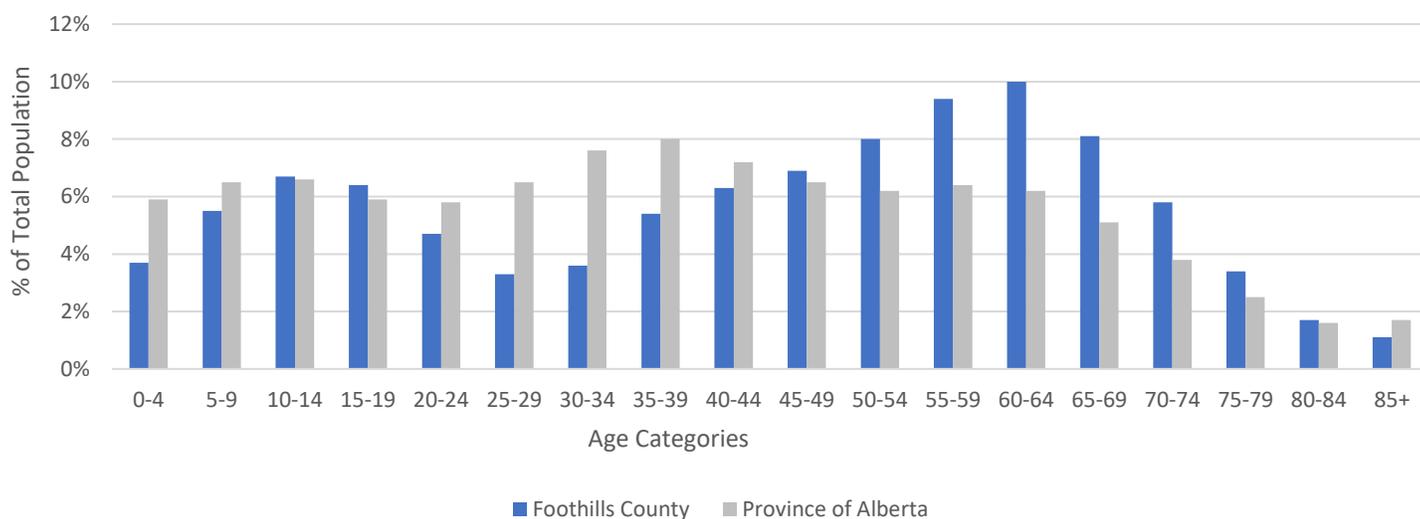
Part 3: Community Profile

Age Distribution

The median age in Foothills County is 10 years older than the provincial average, 48 years of age versus 38 years of age and has a median age 7 years older than Sturgeon County.^{ix}

When compared with Alberta population percentages, Foothills County has a slightly higher percentage of its population ages 10-19, and has a lower, and at times significantly lower percentage of its population under 10 and between the ages of 20 and 44. It has a higher percentage of its population than Alberta as a whole, for residents ages 45 – 84 with slightly less than Alberta for people ages 85 and older, which can most likely be attributed to the fact that there are currently no long-term care facilities located in Foothills County.

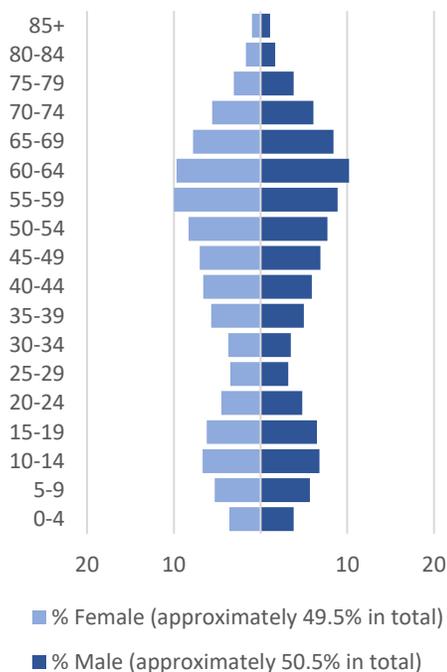
% of Total Population by Age Category



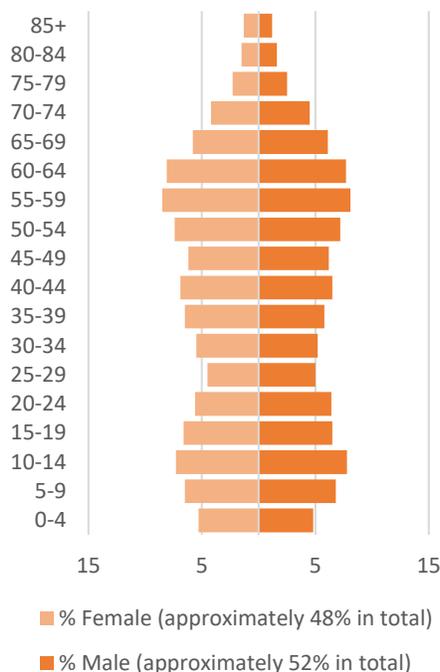
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

When comparing Foothills County and Sturgeon County, while the general trends for age categories and sex are similar, the age categories for Foothills County are slightly more pronounced. Additionally, both Counties show a different population trend, when it comes to age of residents, than Alberta as a whole, with the largest age groups being older residents (55+ yrs. old), rather than middle aged residents.

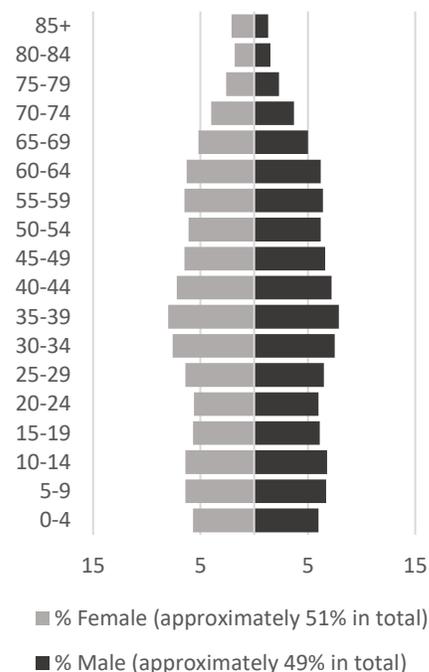
Foothills County % of Total Population by Sex and Age Group (2021)



Sturgeon County % of Total Population by Sex and Age Group (2021)



Alberta % of Total Population by Sex and Age Group (2021)



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

Part 3: Community Profile

Indigenous Population, Diversity & Immigration

Both Foothills County and Sturgeon County are less diverse than Alberta as a whole with a lesser percent of immigrants and a significantly lower percent of the population identifying as a visible minority.

In 2021, only 3.5% of the Foothills County’s residents identified as Indigenous, whereas 6.8% of Alberta’s and 8.4% of Sturgeon County’s population identified as indigenous. Foothills County has twice the percentage of immigrants as Sturgeon County, but half the percentage of Alberta.

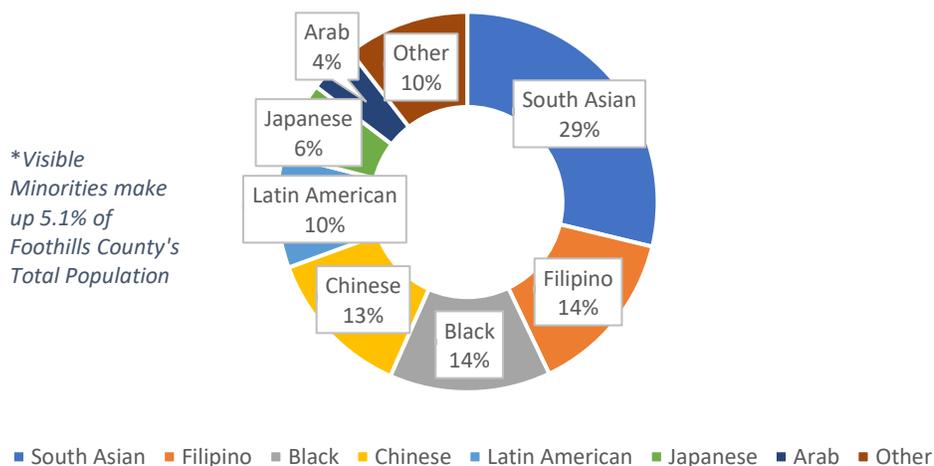
Immigration and Diversity (% of total population)			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
Non-immigrant	87%	93.7%	75.2%
Immigrant	12.8%	6.2%	23.2%
New Immigrant (within last 5 years)	1.2%	0.4%	4.6%

Non-permanent resident	0.2%	0.1%	1.6%
Non-Indigenous	96.5%	91.6%	93.2%
Indigenous	3.5%	8.4%	6.8%
Visible Minority	5.1%	4.1%	27.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

While the largest visible minority group in Foothills County is South Asian, with a total of 315 people, the largest group of immigrants are from the UK, with a total of 820 people.

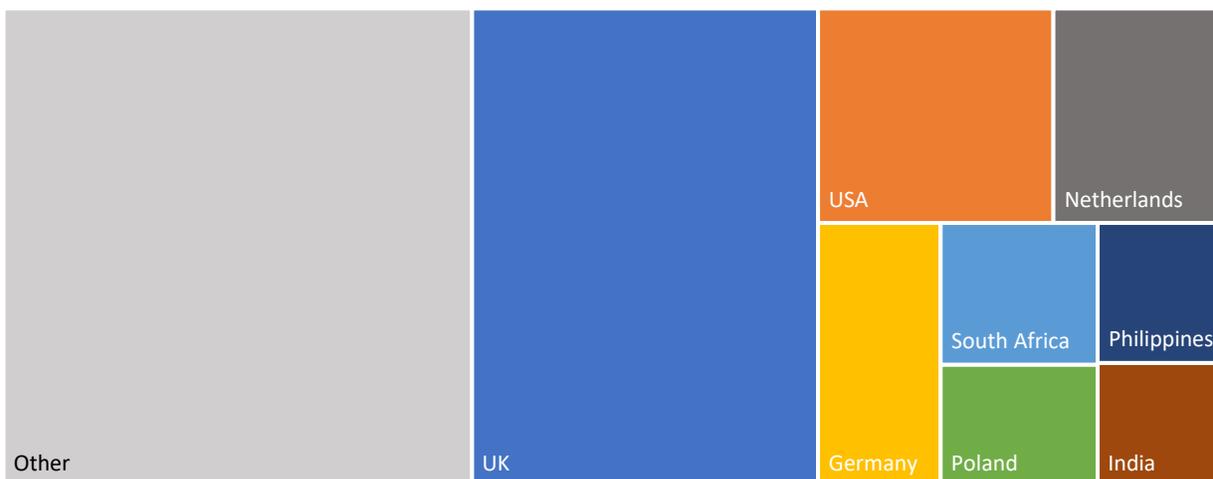
Breakdown of Visible Minority Groups in Foothills County



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

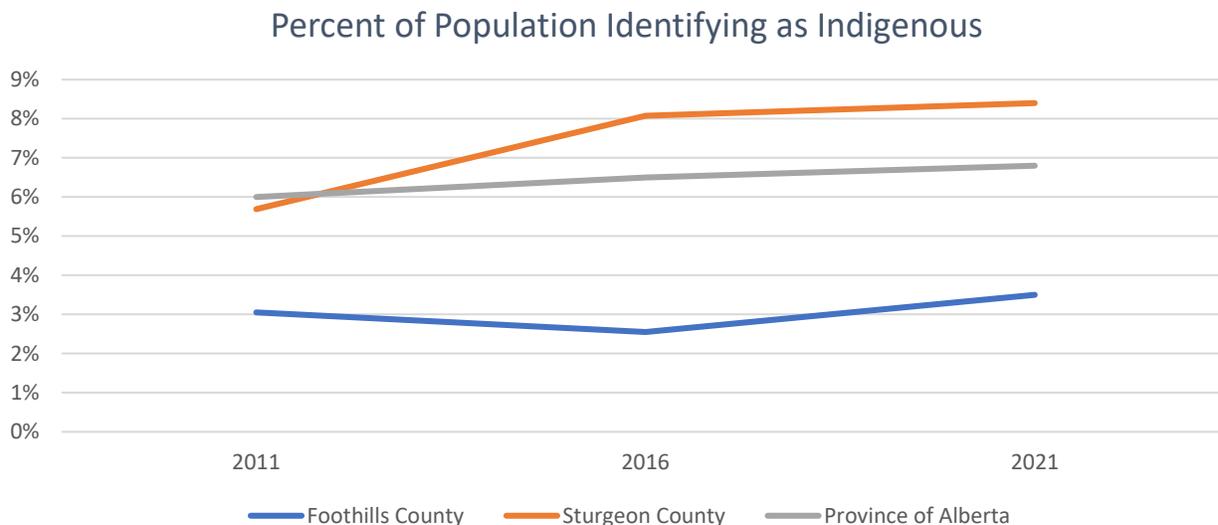
A significant proportion of immigrants residing in Foothills County come from countries where English is either an official language or widely spoken, and which are predominantly white-majority nations.

Place of Birth of Immigrants Living in Foothills County



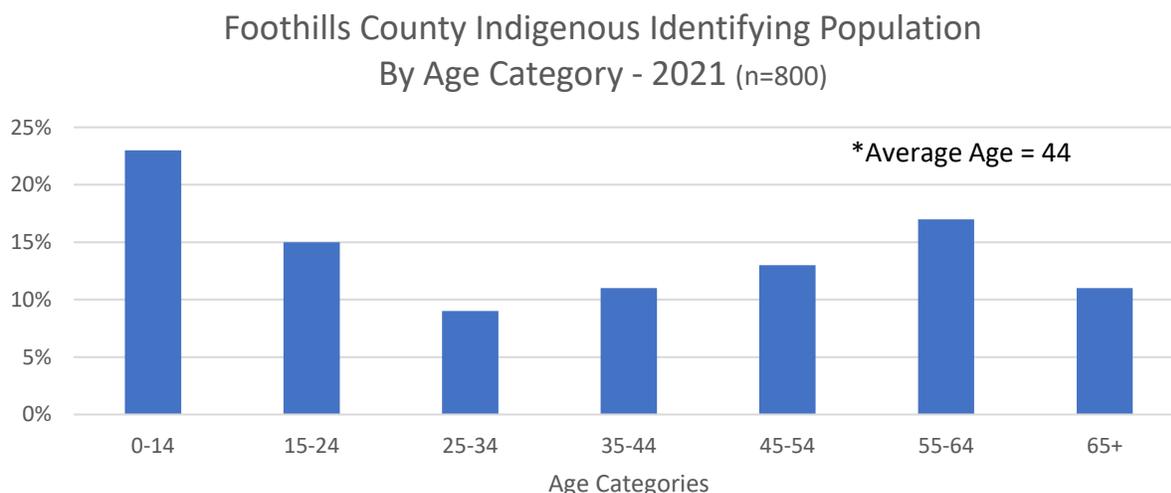
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

The Indigenous identifying population of the Foothills County is lower than both Sturgeon County and Alberta as a whole, however the 10 year growth rate of percent of population identifying as Indigenous in Foothills County is similar to that of Alberta, being just below 1%, but is lower than that of Sturgeon County, which is around 2.5%.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Census Profile, Statistics Canada, 2011 Focus on Geography Series, Statistics Canada, 2011 NHS Focus on Geography Series

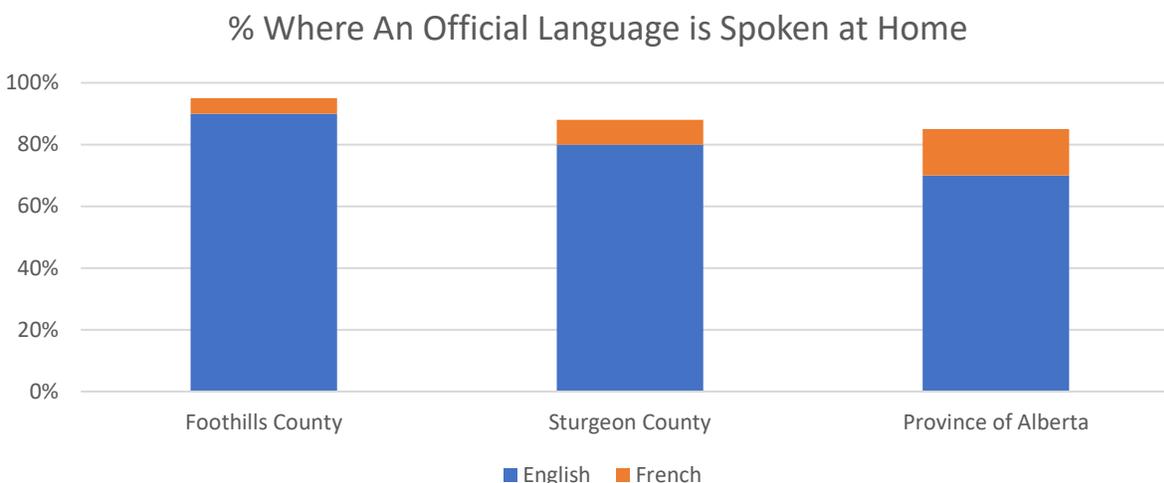
The ages of the Indigenous identifying population in Foothills County is similar to that of the population as a whole, with a larger percentage of people under the age of 25, a lower percentage of people between 25 and 54 years of age and a larger percent aged 55 years and older. However, rather than having the 55 years and older age category representing the majority of the population, the majority of the indigenous identifying population in Foothills County is under the age of 25.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

Of the indigenous identifying population in Foothills County, 57% identify as Métis, 37% identify as first nations and the remainder identify as Inuit, or a combination.^x

When considering languages, only 5% of the Foothills County population report not speaking an official language in the home and approximately 94% identified that they understand English enough to conduct a conversation. Other than English and French the only other language where at least 1% of the total population of Foothills County identified as their mother tongue was German.^{xi}



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

Part 3: Community Profile

Family & Household Demographics

Of Foothills County residents ages 15 and older, 29% are neither married nor living common-law, whereas 71% are either married or living common-law, meaning fewer “singles” and more “couples” than Alberta as a whole.^{xii}

Foothills County has a higher percent of married couples and a lower percent of common-law couples than both Sturgeon County and Alberta, with a higher percentage of married couples with no children, when compared to Sturgeon County and Alberta as a whole. Foothills County also has a lower percent of lone parent families and a lower percentage of those families being female led.

Family and Household Composition			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
Total number of families	7,215	5,870	1,164,655
Average size of families	2.9	3	3

Total % couple families	93.8%	91.8%	84.8%
% Married couples	83.0%	80.1%	70.6%
% Married couples with children	39.0%	42.5%	39.9%
% Married couples NO children	44.0%	37.5%	30.7%
% Common-law couples	11.0%	11.8%	14.2%
% Common-law couples with children	3.4%	5.2%	5.2%
% Common-law couples NO children	7.5%	6.6%	9.0%
Average # of children/family	1.9	2.0	1.9
Total % lone parent families	3.8%	4.7%	8.1%
% Female Led	4.2%	4.6%	11.6%
% Male Led	2.0%	3.5%	3.6%
% Multigenerational households	2.8%	2.7%	2.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

Part 3: Community Profile

Employment, Income & Poverty Levels

When examining income and poverty levels, it is important to be aware that the 2021 census data is based off of income from 2020, which may not be the most reliable measure of income and poverty due to the arrival of COVID-19 and its significant impact on employment, income and government transfers (benefits). However, looking at trends and comparisons with the provincial rates can still be of benefit. Where available, data from 2019 and the 2016 census is included to explore what may be more “realistic” trends regarding income, employment and poverty, prior to Covid-19.

Household incomes in Foothills County are higher than household incomes in Sturgeon County and Alberta as a whole, with one person households incomes being significantly less than both the median and average incomes of all households.

Household Income			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
Median Total Household Income 2020	\$132,000	\$124,000	\$96,000
Average Total Household Income 2020	\$205,600	\$151,400	\$119,700
Median Total Income of One-Person Households 2020	\$51,200	\$56,400	\$48,000
Average Total Income of One-Person Households 2020	\$97,800	\$68,400	\$62,050

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

It is important to note the significant difference between Foothills County’s median and average total household incomes. Comparing the annual average income with the annual median income helps to better understand income distribution and economic inequality. The average income can be skewed by very high earners, making it appear higher than what most

people actually earn. The median income represents the middle point, where half the population earns less, and half earns more, so it gives a better sense of a "typical" income.

Over 30% of all households in Foothills County have an annual *household income* \$200,000 and over, suggesting significant wealth in the County. However, it is also important to note that 27.6% of all households have an annual household income under \$80,000 and 14.1% have an annual household income under \$50,000, confirming the economic inequality and suggesting that at least a quarter of households may be struggling financially, based solely off of household income.

% of Households with Household Total Income Groups (2020)			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
under \$25,000	5.1%	3.8%	6.4%
\$25,000-\$49,999	9.0%	8.9%	14.0%
\$50,000 - \$79,999	13.5%	14.9%	19.3%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	9.0%	10.4%	11.9%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	19.7%	22.9%	22.1%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	13.4%	16.6%	12.3%
\$200,000 and more	30.4%	22.4%	13.0%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

When comparing the difference between average and median *individual incomes* in Foothills County, there is quite a large gap, again demonstrating a high degree of income distribution and inequality. While the average individual income in 2019 was \$104,000, half of Foothills County residents had an income lower than \$52,400.

Individual incomes in Foothills County show significantly higher degrees of income inequality than in Sturgeon County and Alberta, with males earning higher incomes across all of the areas examined.

Individual Income									
	Foothills County	Male	Female	Sturgeon County	Male	Female	Alberta	Male	Female
Median Total Income for Individuals 2019 (prior to Covid-19)	\$52,400	\$68,500	\$41,200	\$53,200	\$70,000	\$39,200	\$44,400	\$54,800	\$36,400
Average Total Income for Individuals 2019 (prior to Covid-19)	\$104,000	\$132,000	\$75,800	\$74,300	\$95,000	\$51,850	\$60,750	\$74,200	\$47,560

Median Total Income for Individuals 2020	\$50,800	\$64,500	\$40,800	\$52,400	\$67,500	\$40,000	\$44,800	\$53,200	\$38,400
Average Total Income for Individuals 2020	\$95,600	\$111,600	\$74,800	\$70,400	\$86,200	\$53,350	\$60,850	\$72,700	\$49,160

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

Incomes from 2019 are primarily slightly higher than in 2020, with the exception of the females in Sturgeon County and Alberta as a whole. This is most likely due to the negative impact of Covid-19 on employment income and potentially more females in Sturgeon County and Alberta as a whole qualifying to receive additional Covid-19 government benefits in 2020.

In 2020, Foothills County had a lower labour force participation rate than both Sturgeon County and the province as a whole. Although definitive conclusions can't be drawn, this could potentially be reflective of more people in Foothills County being retired, due to higher degrees of wealth and/or the older population of the County. In both 2020 and 2015, Foothills County had a comparable unemployment rate to Sturgeon County, and both had lower rates than Alberta as a whole.

Labour Force Involvement									
	Foothills County			Sturgeon County			Province of Alberta		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Labour Force Participation Rate 2020	66.5%	72.1%	60.9%	68.0%	73.7%	61.9%	68.0%	72.6%	63.5%
Employment Rate 2020	60.8%	65.6%	55.8%	62.4%	68.2%	56.1%	60.2%	64.3%	56.1%
Unemployment Rate 2020	8.7%	9.0%	8.4%	8.3%	7.6%	9.3%	11.5%	11.4%	11.7%
Unemployment Rate 2015 (prior to Covid-19)	7.0%	7.8%	5.9%	7.2%	8.3%	5.7%	9.0%	10.0%	7.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

In 2020, Foothills County had a lower percentage of its residents receiving Employment Insurance and in 2015 and 2020, had a lower percentage of residents receiving government transfers than either Sturgeon County or Alberta as a whole. For Foothills County residents who did receive government transfers, those transfers also made up a smaller percent of their total income than the other areas.

Percent of Population Receiving Employment Insurance									
	Foothills	Male	Female	Sturgeon County	Male	Female	Alberta	Male	Female

% Individuals Receiving 2020	5.7%	5.4%	5.9%	8.3%	7.8%	8.9%	11.1%	11.0%	11.1%
Percent of Population Receiving Government Transfers									
% Individuals Receiving 2020	78.4%	79.3%	77.5%	80.1%	80.6%	79.6%	83.5%	82.2%	84.4%
% of Total Income from Government Transfers 2020	7.8%	6.3%	10.3%	11.1%	8.4%	16.0%	15.0%	11.0%	20.9%
% Individuals Receiving 2015 (prior to Covid -19)	48.9%	39.0%	59.0%	49.9%	37.5%	63.3%	55.7%	44.0%	67.0%
% of Total Income from Government Transfers 2015 (prior to Covid -19)	3.5%	2.4%	5.9%	5.1%	3.4%	8.7%	6.7%	4.2%	10.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Census Profile

Regardless of Covid-19, across all areas examined, government transfers make up a higher percentage of total income for females than males, most likely due to females having lower labour force involvement, employment rates and lower overall incomes.

Again, while caution needs to be used when drawing conclusions from 2020 income data, both before and after Covid-19, a higher percent of Foothills County residents were living on low-income than in Sturgeon County, but still a lower percent than Alberta as a whole. The age group of Foothills County residents having the largest percentage of individuals living in a low-income situation are children – those 0 – 17 years of age.

Percent of Individuals Living on Low-Income (based on the Low-Income Measure After Tax - LIM-AT)										
		Foothills County	Male	Female	Sturgeon County	Male	Female	Alberta	Male	Female
Overall	2020	7.2%	7.2%	7.3%	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	9.2%	8.8%	9.6%
	2015	8.1%	7.4%	8.8%	5.3%	5.3%	5.4%	9.3%	8.7%	9.8%
0-17 years of age	2020	8.2%	7.8%	8.7%	6.0%	5.9%	6.1%	11.2%	11.2%	11.3%
	2015	10.1%	10.0%	10.3%	6.2%	6.1%	6.2%	12.8%	12.8%	12.8%
(0-5 years of age)	2020	8.0%	7.8%	8.4%	6.2%	6.6%	6.0%	12.0%	11.9%	12.0%
	2015	11.1%	10.7%	11.4%	5.6%	5.5%	5.7%	13.5%	13.4%	13.5%
18-64 years of age	2020	7.0%	7.2%	6.8%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	8.1%	7.8%	8.4%
	2015	7.5%	6.7%	8.3%	4.7%	4.7%	4.8%	8.2%	7.6%	8.8%
65 + years of age	2020	6.8%	6.3%	7.3%	8.4%	8.2%	8.6%	10.6%	9.0%	12.0%
	2015	7.4%	6.2%	8.6%	6.7%	6.8%	6.7%	8.6%	6.9%	10.1%

Indigenous Identifying Residents	2020	7.4%			5.3%			9.2%		

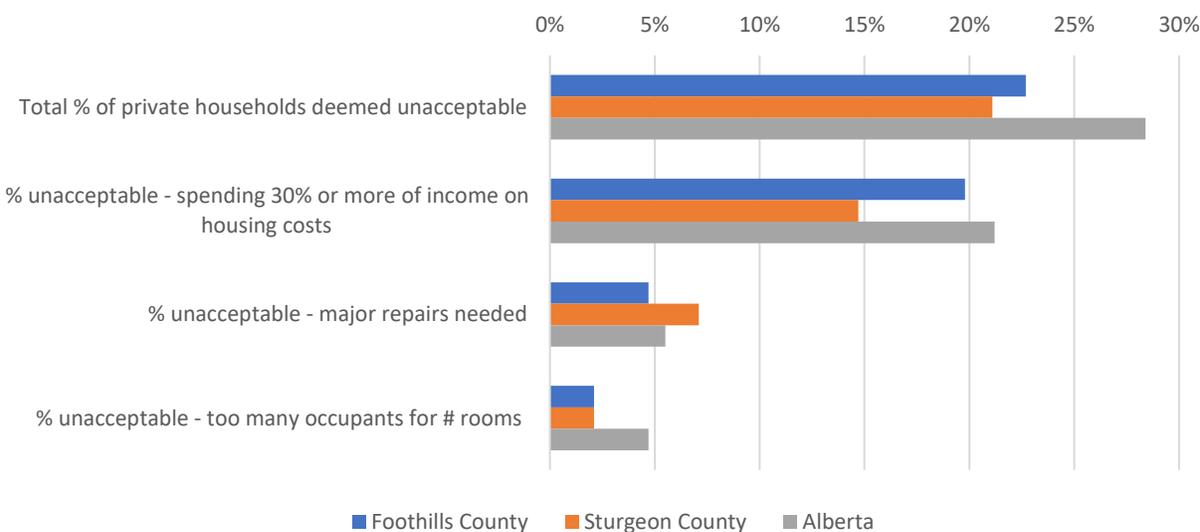
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Census Profile

Part 3: Community Profile

Housing & Affordability

In 2021, there were 8,450 occupied private dwellings in Foothills County. Of the non-farm, privately owned dwellings, where residents had an income over \$0 (7,780), 23% were deemed as being “unacceptable”; meaning they are not suitable for the number of people living there, and/or they are in need of major repairs, and/or the inhabitants are spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs. Although some households fall under more than one category, the primary reason for households to be deemed unacceptable is the high percentage of income people are spending on monthly shelter costs.

Private Households Deemed as Unacceptable



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

Foothills County had 90% of its households being owner occupied households and 10% being tenant occupied, having a slightly higher percent of owner occupied households than Sturgeon County and a significantly higher percent than Alberta as a whole.

Owner Households			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
% of total households	90.0%	86.8%	70.9%
% with a mortgage (non-farm)	52.3%	56.9%	64.2%

% spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs (non-farm)	18.1%	15.2%	16.0%
Average monthly shelter costs (non-farm)	\$2,132	\$1,824	\$1,678
Average value of dwellings (non-farm)	\$985,000	\$652,000	\$448,800
Tenant Households			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
% of total households	10.1%	13.2%	28.5%
% in subsidized housing	0.0%	14.9%	9.1%
% spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs (non-farm)	35.6%	10.5%	34.0%
Average monthly shelter costs (non-farm)	\$1,512	\$1,288	\$1,332

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

Just under 20% of all Foothills County residents are spending 30% of their total income, or higher, on monthly shelter costs. Statistics Canada identifies this as “inadequate housing” and can be used as an indicator to identify low-income households. However, given the average value of the dwellings in Foothills County, it may speak more to financial stresses than low income for some Foothills County home owners. However, it may very well be an indicator for low-income households for tenants in Foothills County, where close to 36% of all renters are spending more than 30% of their total income on shelter costs, which is a significantly higher percentage than those in Sturgeon County and although not significantly, higher than Alberta as a whole. Whether they meet the formal definition of low-income, a significant number of renters in Foothills County are experiencing financial stresses due to cost of housing.

When considering housing insecurity and homelessness, it can be very difficult to quantify the number of individuals living unhoused, especially in a more rural context. The Rural Development Network (RDN) completed a Rural Housing and Service Needs Estimation for Okotoks and area in 2020, providing a bit more insight into the issue of housing insecurity in the area. Although definitive conclusions can't be drawn for Foothills County, one of the indicators for housing insecurity used by RDN and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, includes people spending more than 30% of their income on housing.^{xiii} Again, due to average dwelling values in Foothills County, caution needs to be used for owner occupied households, but based on this commonly accepted definition, it could be argued that in 2021, 36% of renters and 20% of all households in Foothills County were experiencing housing insecurity.

The dwellings in Foothills County are newer, with fewer being constructed before 1960 and more being constructed since 1990 than both Sturgeon County and Alberta. Fewer dwellings also require major repairs than the other two areas.

Private Dwelling Conditions			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
% private dwellings constructed 1960 or before	8.2%	10.8%	10.3%
% private dwellings constructed before 1990	36.4%	53.6%	48.0%
% private dwellings constructed after 1990	63.6%	46.4%	52.0%
% private dwellings requiring major repairs	4.7%	7.1%	5.5%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

While the Economic Research Institute doesn't have specific data on Foothills County, it does identify that the cost of living is slightly lower in the Towns of Okotoks and High River than the national average, and slightly higher than the Alberta average, with housing and health care costs being least affordable, and food and transportation being similarly affordable.^{xiv}

It is also important to note that the cost of living in Alberta increased significantly after the arrival of Covid-19, with the Consumer Price Index in Alberta increasing over 13% between 2021 and 2024.^{xv} It may be possible that even more County residents are now spending more than 30% of their income on monthly shelter costs, are spending more for everyday necessities, and are experiencing more significant financial stress and hardships.

Part 3: Community Profile

Residents Living with Disabilities

There aren't census statistics specific to Foothills County. However, in 2022, 24% of Calgary's population aged 15 and over and 34% of Lethbridge's population ages 15 and over identified having at least one disability,^{xvi} with 27.5% of Albertans aged 15 and older, having at least one disability, which was a 5.8% increase from 2017.^{xvii} Additionally, as people age, the likelihood of them developing a disability increases, leading to an increased disability rate, as a population ages,^{xviii} with the proportion of severe or very severe disabilities also increasing with age.^{xix}

Considering that Foothills County has a higher percent of its population aged 55 years old and older than Alberta as a whole,^{xx} it could be hypothesized that Foothills County may have a higher percentage of people living with disabilities and may face greater challenges as the population base ages.

Inclusion Foothills is a not-for-profit organization that provides supports to individuals with disabilities and their families, and has received Foothills County FCSS funding over the last 20 years. In 2024, Inclusion Foothills supported a total 527 participants who live in Foothills County, including both individuals with disabilities and their family members, and people of all ages.^{xxi} While this does not identify the number of County residents living with a disability, it does provide some insight into the need for services.

Part 3: Community Profile

Mental Health & Addictions

It can be quite difficult to accurately quantify the number of people who are dealing with mental health and problematic substance use issues because many of these issues are often hidden and go unreported. Alberta Health publishes Community Profiles to provide local health statistics. Although there isn't a report specific to Foothills County, there are 3 separate reports covering "Local Geographic Areas" (LGAs) that encompass the majority of the County – Okotoks/Priddis LGA, Black Diamond LGA and High River LGA. While these 3 LGAs include other municipalities, examining the data can still be of value for Foothills County.

There is significant variance throughout the Foothills Region, when it comes to emergency room visits related to substance use, with the Black Diamond area having much higher rates than the rest of the region, as well as much higher rates than the Sturgeon Region and Alberta as a whole. All 3 areas of the Foothills Region have higher rates of emergency room visits related to mood and anxiety disorders than the Sturgeon Region and Alberta, with the Black Diamond area having the highest rates. This could suggest a high prevalence of mental health issues in the Foothills Region.

Emergency Room Visits For Mental Health and Substance Use Related Issues								
Emergency Room Visit Rates per 100,000 population	Foothills Region				Sturgeon Region			Province of Alberta
	Black Diamond LGA	High River LGA	Okotoks-Priddis LGA	Average	Sturgeon County West LGA	Sturgeon County East LGA	Average	
For mental & behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use	2013.5	362.2	402.5	926.1	456.8	418.6	437.7	791.3
Related to substance use	3469.9	677.0	700.7	1615.9	745.7	657.4	701.6	1316.1
Related to mood and anxiety disorders	1943.0	1232.7	1127.8	1434.5	870.6	1044.2	957.4	1095.0

Sources: Alberta Health. Community Profile: Black Diamond, High River, Okotoks-Priddis, Sturgeon County West and Sturgeon County East Health Data Summaries

In addition, although data specific to the Foothills County isn't available, it is still of note that the rate of drug poisoning deaths in Alberta saw a marked increase in 2020 aligning with the arrival of COVID-19, with 2023 showing the highest rate to date. Although the rate dropped in 2024, it is still significantly higher than it was before the arrival of Covid-19.

Rate of Drug Poisoning Deaths in Alberta	
Calendar Year	Rate of Drug Poisoning Deaths per 100,000 persons
2016	16.4
2017	20.3
2018	22.3
2019	18.4
2020	32.1
2021	42.6
2022	39.4
2023	45.4
2024	29.4

Source: Government of Alberta. Alberta Substance Use Surveillance System

Part 3: Community Profile

Crime & Intimate Partner/Family Violence

There is no one specific crime statistic solely for Foothills County, however municipal and rural Crime Severity Index (CSI) data is reported for Okotoks and High River, as well as rural stats for Turner Valley. This data can provide insight and identify trends that may be helpful for Foothills County.

Regional Crime Severity Index, 2023								
	Okotoks Municipal	Okotoks Rural	High River Municipal	High River Rural	Turner Valley Rural	Foothills County (Average of Rural)	Alberta	Canada
Crime Severity Index	41.03	39.37	70.14	47.61	80.38	55.71	103	80.45
% Change in Crime Severity Index	0.20%	-0.46%	73.49%	4.82%	-8.38%	13.93%	-2.11%	2.15%
Violent Crime Severity Index	48.71	26.68	134.87	50.85	112.93	74.81	114	99.45

% Change in Violent Crime Severity Index	0.72%	36.33%	316.78%	-14.52%	-9.42%	65.98%	0.27%	0.39%
Non-Violent Crime Severity Index	38.31	44.78	44.85	46.72	68.06	48.54	99.48	73.54
% Change in Non-Violent Crime Severity Index	-0.08%	-6.45%	1.95%	16.28%	-7.65%	0.81%	-3.16%	3.11%

Source: Statistics Canada Table 35-10-0190-01

In 2023, based on the regional rural average, Foothills County had an approximate CSI of 55.71, which would have made it the 12th lowest CSI in all of Alberta at that time.^{xxii}

The regional rural average CSI fluctuated between 2019 and 2023, but the trend indicates an overall decrease in non-violent crimes and an overall increase in violent crimes over that time period.

Foothills County Crime Severity Index, 2019 – 2023					
	Foothills County (average of Okotoks rural, High River rural and Turner Valley rural)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Crime Severity Index	62.38	49.13	48.46	50.82	55.71
% Change in Crime Severity Index	10.85%	-21.46%	0.24%	5.90%	13.93%
Violent Crime Severity Index	46.96	43.38	54.21	55.49	74.81
% Change in Violent Crime Severity Index	84.92%	-16.54%	96.78%	7.34%	65.98%
Non-Violent Crime Severity Index	65.61	51.08	46.57%	48.82	48.54
% Change in Non-Violent Crime Severity Index	2.10%	-22.04%	-10.37%	9.16%	0.81%

Source: Statistics Canada Table 35-10-0190-01

It can be difficult to quantify intimate partner and family violence, especially considering that anywhere from 80% to 95% of the cases go unreported.^{xxiii}^{xxiv}

However, there is significant evidence showing that the rates of intimate partner and family violence have increased significantly in recent years and are not only higher in rural areas than urban areas, but that the violence is more severe in rural areas and leads to greater physical injury and/or death. The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters research reports that rates of intimate partner violence are 75% higher for rural women than urban women, with 73% of rural women survivors being at severe or extreme danger of being killed by their partner.^{xxv}

Police reported intimate partner and family violence rates also show that rural women and girls are experiencing higher rates of violence than their urban counterparts.

Police Reported Rate of Family and Intimate Partner Violence (per 100,000) Against Women and Girls (2023)		
	Rural - South	Urban - South
Family Violence	667	398
Intimate Partner Violence	775	488
With Physical Injury	435	250

Source: Statistics Canada: Rural Crime Fact Sheets, 2023: Alberta

Family violence against children and youth increased by 32% between 2018 and 2023 and family violence against seniors also increase by 42% during that time period.^{xxvi}

Local RCMP detachments shared the number of intimate partner violence (spousal abuse) cases reported in 2024, with the Okotoks detachment reporting 72 cases, Diamond Valley reporting 85 cases and High River detachment reporting 49 cases for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year. These detachments serve areas outside of Foothills County, so again, County specific data isn't available, but still provides insight into the issue.^{xxvii}

Rowan House Society offers emergency shelter and domestic violence services across Southern Alberta and provides services to Foothills County residents. In the 2024-2025 year, their 24 hour emergency support line fielded approximately 420 calls/texts from Foothills County residents, their children's program supported 36 Foothills County children, and 5 or 6 County residents were admitted to their emergency shelter to seek safety.^{xxviii}

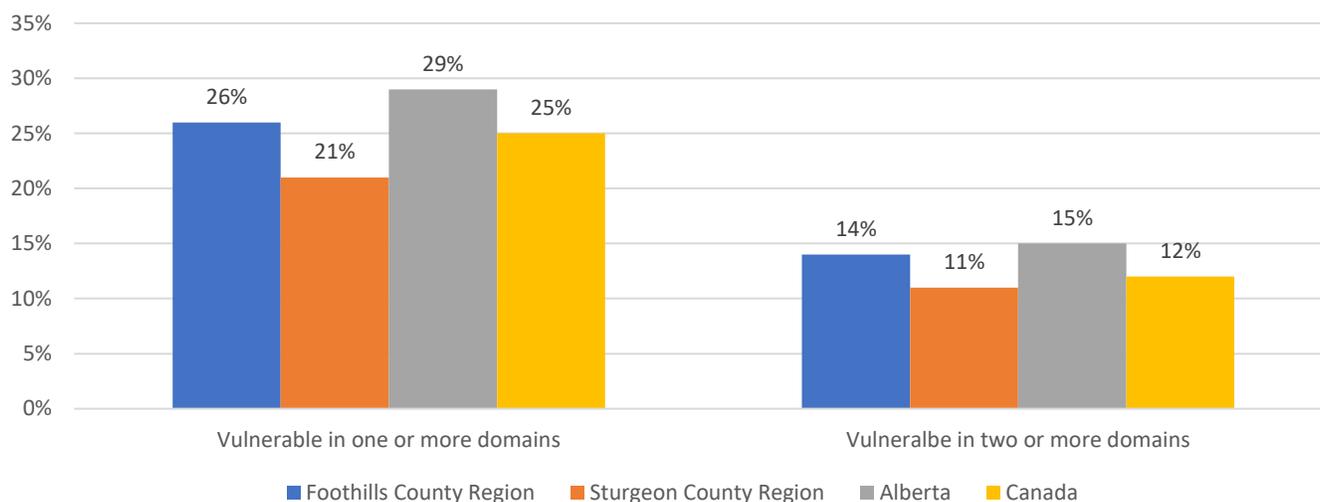
Part 3: Community Profile

Early Childhood

The Early Development Instrument (EDI), implemented by the provincial government in 2016, explores core developmental competencies and vulnerabilities in pre-school aged children which are predictive of future success. The EDI report provides aggregate data for the entire Foothills County Region, including other municipalities, but some information has been broken down into multiple areas, some of which are primarily comprised of County residents. Although the instrument hasn't been replicated since 2016, it still can provide valuable insight into the early development of pre-school aged children in the Foothills Region.

Based on the EDI findings, the Foothills County Region's pre-school aged children are somewhat more vulnerable than children in the Sturgeon County Region and Canada, but somewhat less vulnerable than compared to the children of Alberta.

% of Children Vulnerable in One or More, and Two or More Domains



Source: Alberta Health – Alberta Early Development Instrument Community Profile Report – 2016 Data Collection – MD of Foothills

When further breaking down the above data to look at vulnerability rates across each of the five scales of the EDI, there is great variance across the different sub-communities of the Foothills County Region. It is interesting to note that all of the sub-communities primarily made up of County pre-schoolers showed a higher level of vulnerability and risk across all 5 scales than the preschoolers in the Okotoks sub-community. However, there is variability between the 5 scales and the High River and County sub-communities.

Early Development Instrument Categories by Sub-Community (2016)

Category	Foothills County (sub-community B - Primarily County - West)	Foothills County (sub-community D - Primarily Okotoks)	Foothills County (sub-community E - Primarily County - Central)	Foothills County (sub-community F - Primarily County - South East)	Foothills County (sub-community G - Primarily High River)	Foothills County (sub-community H - Primarily High River)	Alberta
	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable
Physical Health and Well-being	29.80%	13.80%	18.60%	26.30%	19.00%	23.40%	22.90%
Social Competence	15.80%	15.20%	24.30%	26.40%	21.50%	39.00%	24.50%

Emotional Maturity	29.80%	20.30%	33.10%	36.80%	23.80%	40.30%	25.10%
Language & Cognitive Development	30.70%	13.00%	23.60%	21.10%	13.10%	41.60%	25.90%
Communication Skills & General Knowledge	28.90%	15.90%	30.70%	31.60%	19.10%	46.80%	31.90%
<i>Note - sub-communities A & C were not reported separately due to either low participation of residents in that area or too few eligible children living in that geographic area.</i>							

Source: Alberta Health – Alberta Early Development Instrument Community Profile Report – 2016 Data Collection – Md of Foothills

When assessing the data for the sub-communities that are primarily made up of County residents, great variance is still seen between communities. However, when averaged, the levels of vulnerability, although slightly different, are within a 5% difference of the provincial average, with the exception of more Foothills preschoolers being at risk or vulnerable in emotional maturity.

Early Development Instrument Categories by Sub-Community (2016)					
Category	Foothills County (sub-community B - Primarily County - West)	Foothills County (sub-community E - Primarily County - Central)	Foothills County (sub-community F - Primarily County - South East)	Average for Primarily Foothills County Sub-Communities	Alberta
	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable	% At Risk or Vulnerable
Physical Health and Well-being	29.80%	18.60%	26.30%	24.90%	22.90%
Social Competence	15.80%	24.30%	26.40%	22.17%	24.50%
Emotional Maturity	29.80%	33.10%	36.80%	33.23%	25.10%
Language & Cognitive Development	30.70%	23.60%	21.10%	25.13%	25.90%
Communication Skills & General Knowledge	28.90%	30.70%	31.60%	30.40%	31.90%

Source: Alberta Health – Alberta Early Development Instrument Community Profile Report – 2016 Data Collection – Md of Foothills

When examining early childhood development, it can also be helpful to look at some maternal health statistics, as they can influence the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development

of children, and help identify some social issues that may be contributing to poor maternal health indicators, as well as additional social supports that may be needed.

By once again utilizing data from the Alberta Health Community Profiles, and the 3 Local Geographic Areas (LGAs), regional data can be used to better understand social factors contributing to maternal health indicators in the Foothills County Region.

Maternal Health Indicators								
	Foothills Region				Sturgeon Region			Alberta
	Black Diamond LGA	High River LGA	Okotoks-Priddis LGA	Average	Sturgeon County West LGA	Sturgeon County East LGA	Average	
% Low birth weight	6.8%	7.0%	7.7%	7.2%	6.3%	7.0%	6.7%	7.2%
% High birth weight	8.9%	9.2%	10.0%	9.4%	10.0%	11.0%	10.5%	8.2%
Teen birth rate (per 1000 women ages 15-19)	23.5	3.2	1	9.2	4	1.7	2.9	6.9
Deliveries with maternal smoking	17.3%	10.7%	5.4%	11.1%	12.4%	11.2%	11.8%	9.5%

Source: Alberta Health. Community Profile: Black Diamond, High River, Okotoks-Priddis, Sturgeon County West and Sturgeon County East Health Data Summaries

Birth weight indicators are comparable across all of the areas examined. However, for the teen birth rate and deliveries with maternal smoking, once again, there is great variance between the different areas of the Foothills County Region, with the Regional average being higher than the Alberta average. However, the Regional average is skewed by the significantly higher rates found in the Black Diamond LGA for both teen birth rate and deliveries with maternal smoking.

Part 3: Community Profile

Education & High School Completion Rates

In 2021, for those ages 15 and older, close to 90% of Foothills County residents had attained at least a high school diploma. The percent not having obtained a minimum of a high school diploma in Foothills County (10.2%) was lower than both Sturgeon County and Alberta as a whole. Foothills County also has a higher percentage of residents having an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, as well as a higher percentage of residents having completed a Bachelor's Degree.

Highest Level of Education			
	Foothills County	Sturgeon County	Alberta
No certificate, diploma, or degree	10.2%	13.9%	15.5%
Secondary/High school diploma/Equivalency	29.2%	31.4%	28.8%

Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	10.0%	4.1%	8.7%
College, CEGEP, or other non-university diploma	20.3%	23.4%	18.2%
University certificate or diploma or degree below bachelor level	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%
Bachelor's Degree	19.5%	11.2%	17.9%
University certificate or diploma or degree above bachelor level	1.5%	1.5%	1.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

High school students in the Foothills County Region are showing higher levels of high school completion rates and lower levels of high school drop-out rates than the provincial average. This also holds true for rates specific to the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) populations.

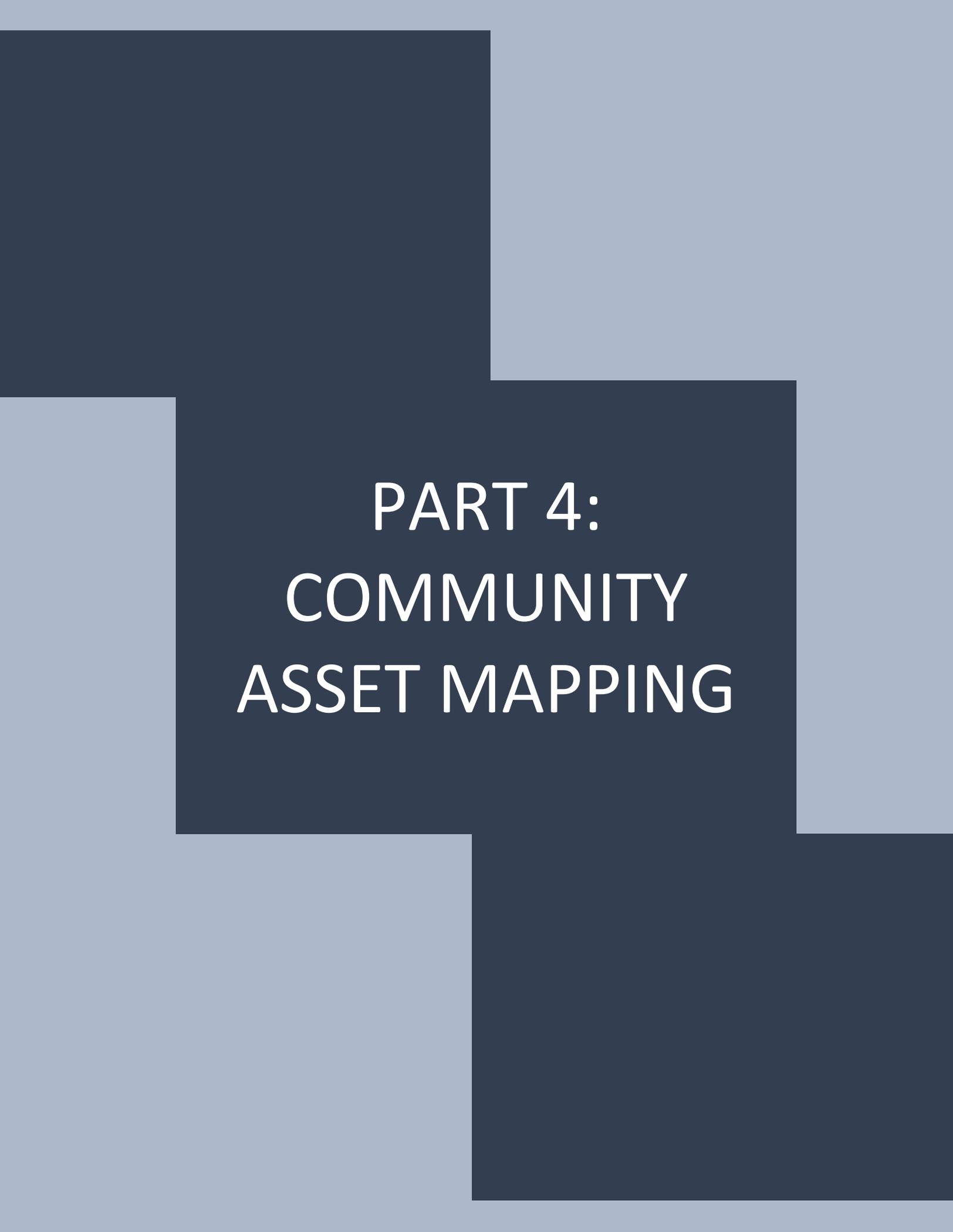
Foothills County Region High School Completion and Drop-Out Rates 2021 - 2024						
	*FSD	**CRSD	*Alberta	*FSD - FNMI	**CRSD - FNMI	*Alberta - FNMI
High School Completion Rate (3 yr) 2021-2022	91.6%	91.8%	83.2%	82.5%	87.8%	62.0%
High School Drop-Out Rate 2021 - 2022	1.0%	n/a	2.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a
High School Completion Rate (3 yr) 2022 - 2023	87.6%	83.7%	80.7%	86.3%	79.3%	59.5%
High School Drop-Out Rate 2022 - 2023	1.3%	1.3%	2.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
High School Completion Rate (3 yr) 2023 - 2024	87.2%	89.1%	80.4%	87.2%	80.6%	57.0%
High School Drop-Out Rate 2023 - 2024	1.3%	1.8%	2.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a - information not available

*Source: 2023-2024 Annual Education Results Report for Foothills School Division (FSD)

**Source: 2023-2024 Annual Education Results Report for Christ the Redeemer School Division (CRSD)

**includes many schools outside of the Foothills Region, so cannot draw specific conclusions regarding Foothills County youth residents



**PART 4:
COMMUNITY
ASSET MAPPING**

PART 4: COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

A community asset is anything in the community that supports and enhances the capacity of individuals and groups to thrive. Mapping assets allows for the identification of community assets, and how they may be mobilized and used to address challenges and build stronger, more resilient communities. Assets can be anything, including individuals, financial resources, organizations, physical spaces, and services provided.

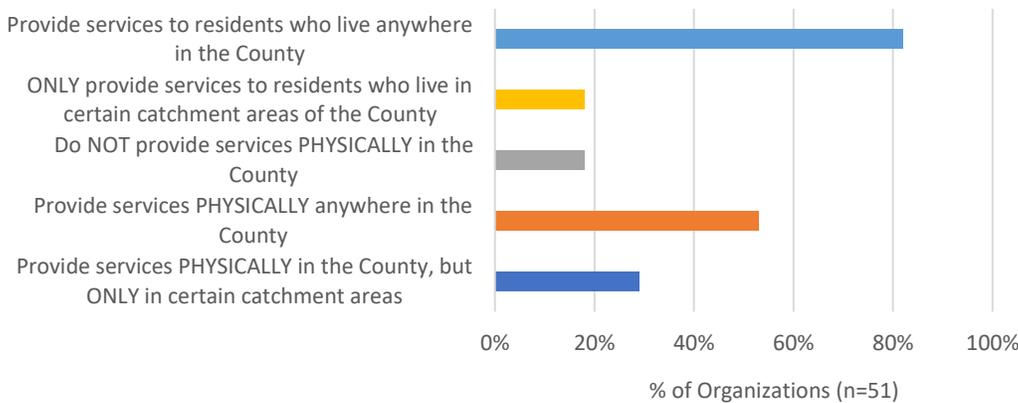
Project limitations did not allow for a full mapping of all community assets in Foothills County. However, some assets specifically relevant to FCSS and its mandate of enhancing the social well-being of individuals, families and communities through prevention, were documented through a County database review, FCSS funding records and the Community Service Provider survey.

Part 4: Community Asset Mapping

Community & Social Service Organizations

A total of 58 community and social service providers completed a survey. While the data gathered from them does not provide a complete picture of the supports and services available for Foothills County residents, it does provide some information on where strengths in services may lie.

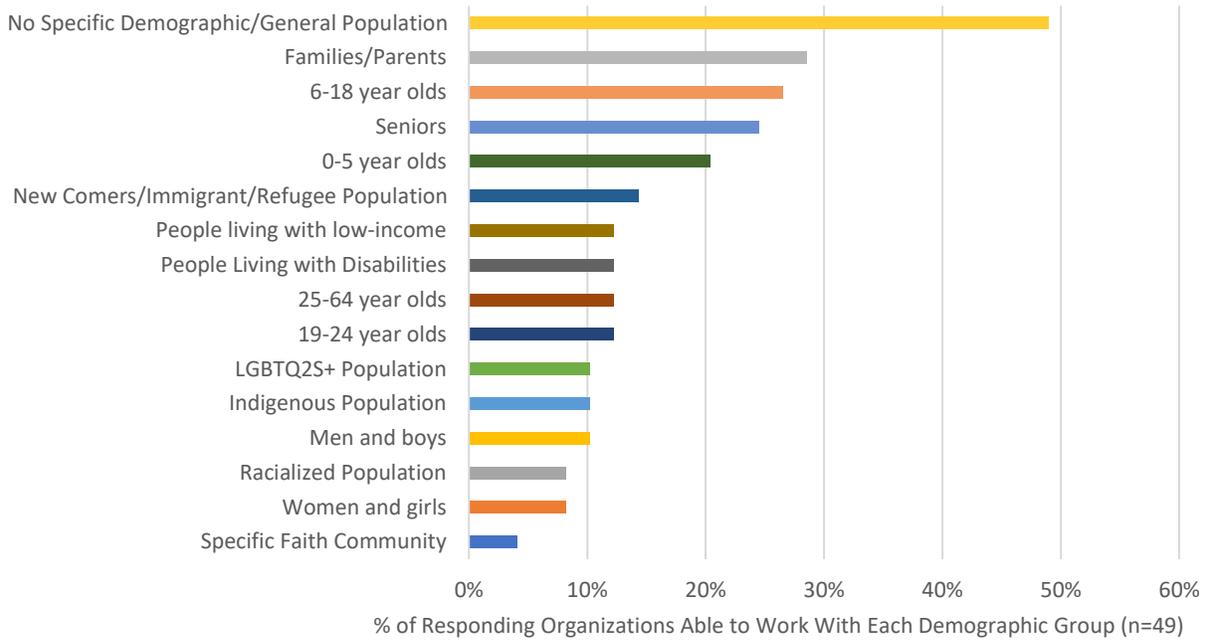
Community & Social Service Organizations' Varying Ability to Serve Foothills County Residents



Of the 58 community service providers that completed the survey, over 80% have the ability to provide services to County residents, regardless of where they live. Just over 50% of them provide services physically anywhere in Foothills County, improving accessibility to some services for County residents.

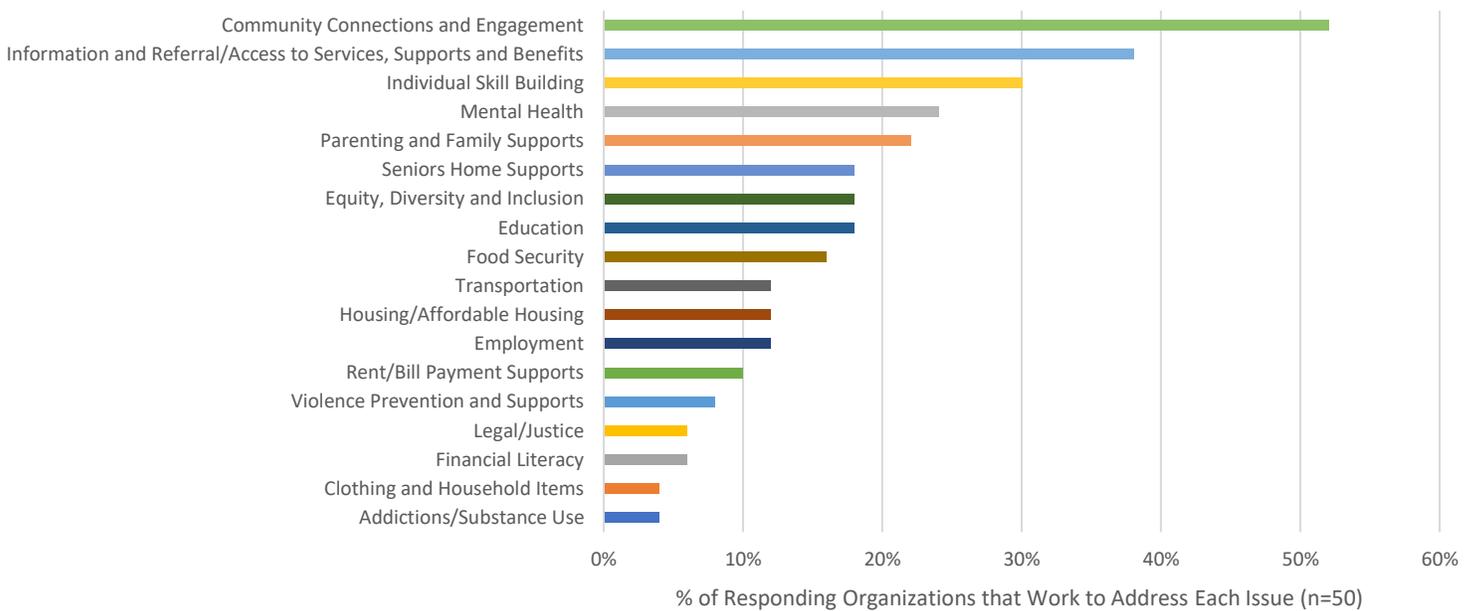
Almost 50% of responding organizations serve the general population, with over 25% of the organizations specifically serving families/parents and 6-18 year olds.

Community & Social Service Organizations' Target Demographics



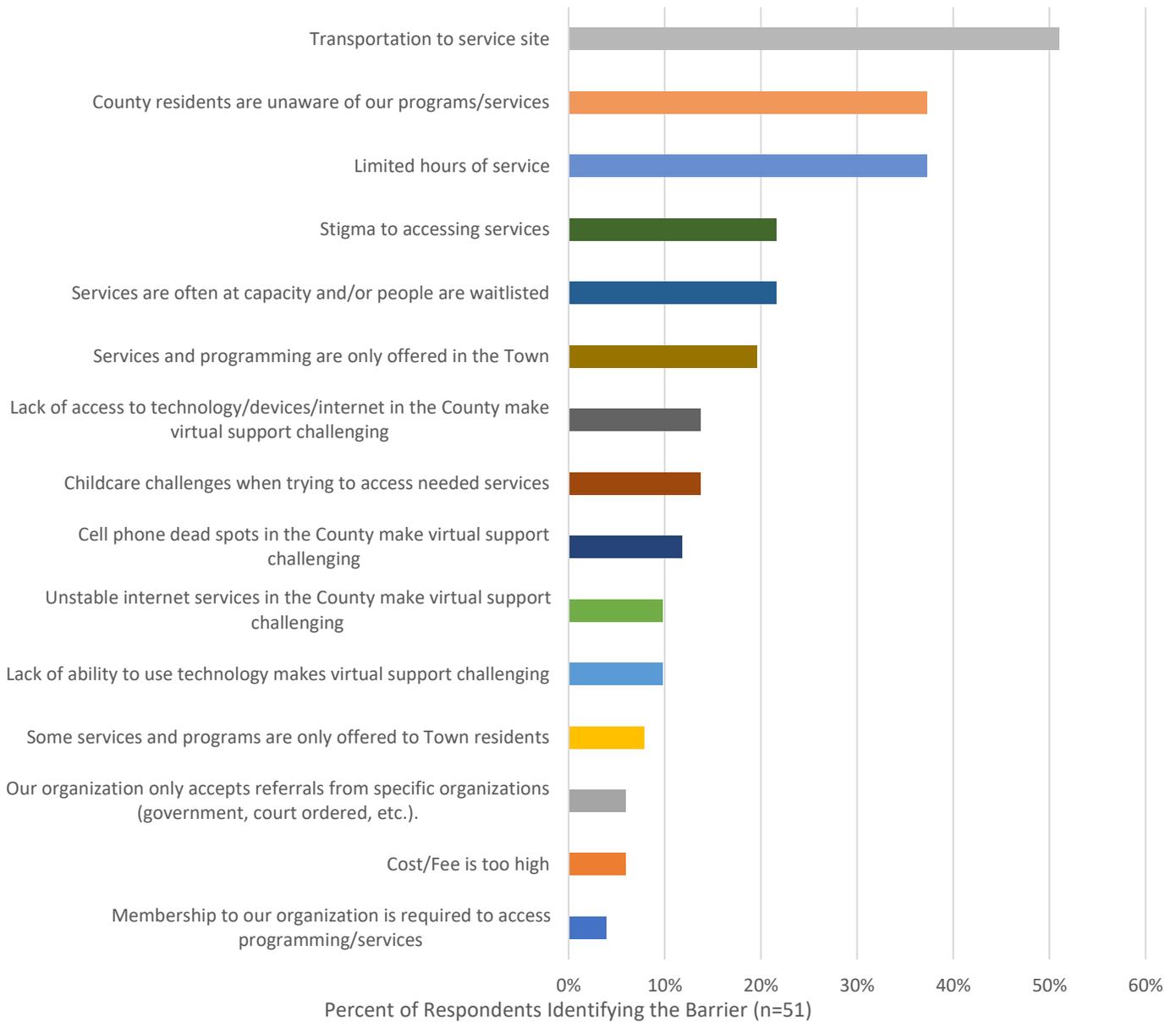
Over 50% of the responding organizations provide supports to improve community connections and engagement, and over 25% provide information and referral supports, as well as individual skill building.

Community & Social Service Organizations' Targeted Issues to Address



Community and social service providers were also asked to identify the primary barriers Foothills County residents experience in accessing their services. Although these are not assets, the more these barriers can be minimized, existing assets can be maximized.

Barriers to Accessing Community & Social Service Organizations' Services



In 2025, Foothills County FCSS funded 35 programs, offered by a total of 29 organizations, to help ensure County residents have access to community-based social services and programs. Just under \$360,000 was invested into these programs, with fairly equal distribution of funds

between the north half and south half of the County and just over half of the funding being allocated to child and youth programming, and volunteering training & recognition.

Foothills County FCSS 2025 Funding Themes & Allocation Amounts	
Child & Youth Programming	\$103,000
Volunteer Training & Recognition	\$77,373
Information & Referral	\$68,500
Family Programming	\$59,700
Seniors Programming	\$24,700
Community Awareness Building	\$13,100
Mental Health Supports	\$12,520

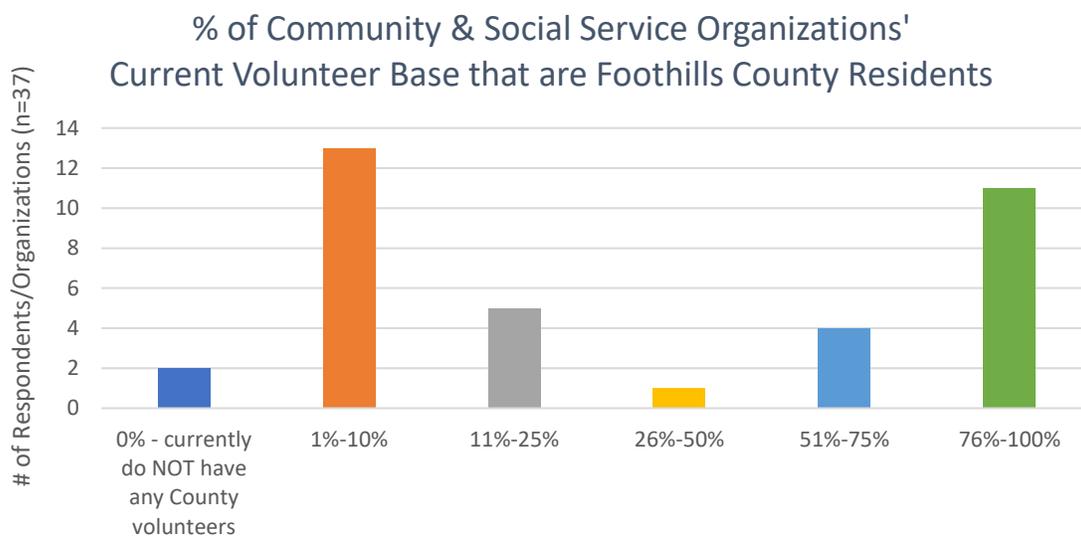
Source: Foothills County FCSS

FCSS funding and the ability for Foothills County FCSS to direct funding, within the FCSS mandate, towards identified need is a significant asset and opportunity for the community.

Part 4: Community Asset Mapping

Volunteerism

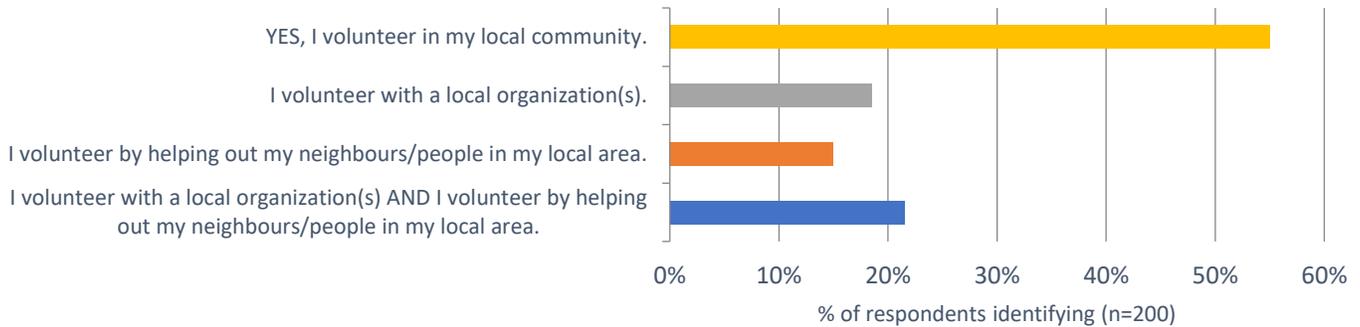
Volunteerism is an important asset in communities, as it often allows for the offering of programs and services that otherwise may not be available to the community. Of the organizations that responded to the Community Service Provider survey, 62% indicated that their organization provides volunteer opportunities for Foothills County residents, with a varying degree of their volunteer base actually being made up of County residents.



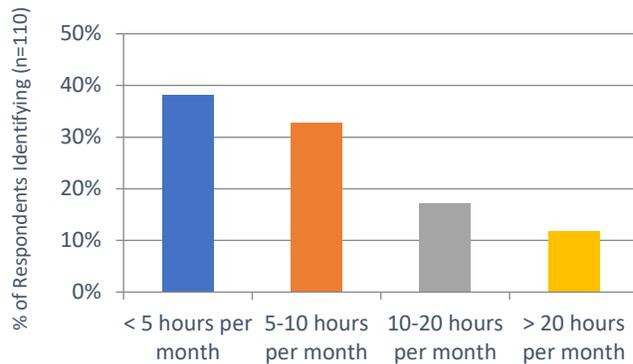
When community residents were surveyed, 55% of respondents identified that they volunteer in some capacity in their local community, with the majority identifying that they volunteer

both with a local organization (formal volunteering) and by helping out others in their area (informal volunteering).

Foothills County Residents Rate & Type of Volunteerism



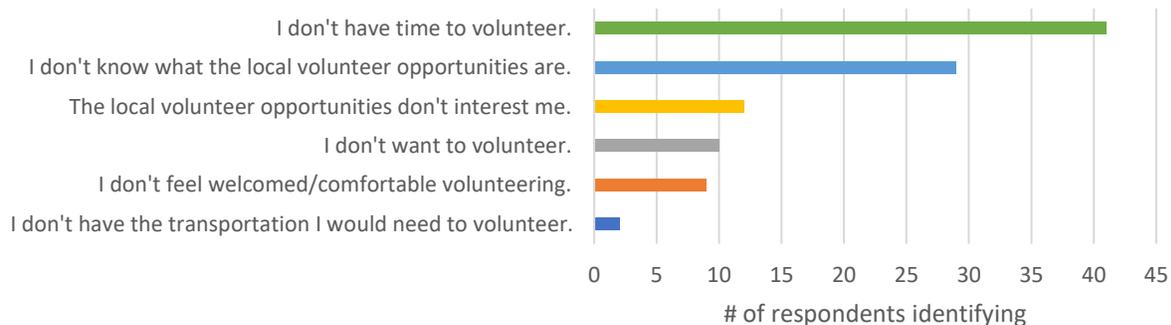
Time County Residents Spend Volunteering Every Month



The majority of volunteers spend less than 5 hours per month volunteering, but over 10% identified spending more than 20 hours per month.

The barriers keeping people from volunteering were varied, and not all can be addressed. However, the main barrier that could be addressed is that residents don't know what volunteer opportunities exist. If this was to be addressed, it is possible that the asset of volunteerism could be expanded upon in Foothills County.

Barriers Preventing Volunteering



Part 4: Community Asset Mapping

Potential Community Gathering Places

At the beginning of this project, it was observed, and later confirmed through the General Community Household/Adult Survey, that some Foothills County residents don't necessarily identify as a County resident, nor feel a sense of belonging to the County. Rather, they identify as living in, or feeling a sense of belonging to one of the towns/city close to the County.

In response to this, another asset that was documented that included potential community gathering places that are located directly in Foothills County. Things like schools, churches and community halls were identified as assets, as potential places where programs and events could be offered, allowing County residents to gather, connect with their neighbours and develop a deeper sense of connection and belonging to Foothills County.

There is fairly equal distribution of potential public gathering places throughout the County, with the exception of the southwest quadrant, which appears to have significantly fewer. The current level of community activities being offered out of these potential gathering places varies, but some may be underutilized and have untapped potential for community building.

Type & Number of Potential Public Gathering Places Directly IN Foothills County				
	NW Quadrant	NE Quadrant	SW Quadrant	SE Quadrant
Community Halls	6	3	1	5
Public Recreation Facilities	1	2	0	1
Public Schools	2	2	0	2
Private Schools	0	2	0	0
Libraries	1	0	0	1
Churches	0	1	0	1
Historic Sites	0	0	1	0
Agricultural Facilities	1	0	0	1
Total	11	10	2	11

Source: Foothills County database

When community residents were asked where they typically socialize, the majority said either in a private home or somewhere in the nearest town/city.

By capitalizing on these potential public gathering places, residents would have opportunities to socialize directly in the County, and publicly, which could enhance their sense of belonging to the County, and over time, increase their connection to neighbours and expand their social support networks.

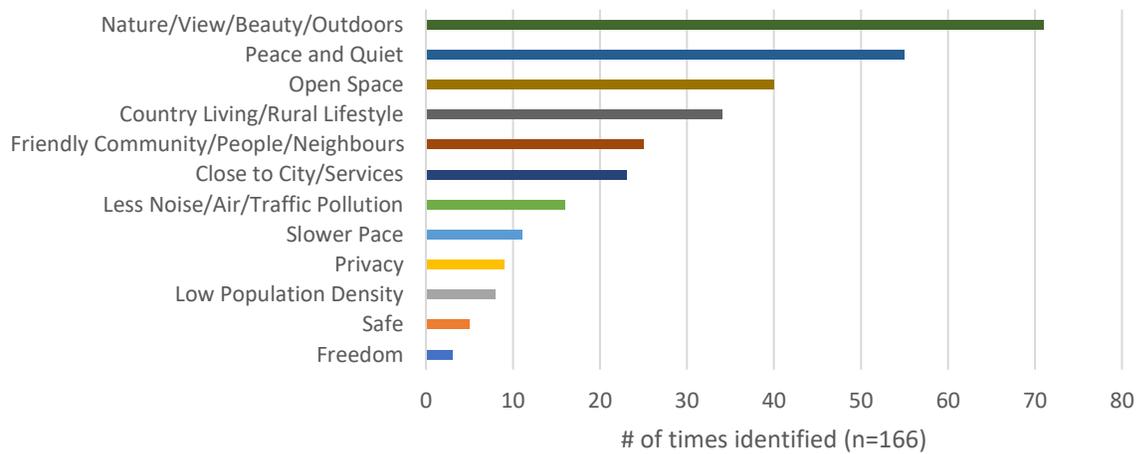
Part 4: Community Asset Mapping

Community Pride

In the Household/Adult survey, 84% of respondents indicated that they feel proud to live in Foothills County.

When asked what the best parts of living in Foothills County are, residents overwhelmingly identified that the rural landscape and the benefits it provides, including living the rural/country lifestyle, were the best parts of living in the County.

Best Parts of Living in Foothills County





**PART 5:
HIGH IMPACT
PRIORITIES**

PART 5: HIGH IMPACT PRIORITIES

Given the overwhelming need and limited resources that all communities are facing, including Foothills County, it is important to prioritize and focus any efforts to affect social change and improve the social well-being of individuals, families and the community. Fortunately, just as one risk factor can contribute to multiple complex issues, one strategy can also help prevent and address a wide range of these challenges.

Taking into account the FCSS mandate and where Foothills County FCSS can most influence change, the prevention science research, the high-impact opportunity protective and risk factors, data from the Community Profile, and insights from community engagement—including potential service gaps, several key high impact priorities have emerged. These priorities show a high to extreme level of supporting evidence and offer valuable insight into the most pressing and impactful concerns. They also share common risk factors, and the strategies used to prevent and address these issues often overlap and reinforce one another – making them high impact opportunities. By prioritizing these issues, Foothills County FCSS is well-positioned to help create meaningful, high impact, positive change in the community. The following are the evidence-based recommended priorities for Foothills County FCSS:

Foothills County FCSS Recommended High-Impact Priorities

1. Support Mental Health Across the Lifespan
2. Prevent and Mitigate Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Develop Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)
3. Enhance Social Connections and Natural Supports
4. Enhance Community Engagement and Cohesion
5. Support Affordability Initiatives
6. Enhance Access to Services

These opportunities do not represent all of the high evidence level issues, but again, represent the best high-impact opportunities for Foothills County FCSS to create lasting change around a multitude of social issues community residents are facing. For additional information on evidence rankings and specific data regarding all issues examined, see the Community Profile, as well as the evidence rankings in Appendix A and additional data tables in Appendix C.

Part 5: High Impact Priorities

Data Sources

Information was gathered from multiple sources during the first 6 months of 2025, to provide an evidence-based perspective on what issues may be challenging Foothills County residents. Data from the Community Profile, the prevention science research and associated high impact

opportunity protective and risk factors, and the community engagement results was used to support the identification and importance of different issues and opportunities for Foothills County FCSS.

Data from the community engagement includes the perspective of 58 local community and social service providers, who completed a survey based on their experience and observations of working specifically with Foothills County residents. If service providers indicated that they didn't have any knowledge regarding a specific demographic group, they were not given the opportunity to answer the questions asked regarding that demographic group, allowing the data to be more experience and observation driven, as opposed to opinion driven.

To help conduct a gap analysis, service providers also provided their perspective, based on their experience of working in the community and social service landscape, whether there are currently enough programs and services addressing the issues. It is important to note that an identified potential gap in service could mean that there are no, or few, programs available in the community addressing a specific issue. It could also mean that although there are a number of programs currently available, the issue being addressed is larger than the current capacity to address that issue and additional programs and services may be needed to effectively prevent and/or address the issue. Additionally, community programs and services are constantly changing, making any gap analysis most reflective of the time in which it was conducted.

Household surveys were completed by adults in 259 Foothills County households. Based solely on a sample of 259 out of 8,450 occupied private households in Foothills County (based on 2021 census data), there is approximately a 90% confidence level that the results reflect the broader population within a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$, or 95% confidence level with a margin of error of approximately $\pm 6\%$. However, although the exact number is unclear, it is assumed that there are more occupied private households in Foothills County now, making the confidence level lower to some degree, which may be a limitation to the data. There are other potential limitations to this data, which will be further explained in the next sub-section.

Youth surveys were completed by 21 Foothills County youth, between the ages of 8 and 18. Those 8-13 were required to get parental/guardian permission before completing the survey and those ages 8-10 were highly encouraged to have their parent/guardian help them in completing the survey.

Both the household/adult and youth survey respondents were screened to ensure they live within Foothills County and answered questions pertaining to the protective and risk factors they experience, and their unique perspective of living in Foothills County.

In addition, some focus groups and interviews also took place with youth, parents and seniors. Unfortunately, due to project limitations and other contributing factors, we did not find enough Foothills County-specific data was collected from this part of the community engagement efforts to influence findings. We have since made adjustments to our approach to public

engagement and how we can best garner uptake in future surveys, program offerings, and overall awareness.

For more detail on the demographics of the respondents, see the Respondent Profile in Appendix B.

The data gathered was analyzed and assigned a low to extreme level of evidence that a specific protective factor is lacking and/or a specific risk factor is prevalent. Low risk (green) required less than 25% agreement among respondents, medium risk (yellow) 25% - 49% agreement, high risk (red) 50% - 74% agreement, and extreme risk (red) 75% agreement or higher. See Appendix A for details.

Part 5: High Impact Priorities

Limitations and Cautions

It is important when examining data to acknowledge its limitations so data can be interpreted appropriately and prevent misleading conclusions. Despite best efforts, as with any data collection process, some limitations to the data used in this report are important to note.

Sample Bias

Throughout the report, some of the potential limitations or cautions in interpreting the data are noted. However, when examining the bulk of the data in this section, specifically any of the community survey results, some degree of sample bias exists. Sample bias is when the group of people who data was collected from – the “sample” – doesn’t necessarily fairly represent the whole population, potentially skewing the data.

Sample Bias – Community and Social Service Provider Respondents

Fifty-eight community and social service providers responded to the survey; however, this does not represent all organizations that provide services to Foothills County residents. Because a full asset mapping was not conducted—and there is no definitive count of providers, their target demographics, or the social issues they address—it is unclear how representative the 58 respondents are of the broader provider landscape. While the exact nature or extent of sample bias cannot be identified, it is reasonable to assume that some degree of bias exists.

Sample Bias – Community Resident Household/Adult and Youth Surveys

Examining limitations in the data collection process, as well as using the quantitative data compiled in the Community Profile as a comparator, a more in-depth analysis of sample bias can be done with the various community resident surveys:

- Surveys were primarily accessed online, requiring people to have access to an electronic device and the internet, which may exclude certain parts of the population, especially those living on lower incomes.
- Advertisement for the surveys included postcards mailed to every household in Foothills County and ads in the Western Wheel, which required an ability to read and understand English, which may exclude certain groups.
- 80% of community survey respondents live in the north half of the County. Although the north half has a significantly higher population density, there may be an underrepresentation of perspectives from those living in the southern half of the County, especially the southwest quadrant.
- 71% of parent respondents did NOT have any children under the age of 6 living with them, so there may be an underrepresentation of perspectives from parents with young children
- There was very little diversity represented in the respondents to the community surveys. Although community demographics show that Foothills County has a less diverse population, it suggests slightly more diversity than the respondent profile. The perspectives of residents with diverse backgrounds, especially those identifying as indigenous or belonging to a visible minority group, may be lacking.
- There was also:
 - Overrepresentation of respondents ages 55 and older, and an underrepresentation of adult respondents under the age of 35.
 - Overrepresentation of female-identifying respondents.
 - Slight overrepresentation from households with incomes ranging from \$75,000 - \$150,000 and slight underrepresentation from residents from the remaining income categories.
 - Overrepresentation of survey respondents with a Bachelor's Degree or higher and an underrepresentation of respondents with a High School diploma or less

Additionally, for the youth survey, a sample size of 21 is too small to reliably represent the broader population, limiting the accuracy and usefulness of the results. Data from the youth survey should be used only to support other findings or to identify potential trends, not draw definitive conclusions.

Incomplete Data

The questions used in the surveys and community engagement were based off of the research identified High Impact Opportunity protective and risk factors. However, due to the necessity to keep surveys a reasonable length, information was not gathered on all of the research identified High Impact Opportunities. The focus was on gathering data regarding the protective and risk factors that research identified as being most impactful and those that are most relevant to the FCSS mandate.

For the gap analysis, although information from 58 community and social service providers was gathered, it is important to recognize that this is not the entirety of programs and services

available to Foothills County residents. In addition, the services and programs available are constantly changing, so any gaps in services are identified as “potential” and may require further examination.

Part 5: High Impact Priorities

Support Mental Health Across the Lifespan

Evidence of Importance

Mental health challenges are identified in the research as being a significant risk factor for a large majority of other issues, including family violence, substance use disorder and homelessness, making it a very High Impact Opportunity. ^{xxxxxxxxxxxii} By prioritizing mental health and wellness across the lifespan, there is an opportunity to have a significant impact in the lives of individuals, families and the community as a whole, not only as a direct impact, but also as a preventive impact.

Evidence of Need

Mental health challenges had a significant amount of high and extreme levels of evidence that it is an issue for all demographic groups, making it one of the top issues facing Foothills County residents. In addition to the high impact protective and risk factors highlighted in the figure below, further contributing to mental health challenges, residents are also facing higher levels of isolation and challenges with substance misuse.

HIGH IMPACT PROTECTIVE FACTORS & RISK FACTORS	Household/Adult & Youth Survey Data					Community & Social Service Provider Survey Data					Other	
	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - General	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/ Youth	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Youth <small>***caution required due to insufficient sample size</small>	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Top 5 Issues - Service Providers - General	Top Seniors Issues - Seniors Focus Groups	Issue Ranking - Quantitative Data - General
INDIVIDUAL												
mental health/chronic (toxic) stress, grief/loss, past trauma	High - SS - women more stress/anxiety	High	High - Stress Medium - anxiety/depression	Medium	Low/Medium	EXTREME	EXTREME	High	High (especially grief & loss)	High	High	High
•caregiver stress/struggles caring for aging parents and/or other family members	Medium - SS - women struggle more			Low/Medium							Medium	
•self-esteem/confidence	High - SS - women struggle more	High			Medium	High		Medium	Medium but sufficiently addressed			
•positive coping strategies	Medium - SS - women struggle more	Medium	High			High	High	High	High			
•emotional regulation/self-regulation/impulse control/emotional maturity/executive functioning	Medium - SS - women struggle more	Medium	Medium		Low/Medium	High		High				High - Low scores for preschoolers

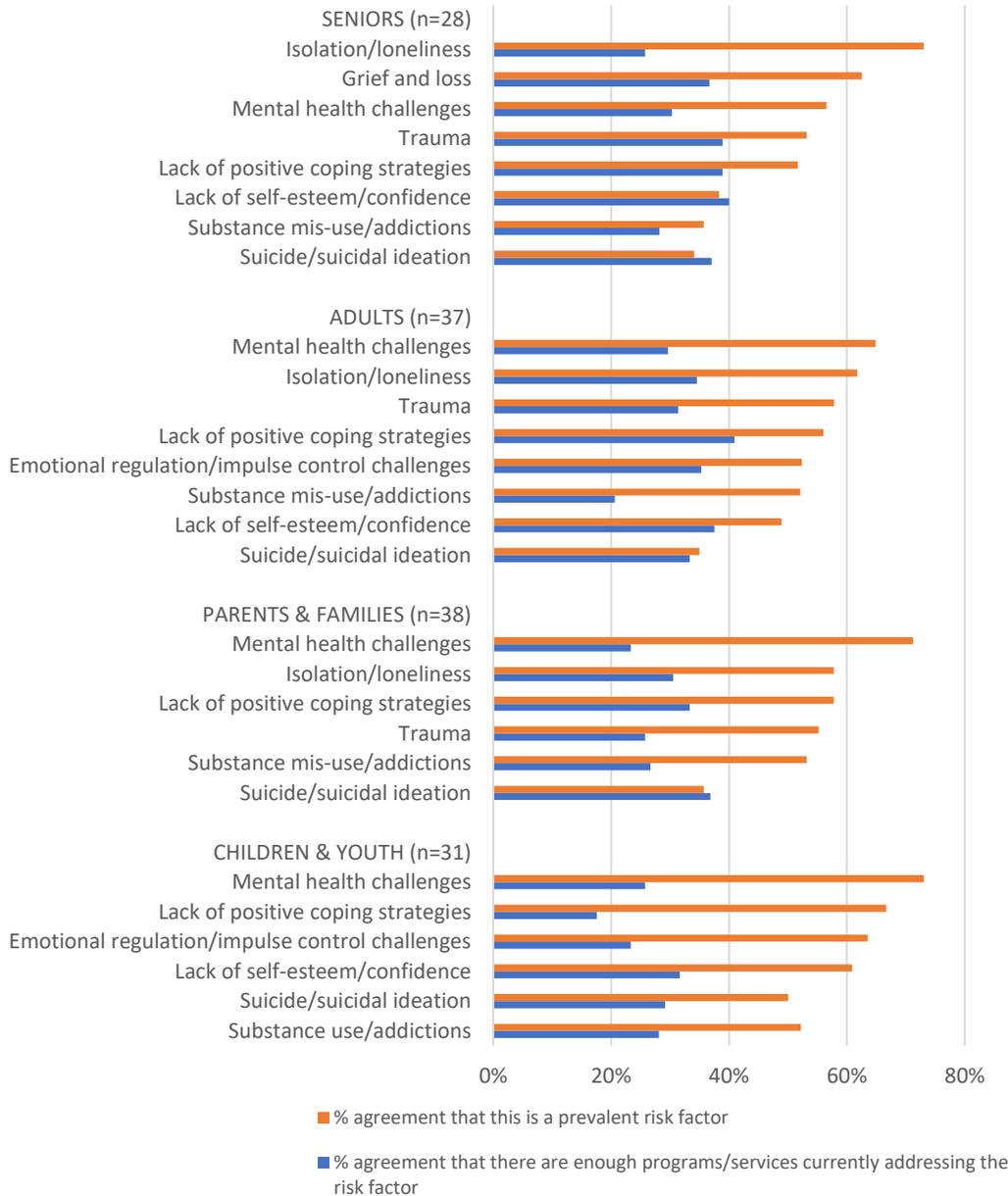
Although evidence suggests that all demographic groups are struggling with mental health challenges, it also suggests that some may be struggling more than others.

Community Household/Adult Survey showed a statistically significant difference that residents ages 35-44, and those ages 45-54 to an even larger degree, are struggling more with stress and anxiety than other adult age groups. In addition, it also showed that women are struggling more than men.

When examining seniors mental health, some of the evidence is conflicting, with seniors reporting in the Community Household/Adult Survey that they aren't having significant challenges with their mental health. However, seniors from the focus groups and the service providers identified that seniors are definitely struggling with their mental health, and especially with grief and loss.

Youth identified that they are struggling with their self-esteem, but it was parents and service providers who identified that they are also struggling with significant stress, anxiety, poor emotional regulation and are lacking in positive coping strategies.

Service Provider Observations Risk Factor Prevalence and Current Service Levels MENTAL HEALTH



Although the significant need for mental health supports across the lifespan is supported by the data, as well as a lack of services for all demographics and age groups, service providers identified a more significant lack of mental health services and supports for children and youth, and parents and families.

Potential Opportunities for Foothills County FCSS

While providing mental health supports across the lifespan is critical, and the need for it is demonstrated by the data, there may be an opportunity to target specific groups to have the biggest impact.

Given the research supporting the significance of parental mental health, the impact of early intervention in providing mental health supports, and the identified lack of services, prioritizing parental, child and youth mental health may be an area where significant impact could be seen if it was further addressed.

Parental Mental Health Supports

Parental mental health challenges and parental substance use are known to be an identified Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and can have a long-term, detrimental impact on the healthy physical, emotional and social development of children.^{xxxiii} Substance misuse and mental health are intricately linked, so supports for mental health and the development of healthy coping strategies at the earliest opportunity can not only help prevent further issues for the parent, but significantly improve short and long-term outcomes for children.

Child & Youth Mental Health Supports

In addition to providing mental health and parenting supports for parents, and supports for children and youth to improve their self-esteem, developing stress reduction and anxiety management techniques, as well as other healthy coping strategies, targeting primary prevention activities may provide a more long-term solution to the mental health crisis facing children and youth.

Current research indicates that one of the most impactful ways to prevent mental health challenges, is to support healthy brain development^{xxxiv}, especially in those 0-3 years of age and the teen years, when neuroplasticity is at its highest.^{xxxv} Although the effects may take longer to become visible—as is often the case with primary prevention—the research is clear: healthy brain development forms the foundation for nearly all other outcomes, and its significance cannot be overstated.

Alignment with FCSS Provincial Prevention Strategies

There are 6 Provincial Prevention Strategies outlined in the FCSS Accountability Framework.^{xxxvi} Mental health challenges can be addressed and prevented in a multitude of ways, allowing for potential alignment with any of these 6 strategies, depending on the specific approach taken. However, the most likely alignment would be with the strategy to “develop and strengthen skills that build resilience”.

Part 5: High Impact Priorities

Prevent & Mitigate ACEs & Develop PCEs

Evidence of Importance

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as childhood abuse and household dysfunction, are experiences that increase the likelihood of poor outcomes later in life,^{xxxvii} negatively impact brain development and have been linked to a number of issues in adulthood including an increased risk for mental health issues and problematic substance use.^{xxxviii}

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs), on the other hand, have been shown to not only mitigate the impact of ACEs,^{xxxix} but can also be protective in nature and build resilience in children and youth, and support their success in later in life.^{xl}

Preventing ACEs and mitigating their impact through the development of PCEs is one of the most impactful strategies that can be adopted to not only influence the current reality children, youth, families and communities are facing, but can have a significant impact on the future reality as well.

Evidence of Need

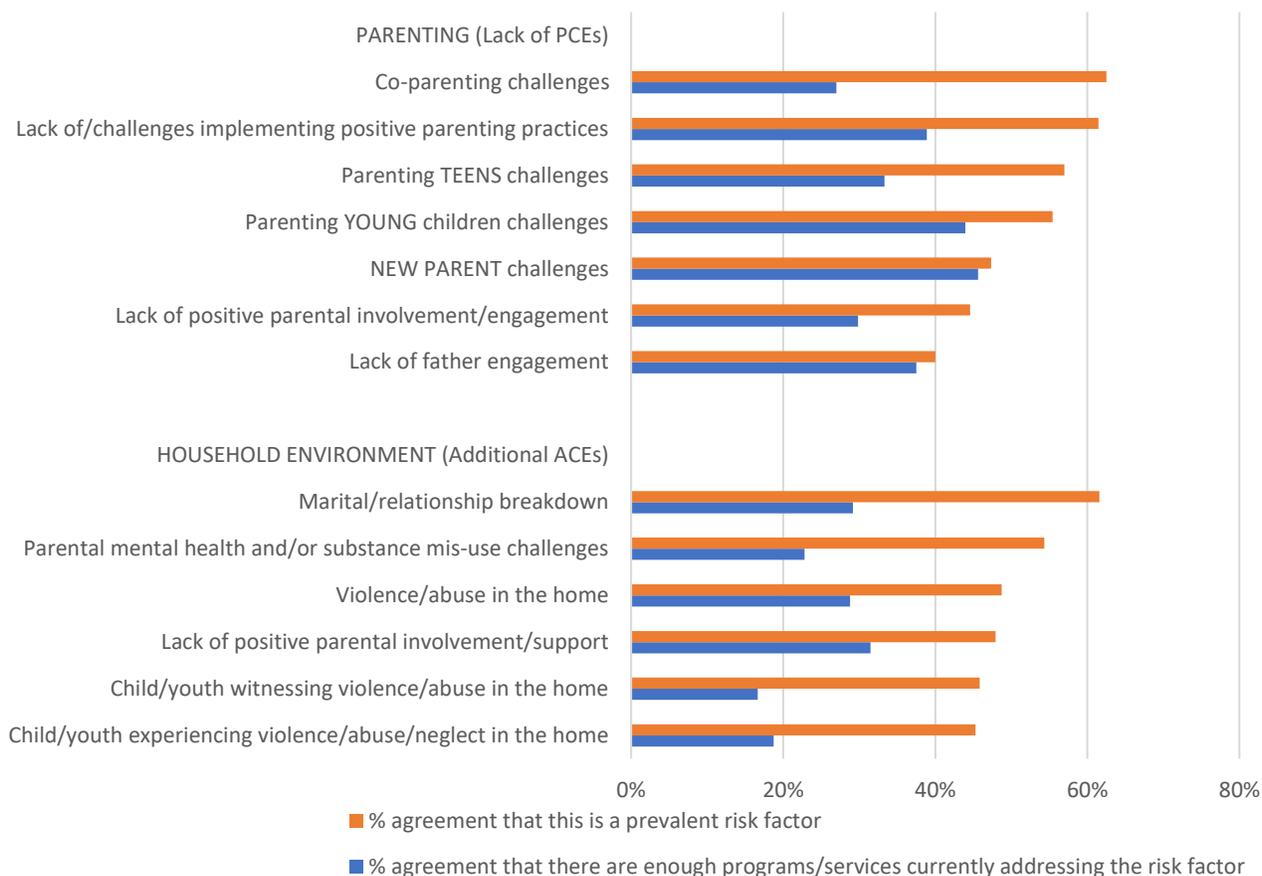
The evidence gathered, as highlighted below, suggests that children in Foothills County are at risk of, or are already experiencing ACEs as a result of their home environment and may be lacking in some of the more protective PCEs that can be provided by a healthy and supportive home environment.

HIGH IMPACT PROTECTIVE FACTORS & RISK FACTORS	Household/Adult & Youth Survey Data					Community & Social Service Provider Survey Data					Other	
	Issue Ranking - Household/Adult - General	Issue Ranking - Household/Adult - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/Youth	Issue Ranking - Household/Adult - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Youth <small>***caution required due to insufficient sample size</small>	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Parents & Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Top 5 Issues - Service Providers - General	Top Seniors Issues - Seniors Focus Groups	Issue Ranking - Quantitative Data - General
FAMILY FUNCTIONING/HOME ENVIRONMENT												
family involvement/healthy attachment/connectedness to family/time parents spend reading with kids/warm, consistent, engaged fathers, co-parenting					Medium - doing something fun together	Medium	Medium					
healthy family functioning/communication/parenting competencies/co-parenting		Medium - confidence in parenting skills, parent as child grows and changes, communicate effectively/calmly with child, setting boundaries, talking to child about social media use & sensitive issues			Medium - talking to parents about worries/parents talking with child about their life		High - co-parenting, positive parenting, parenting teens & young children					
early exposure/use/parental mental health/addiction issue/violence/parent or caregiver well-being		High - parental mental health					High - parental mental health					High
history of trauma/ACEs - experiencing or witnessing abuse of all kinds, physical or emotional neglect, parent/caregiver who uses substances and/or has mental health problems, exposure to intimate partner violence, separation or divorce, parental/caregiver incarceration,						Medium/High	High	High	High			

Two of the high level evidence ACEs identified were parental mental health and substance misuse, which were addressed in the previous section. Service providers identified additional ACEs negatively impacting the home environment and indicated a lack of services currently addressing those issues.

Service providers also identified a lack of PCEs in the home environment, most of which center around positive parenting practices.

Service Provider Observations Risk Factor Prevalence and Current Service Levels ACEs & PCEs



Contributing to the lack of PCEs, parents identified a medium to high degree of evidence, that they are struggling with positive parenting, including:

- Having confidence in their parenting skills
- Parenting teens and young children
- Communicating calmly and effectively with their child(ren)
- Talking to their child(ren) about sensitive issues
- Setting healthy boundaries with their children
- Having the parenting support they need
- Spending quality time with their child(ren)

Potential Opportunities for Foothills County FCSS

In addition to supporting parental mental health, as discussed in the previous section, many of the opportunities to support the development of PCEs and prevent and/or mitigate the impact of ACEs can be approached from the family/household level and the community level.

Family & Household Level Supports

Building positive parenting skills and healthy family relationships help parents build the skills to not only parent their children positively, but in a way that builds the necessary protective factors within the family unit so that the occurrence of ACEs is lowered, and in the event that they do happen, the communication skills, familial bonds and necessary supports are present within the family unit to mitigate its negative impact.^{xlii}

Early intervention for families and providing supports to new parents is critical to the prevention of ACEs, but it is also important to ensure that families with teenagers also have the supports they need. Service providers identified a greater lack of services for parents challenged with parenting their teen child(ren) and the Community Profile data shows that there are more teens living in the County than their younger counterparts. In addition, as stated above, the teen years brings greater neuroplasticity and impactful brain development, meaning that the presence of PCEs could have a significant impact on the future development of teens.

Additionally, although the sample size was too small to draw conclusions, in the Youth Survey, one of the top reasons youth identified as stopping them from getting the help they need, is that they don't know how to talk to their parents. Supporting family relationship development could further support youth in having the help they need.

Community Level Supports

When considering community level interventions, the focus is on building positive and meaningful relationships between children/youth with others in the community, and the meaningful engagement of children and youth in community life and activities. These relationships and positive engagement in the community help buffer against challenges in the home, can provide important protective factors and can help mitigate the negative impact of ACEs that may have already occurred.^{xliii} Whether it is mentoring programs or after school activities, there are many different evidence-based approaches to help children and youth develop these important connections.

Alignment with FCSS Provincial Prevention Strategies

Again, depending on the approach taken, preventing and mitigating ACEs, as well as helping to develop PCEs, could fall under multiple prevention strategies. The strategies it would most directly align with would be to “develop and maintain healthy relationships” and “develop and strengthen skills that build resilience”.

Evidence of Importance

Research has identified that isolation and loneliness has a serious detrimental impact on health, well-being and even life-expectancy,^{xliixliv} and is a significant risk factor for domestic violence and mental health issues, among others.^{xlvxlv}

Being connected to a positive and reliable community of natural supports, meaning the help and relationships one has naturally in their everyday life, is a significant protective factor linked to many issues, including family violence, addictions, homelessness, mental health issues and more.^{xlvixlvixlix} They can also help mitigate the impacts of negative life experiences, support the individual/family and reduce the need to seek professional supports.[!]

Evidence of Need

The community survey responses indicated that overall, there is a fairly high level of evidence that people are feeling isolate, lonely and that they are lacking the connections for social interactions and social supports, although service providers slightly higher than residents, as highlighted below.

HIGH IMPACT PROTECTIVE FACTORS & RISK FACTORS	Household/Adult & Youth Survey Data					Community & Social Service Provider Survey Data					Other	
	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - General	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/ Youth	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Youth <small>***caution required due to insufficient sample size</small>	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Parents & Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Top 5 Issues - Service Providers - General	Top Seniors Issues - Seniors Focus Groups	Issue Ranking - Quantitative Data - General
RELATIONAL/INTERPERSONAL												
isolation/feelings of loneliness/social connections, socializing	Medium - 55 - women and 45-54 struggle more and Area A vs.B, Area A more living alone than B	Medium	Medium	Medium		High	High	High	EXTREME	High	High	
lack of healthy, supportive relationships/peer pressure/connection to positive and reliable community of support/natural supports	Medium - 55 - 45-54 yr olds struggle more than 35-44 and 55-64	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High	Low		
C&Y Specific - positive adult role models in childhood/adolescence outside of immediate family/at least 2 non-parent adults who take genuine interest in them					Medium/Low (especially teachers)	Medium						
C&Y Specific - positive/pro-social peer relationships in childhood/adolescence/peer pressure/feel supported by friends					Low	High						

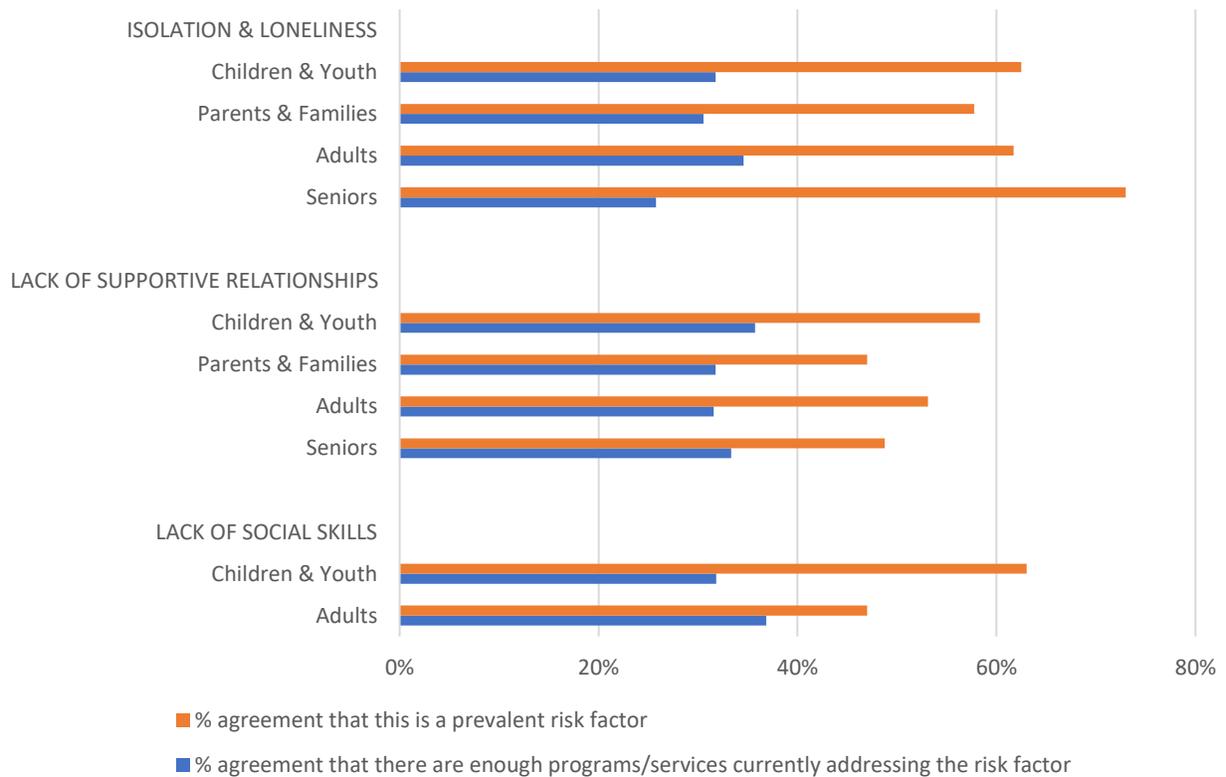
Service providers identified isolation and a lack of natural supports as being a significant, high level evidence issue for all demographic groups in Foothills County. Community residents also identified these issues as being significant, but to a somewhat lesser degree.

Although evidence suggests that all demographic groups are struggling with isolation and a lack of natural supports, it also suggests that some may be struggling more than others. The Community Household/Adult Survey showed a statistically significant difference that residents ages 45-54 are struggling more than other adult age groups. It also showed that women are struggling more than men with isolation, which is a very significant risk factor for women, when it comes to domestic violence.^{li}

In addition, the northwest quadrant of the County has a statistically significant higher amount of residents living alone and a higher number of residents reporting struggling more with isolation than residents living in the northeast quadrant of the County. It is important to note that there wasn't a sufficient sample size from the southwest and southeast quadrants to be included in the statistical analysis, so comparisons cannot be made with these quadrants.

Community and social service providers indicated that there are currently not enough services addressing the issues of loneliness and a lack of natural supports. They also identified that a lack of social skills may be contributing to this issue, which children and youth have confirmed, as approximately one third of youth reported finding it difficult to make friends.

Service Provider Observations Risk Factor Prevalence and Current Service Levels SOCIAL SUPPORTS



Potential Opportunities for Foothills County FCSS

Considering all of the various issues facing Foothills County residents, and the identified lack of community programs and services across the majority of issues, simply enhancing social connections and natural supports is an opportunity unto itself. Providing professional supports is necessary, but it is also requires a significant amount of resources, which many communities

do not have. While sourcing additional funding and resources to increase the professional supports available is critically important, helping community members build supportive social connections and natural supports can create more lasting and sustainable supports, and can lead to less need for, and reliance on, professional supports.^{lii}

Connecting Women and Residents Ages 45-54

The evidence gathered regarding this issue, and the research supporting its importance across the lifespan, suggests that all demographic groups are in need of additional programming to help build social connections and support networks. In addition, based on the statistically significant findings from the Household/Adult Survey, women and those aged 45-54 are struggling more with this issue than their other adult counterparts, which may be a high-impact opportunity for FCSS to address.

Connecting Parents

Isolation and mental health are intricately linked,^{liii} given the importance of and evidence supporting the need for more parental mental health supports, targeting parents with children living in the home, may be another high-impact opportunity for Foothills County FCSS.

Alignment with FCSS Provincial Prevention Strategies

The development of social connections and natural supports aligns directly with two of the provincial prevention strategies - “enhance access to social supports” and “promote social inclusion”. It is also closely linked to other prevention strategies, demonstrating this high-impact opportunity’s strong alignment with the FCSS mandate.

Part 5: High Impact Priorities

Enhance Community Engagement & Cohesion

Evidence of Importance

Research confirms that community engagement and community cohesion enhances both physical and psychological resilience of individuals, as well as enhancing the well-being and resilience of communities.^{liv}

Feeling a strong sense of belonging is often the result of positive community engagement and is often a precursor for community cohesion. It has been found to be associated with better general and mental health across all ages, being particularly impactful in middle adulthood,^{lvi} and is an important protective factor for mental health and substance use issues.^{lvii}

Evidence of Need

The evidence, as highlighted below, shows that there is a lack of community engagement, a lack of a sense of belonging and a lack of community cohesion in Foothills County.

HIGH IMPACT PROTECTIVE FACTORS & RISK FACTORS	Household/Adult & Youth Survey Data					Community & Social Service Provider Survey Data					Other		
	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - General	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/ Youth	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Youth <small>**caution required due to insufficient sample size</small>	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Parents & Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Community	Top 5 Issues - Service Providers - General	Top Seniors Issues - Seniors Focus Groups	Issue Ranking - Quantitative Data - General
COMMUNITY													
community engagement/social and leisure participation/meaningful activities/able to contribute in some way/civic participation/volunteerism (formal and informal)	Medium/High - availability of affordable activities Medium - opportunities to get involved in community life SS - Area A distance to travel greater barrier than Area B				Medium/high - outside of school hours activities	Medium/High - transportation as a barrier to participating, lack of affordable opportunities	Medium/High - lack of affordable opportunities	High - lack of positive community engagement Medium - lack of affordable opportunities	High, but fairly well addressed - affordability well addressed	Volunteerism - Medium but fairly well addressed	Low	Medium	
•don't know what's happening/activities/ events in local area	Medium												
•no community activities/events in local area	Medium												
•inability to afford social/recreational/leisure activities	Medium	Medium											
sense of belonging/community where people feel connected to eachother - C&Y Specific - positive school environment, sense of connectedness/belonging to school community, safety at school, positive school	High/Medium		Medium		Medium	High							
neighbourhood cohesion/feeling close to neighbours/feel like can trust neighbors/community cohesion (social divergence/discord, opposing politics/perspectives)	High - social divergence/discord, lack of community identity												

Adults were asked to what degree they feel a sense of belonging. They were intentionally NOT asked whether they feel a sense of belonging to Foothills County, but rather to what degree they feel a sense of belonging and then asked to list the places they feel a strong sense of belonging to.

Only 18% of adult respondents indicated that they feel a strong sense of belonging, with 95% of those respondents living in the north half of the county, which is only 15% of all the respondents who live in the north half of the County claiming a strong sense of belonging. When asked where they feel a strong sense a belonging towards, 13% identified their local community/neighbourhood, with only 3 respondents mentioning Foothills County specifically.

The top reasons identified for feeling a sense of belonging were the people they know and their neighbours, as well as the activities they participate in. Two of the top reasons identified for NOT feeling a sense of belonging were not knowing neighbours or others in the community and there not being any local activities and opportunities to connect with others. The top reason identified for not feeling a sense of belonging was due to community fragmentation.

Throughout the Household/Adult survey, community residents commented about differing societal attitudes, perspectives and politics as being a significant impediment to having the desire and ability to build connections with others in their area, impacting their engagement with community, sense of belonging and feelings of community cohesion.

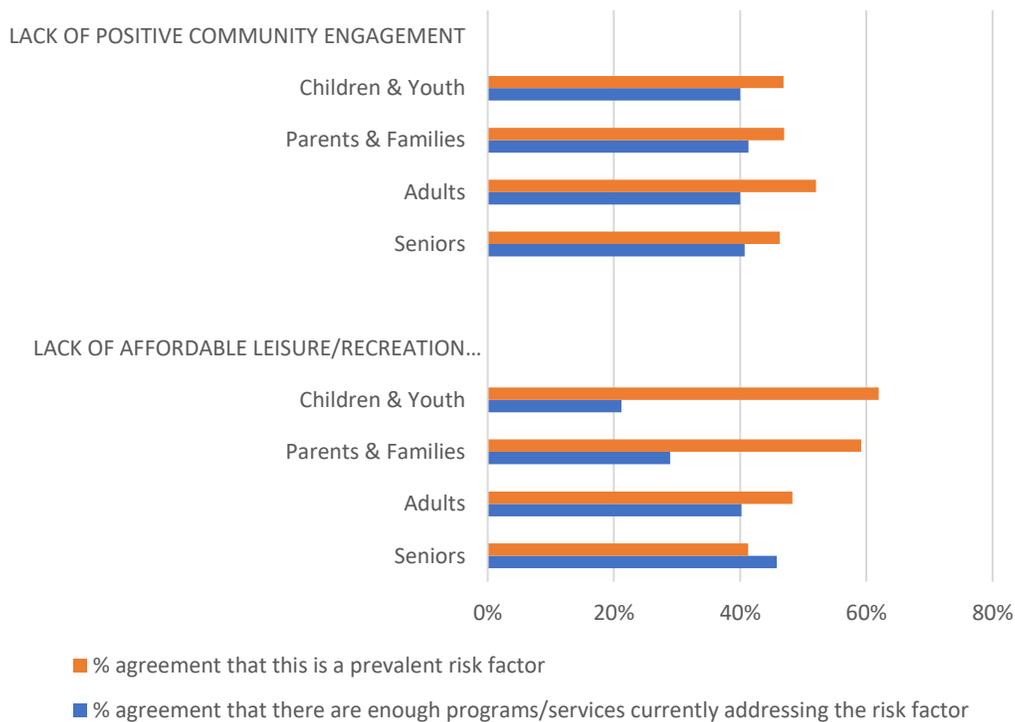
There also appears to be a lack of opportunities for community engagement directly in Foothills County. Over 30% of adult respondents disagree that there are sufficient opportunities in Foothills County to get involved in community life, and just under 40%

disagreed that there are enough affordable social, recreation and leisure activities to participate in.

When asked what barriers stand in the way of engaging further in community life, the primary barriers identified by adult respondents were that they don't know what's happening and there simply aren't opportunities to participate in community in their local area.

Community and social service providers identified a lack of affordable leisure and recreational opportunities as an issue in Foothills County, with there being more of a lack for children, youth, parents and families.

**Service Provider Observations
Risk Factor Prevalence and Current Service Levels
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



Opportunities for Foothills County FCSS

Engage in Community Development and Capacity Building Activities

There are a number of community halls and associations throughout the County, with the majority being in the north half of the County. Based on FCSS staff assessments, there is a varying degree of community engagement activities taking place out of these community

assets, and there could be an opportunity to work with them to increase their capacity to support community engagement and cohesion in their local areas.

Additionally, there may be increased opportunity to work with community, to help develop more of a sense of community, especially in the southern half of the County, where fewer community assets currently exist. This would also help to develop much needed communication channels between Foothills County FCSS and community residents, allowing FCSS to be more connected to the community it serves and more aware of emerging issues.

Increase Community Events and Gatherings

Many residents identified that there are few, or no, community wide events and gatherings in Foothills County. Given that many residents also feel more connected to neighbouring municipalities, there is an opportunity for Foothills County to celebrate its own identity with its own residents.

There were a number of potential public gathering places identified as being directly in Foothills County and that they may provide an opportunity for increasing the number of community events, allowing County residents to gather, connect to one another, connect to Foothills County and develop a stronger sense of belonging and improve community cohesion.

Alignment with FCSS Provincial Prevention Strategies

The first 2 provincial prevention strategies – “promote and encourage active engagement in the community” and “foster a sense of belonging” directly align with enhancing community identity, engagement and cohesion. Any efforts directed towards this high-impact opportunity will meet the provincial FCSS requirements.

Part 5: High Impact Priorities

Support Affordability Initiatives

Evidence of Importance

People having the financial ability to meet basic needs, especially food and housing, is critical to the health and well-being of individuals, families and the broader community. Research has shown that it has a significant immediate, and long-term impact on physical health and mental health,^{lviii} with financial instability and financial stress being strongly linked with increased mental health concerns,^{lix} increase substance use,^{lx} and an increased prevalence of domestic violence.^{lxi}

In addition, high degrees of income disparity in communities has been shown to not only weaken individual resilience, but the well-being, stability and resilience of the entire community.^{lxii}

Evidence of Need

As highlighted in the Community Profile, there is a great degree of income disparity in Foothills County, meaning that there are some people who have a very high income, while there are others who have a very low income. So while affordability may not be an issue for everyone, it is a significant issue for some.

Community and social service providers identified issues relating to financial challenges and affordability amongst the highest of all issues facing Foothills County residents. This includes extreme levels of evidence that a lack of affordable housing is a highly significant issue facing County residents, as well food insecurity, the ability to afford other monthly bills and significant levels of stress related to finances.

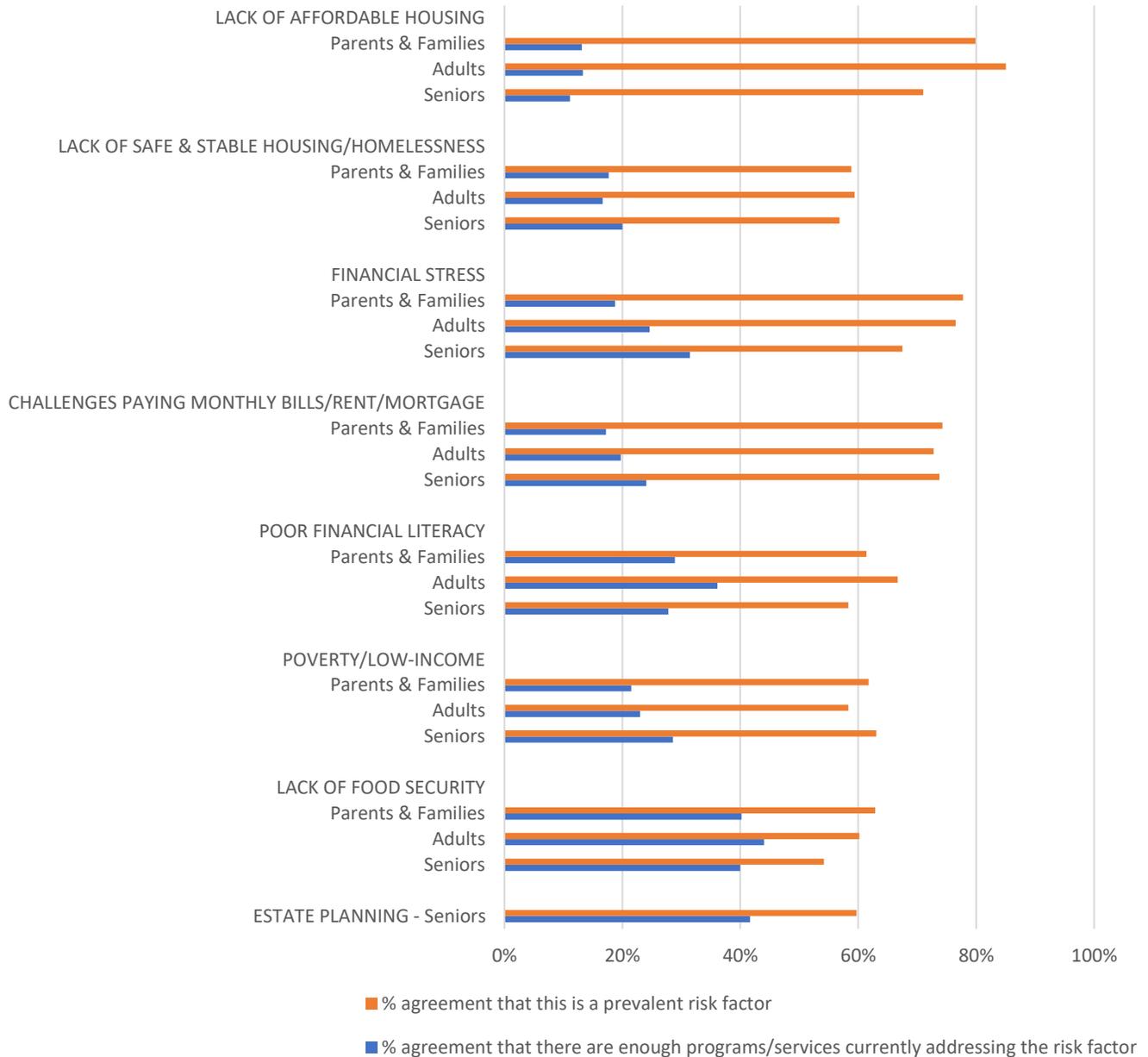
HIGH IMPACT PROTECTIVE FACTORS & RISK FACTORS	Household/Adult & Youth Survey Data					Community & Social Service Provider Survey Data					Other		
	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - General	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/ Youth	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Youth <small>***caution required due to insufficient sample size</small>	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Parents & Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Community	Top 5 Issues - Service Providers - General	Top Seniors - Issues - Seniors Focus Groups	Issue Ranking - Quantitative Data - General
INDIVIDUAL													
finances - financial literacy, estate planning, budgeting				Medium			High	High	High				
finances - lacking financial resources, Low income, ability to meet basic needs, financial stress, poverty	Medium - \$5 - Area A more \$25k-\$50k and less \$150k-\$300k than B				Low/Medium		EXTREME	EXTREME	EXTREME		Medium - Financial stress Low - poverty	Medium	Medium - 10% of 0-17 yr olds living in poverty & high level of income disparity
•struggled to afford monthly bills/rent/mortgage	Medium - \$5-men more than women & 65-74 yr olds struggle less than 35-64 yr olds						EXTREME	EXTREME	EXTREME		Medium		
•food security/children have access to healthy food/ability to afford 3 healthy meals per day	Low - \$5 - 65-74 yr olds struggle less than 35-64 yr olds				Low	Medium	High	High	High		Medium/Low		
housing insecurity/affordable housing/homelessness/poor housing/safe and stable housing	Low					Medium	EXTREME - affordable housing	EXTREME - affordable housing	EXTREME - affordable housing	EXTREME - affordable housing High - lack of local assisted living facilities	High - affordable housing Low - homelessness		High - housing insecurity for renters and lack of affordability

Community residents also identified challenges with affordability and finances, although to a somewhat lesser degree than service providers. There were also statistically significant differences with seniors reporting struggling less than their younger counterparts, residents living in the northwest quadrant struggling more than those in the northeast quadrant and more men reporting challenges with being able to afford monthly bills than women.

It is important to note that although the data from the Household/Adult Survey showed low evidence for housing insecurity, that data from the Community Profile identified that in 2021, 20% of all Foothills County households, and 36% of renter households, were experiencing housing insecurity due to spending more than 30% of their annual income on shelter costs.^{lxiii} With the Consumer Price Index in Alberta increasing over 13% between 2021 and 2024,^{lxiv} it is quite likely that the percent of households experiencing housing insecurity has risen along with it.

In addition to identifying financial challenges and affordability as a high to extreme level of evidence issue, service providers also identified a significant lack of programs and services helping to address these issues in Foothills County.

Service Provider Observations Risk Factor Prevalence and Current Service Levels AFFORDABILITY



Opportunities for Foothills County FCSS

While the FCSS mandate prohibits directly providing for basic needs, there are many things that can be done, that fits within the FCSS mandate, to support affordability and access to basic needs for residents.

Partnerships and Community Initiatives

Although FCSS cannot provide or fund direct services that provide basic needs, it can partner with other organizations and the community to collectively address these issues. For example, it can help build and expand the capacity of organizations that work towards addressing basic needs, or create community initiatives, like community gardens or food coops, that may help address food security.

Also, Foothills County residents indicated that they rely on services provided in neighboring municipalities. As a result, the FCSS Programs and service organizations in those areas are key partners in supporting the social well-being of County residents. Collaboration with these organizations is essential to advancing Foothills County's mission, in affordability initiatives and beyond.

Increase Financial Capacity for Lower-Income Residents

Supporting affordability efforts towards things that fit within FCSS mandate may provide some financial relief for residents, allowing for more expendable income to meet their basic needs. For example, in alignment with improving access to resources, FCSS could support subsidizing the cost of some core services for County residents. Or, FCSS could explore opportunities to partner with local businesses and organizations to provide reduced fees for low-income residents.

Advocacy and Policy Development

Another opportunity for Foothills County FCSS could be to take on an advocacy role around affordable housing, food security and affordability overall. FCSS could explore the development of an Affordable Housing Action Plan for the County, or advocate for policies that support the development of affordable housing within the County, and policies that support food security and affordability overall.

An additional consideration for advocacy could also be for the development of affordable, supported seniors residences located directly in Foothills County. There are no options that currently exist in the County and some seniors expressed concern of needing to leave their community as they get older, taking them away from their home and their social support network.

Alignment with FCSS Provincial Prevention Strategies

Affordability and the ability to meet basic needs is foundational to the ability to have resilience, build healthy relationships, access supports, be included and engage in community life, and feel any sense of belonging.

Provided any approach taken aligns with the FCSS mandate outlined in the FCSS Regulation^{lxv}, efforts made to support affordability can align with any of the 6 provincial prevention strategies.

Part 5: High Impact Priorities

Enhance Access to Services

Evidence of Importance

The success of all of the other high impact opportunities is dependent upon community residents being aware of what supports, resources and opportunities are available, and then being able to access the supports and actually be able to participate in the opportunities.

Evidence of Need

It has already been identified that adult residents reported that a primary barrier to further community engagement is not knowing what is happening in the community. This also holds true for the programs and services available in the community, with adult respondents identifying with a medium level of evidence, that they didn't know what programs and services are available to help them address an issue they, or their family, was having.

Residents also identified to a medium evidence level that the services they need don't exist in their area and that the fees for the services they need are too high. Service providers identified the lack of ability for Foothills County residents to access services as a high evidence issue, somewhat higher than the residents did themselves.

HIGH IMPACT PROTECTIVE FACTORS & RISK FACTORS	Household/Adult & Youth Survey Data					Community & Social Service Provider Survey Data					Other	
	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - General	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/ Youth	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Youth <small>Question requires due to insufficient sample size</small>	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Parents & Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Community	Top 5 Issues - Service Providers - General	Top Seniors Issues - Seniors Focus Groups
COMMUNITY												
accessing services/not available/unaware/coordination of services between agencies/minimize barriers	Low - SS - Area A distance travel more barrier than B	Medium			Medium	High	High	High	High (transportation to, knowledge of)		Low	Medium
•services needed don't exist in area	Medium	Medium										
•inability to afford services	Medium/Low - SS 65-74 yr olds struggling less	Medium										
•lack of knowledge regarding what services are available	Medium/Low	Medium										
INDIVIDUAL												
lack of safe, affordable/accessible and reliable transportation	Low - SS - Area A distance travel to services greater barrier than B	Low		Low/Medium	Low/Medium	EXTREME	High	High	High	EXTREME - Distance	Medium	

Opportunities for Foothills County FCSS

Increase Access to Existing Programs and Services

County residents and service providers agree that there is a need for greater awareness building efforts around not only what programs and services are available, but also how to

access them. Different avenues of communicating this information should be explored to ensure that all age and demographic groups are receiving the information that is most relevant to them, including children and youth.

In addition to increasing awareness of what's available, addressing some of the identified barriers to accessing services could also be a good opportunity for FCSS. Some barriers could be addressed by enhancing affordability and potentially providing for subsidized programming and services for County residents, and bringing more services to be offered directly in the County.

Service providers identified a lack of transportation as a high evidence issue, but community residents did not. Foothills County has recently engaged in a regional transportation pilot study to help address this issue, which should help increase residents' abilities to access existing services.

Increase Service Levels

Although the situation is complex, it is clear that current service levels are not meeting the needs of Foothills County residents, and increasing service levels is needed. However, with limited funds, this can be a significant challenge.

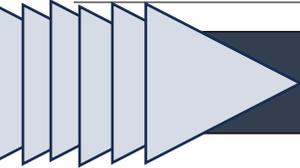
One opportunity could be to work with existing service providers and help build their capacity to expand their service levels. Additionally, Foothills County FCSS can focus on developing more partnerships with current providers, to bring their services into the County, so residents don't need to travel so far to access the services they need.

There may also be an opportunity for FCSS to either partner with other organizations, or on its own, explore additional funding opportunities to bring more needed services into the County.

Alignment with FCSS Provincial Prevention Strategies

While enhancing access to services underlies the achievement of all 6 provincial prevention strategies, it directly aligns with "enhance access to social supports". Like other high-impact opportunities, provided the approach taken is in line with the FCSS mandate, enhancing access to services will certainly align with the provincial prevention strategies.

PART 6: CONCLUSION



Part 6: Conclusion

6

Part 6: Conclusion

Future Considerations

The priorities and opportunities outlined in this report reflect what evidence suggests are the most prevalent issues currently facing the Foothills County. In the future, it may be beneficial to investigate a few additional issues further.

Data from this project showed conflicting information for seniors, with service providers identifying a higher level of need than residents themselves. Additionally, very few County seniors engaged in the focus groups held, which may have helped FCSS to further understand their unique needs. With close to half of Foothills County's population being 50 years of age and older, a more in-depth investigation into the needs of the aging population may identify some additional opportunities to ensure their on-going well-being and ability to age-in-place.

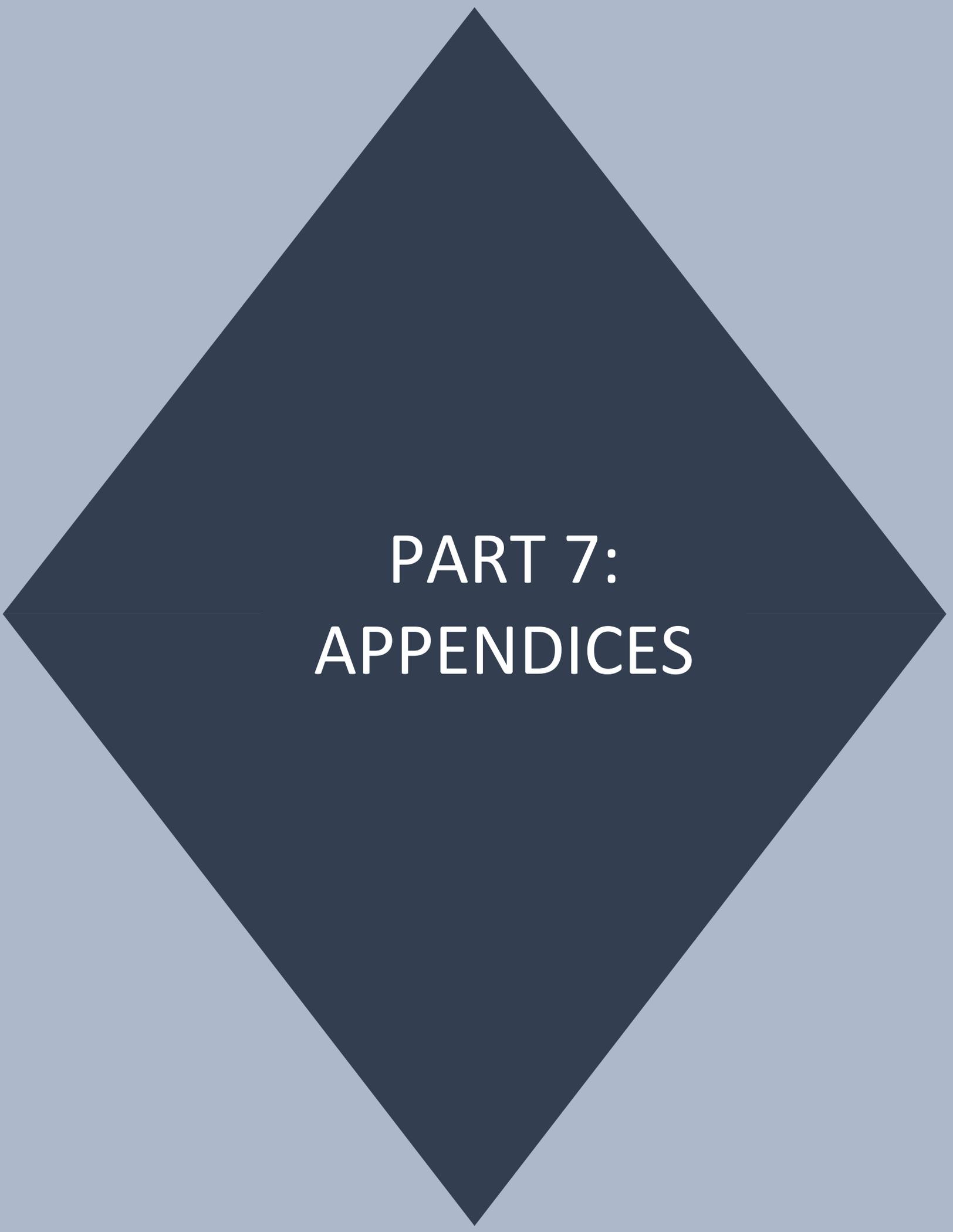
The perspectives of a small number of Foothills County youth were captured in this project. The needs of rural youth are unique, and further engagement and investigation into the challenges they are facing could provide Foothills County FCSS with valuable information on how to support what is typically a vulnerable group in rural communities.

As Foothills County FCSS moves forward, there is an opportunity to take the evidence-based high priority opportunities and apply them to best practice research to determine what specific programs and service to invest in. Best practice research identifies what programs achieve the best, most sustainable outcomes. When looking to have the biggest impact with limited resources, utilizing best practice research is an important step in supporting community and affecting positive social change.

Part 6: Conclusion

Conclusion

This report provides key insights and recommendations to support evidence-based decision-making for Foothills County FCSS. By investing in the high-impact priorities and opportunities outlined in this report, Foothills County FCSS can make meaningful contributions to community well-being—addressing critical risk factors, strengthening protective factors, and fostering the social cohesion necessary for individuals, families, and the broader community to thrive.



**PART 7:
APPENDICES**

Appendix A

High Impact Opportunities

Figure 1: Prevention Science High Impact Opportunities

Prevention Science - High Impact Opportunities							
"X" = research identified	FCSS Provincial Prevention Priorities						
	Addictions	Mental health	Homelessness	Domestic Violence	Employability	Aging Well in Community	Crime Prev & Comm. Safety
PROTECTIVE and RISK FACTORS							
FAMILY FUNCTIONING/HOME LIFE							
family involvement/ healthy attachment/ connectedness to family/ time parents spend reading with kids/ warm, consistent, engaged fathers, coparenting	X	X	X	X			X
healthy family functioning/communication/parenting competencies/co-parenting	X	X	X	X			X
positive adult role models in childhood/parent or caregiver well-being	X		X	X			X
early exposure or use/parental mental health/addiction issue/violence	X	X	X	X			X
history of trauma/ACEs - experiencing or witnessing abuse of all kinds, physical or emotional neglect, parent/caregiver who uses substances and/or has mental health problems, exposure to intimate partner violence, separation or divorce, parental/caregiver incarceration,	X	X	X	X			X
prevalence of PCEs - able to talk to family about feelings, feels like family stood by them in difficult times, felt safe and protected by an adult in their home (PCEs also include - enjoyed participating in community traditions, sense of belonging in highschool, felt supported by friends, at least 2 non-parent adults who took genuine interest in them)	X	X	X	X			X
RELATIONAL/INTERPERSONAL							
isolation/feelings of loneliness/social connections/socializing	X	X	X	X		X	X
unhealthy relationships/stable, positive, healthy relationships	X	X	X	X		X	X
marital or relationship breakdown	X	X	X	X			X
lack of supportive relationships/peer pressure	X	X	X	X		X	X
connection to positive and reliable community of support/natural supports	X	X	X	X		X	X
C&Y Specific - positive adult role models in childhood/adolescence outside of immediate family/at least 2 non-parent adults who take genuine interest in them	X	X	X	X			X
C&Y Specific - positive/pro-social peer relationships in childhood/adolescence/peer pressure/feel supported by friends	X	X	X	X		X	X
INDIVIDUAL							
mental health/chronic (toxic) stress/grief/loss/past trauma	X	X	X	X			X
self-esteem/confidence	X	X	X	X	X		X
positive coping strategies	X	X	X	X	X		X
emotional regulation/self-regulation/impulse control/emotional maturity	X	X	X	X	X		X
broad range of highly developed social skills - so can develop positive and supportive relationships (communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Executive Functioning Skills - problem solving, ability to focus attention, cognitive flexibility, planning ahead	X	X	X	X	X		X
no control/autonomy/control over decisions that affect them	X		X	X	X	X	X
being motivated and having goals	X		X	X			
lack of security	X		X			X	
Individual Factors FCSS Cannot Address Directly							
experiencing or being threatened with abuse	X	X	X	X		X	
poverty	X	X	X	X		X	X
mis-use of alcohol/drugs	X	X	X	X			X
unemployment	X	X	X	X			
homelessness/poor housing/affordable/safe and stable housing (policies)	X	X	X	X		X	X
food security/children have access to healthy food/snacks at school							X
lack of safe, affordable/accessible and reliable transportation						X	
COMMUNITY							
stigma/discrimination/racism/recognition and respect for diversity and individual differences, thoughts, ideas, opinions/feel respected in the community	X	X	X		X	X	X
social exclusion/community where ALL people can be/are involved in the community	X	X	X	X		X	X
community engagement/social and leisure participation/meaningful activities/able to contribute in some way/civic participation/volunteerism (formal and informal)	X	X	X	X		X	X
sense of belonging/community where people feel connected to each other	X	X	X	X		X	X
neighbourhood cohesion/feeling close to neighbours/feel like can trust neighbors	X	X	X	X		X	X
C&Y Specific - positive school environment, sense of connectedness/belonging to school community, safety at school, positive school engagement	X	X		X			X
safety/feeling safe/ walking alone/ being home alone	X	X				X	X
accessing services/not available/unaware/coordination of services between agencies/minimize barriers	X	X	X	X		X	X
community norms/attitudes - value non-violence, anti - substance use/healthy substance use/mental health	X			X			X
Community Factors FCSS Cannot Address Directly							
access to medical and mental health services/formal supports				X		X	
access to economic/financial help	X	X	X	X			X
prevalence of crime	X						X

Note: Exhaustive research was not completed. Once research identified a specific risk/protective factor aligned with a minimum of 3 of the issues, it was identified as a High Impact Opportunity and no further research was conducted. It is very possible that research exists identifying alignment with additional issues, where not currently identified.

Figure 3: Evidence Rankings 2 of 3 – Individual

Issue	Household/Adult & Youth Survey Data					Community & Social Service Provider Survey Data					Other		
	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - General	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/ Youth	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Community	Top 5 Issues Service Providers - General	Top Seniors Issues - Seniors Focus Groups	Issue Ranking - Quantitative Data - General
mental health/chronic (toxic) stress, grief/loss, past trauma	High - SS - women more stress/anxiety	High	High - stress/anxiety/depression	Medium	Low/Medium	EXTREME	EXTREME	High	High (especially grief & loss)	High	High	High	
• caregiver stress/struggles caring for aging parents and/or other family members	Medium - SS - women struggle more	High	Low/Medium	Low/Medium	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium but sufficiently addressed	High	Medium	High - low score for prehookers	
• self-esteem/confidence	High - SS - women struggle more	High	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	
• positive coping strategies	Medium - SS - women struggle more	Medium	High	Medium	Low/Medium	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	
• emotional regulation/self-regulation/pulse control/emotional maturity/executive functioning	Medium - SS - women struggle more	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low/Medium	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	
broad range of highly developed social skills - so can develop positive and supportive relationships (communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, etc.)	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium - making friends	High	High	High	High	High	Medium - use of current technology	High	
life skills						High	High	High	High	High	Medium - use of current technology	High	
no control/autonomy/control over decisions that affect them/ability to age well in own home				Medium	Medium						Low		
frances - financial literacy, estate planning, budgeting			Low	Medium	Low	High	High	High	High				
C&Y Specific - engage in risky behaviours:			Low	Medium	Low								
Individual Factors FCSS Cannot Address Directly													
experiencing or being threatened with abuse	Low	Low				High - bullying	Medium	Medium	High - financial abuse - other, but sufficiently addressed	Low		Medium	
frances - lacking financial resources, low income, ability to meet basic needs, financial stress, poverty	Medium - SS - Area A more \$25k-\$50k and less \$150k-\$300k than B				Low/Medium	EXTREME	EXTREME	EXTREME	EXTREME	Medium - financial stress - low - poverty	Medium	Medium - 10% of 0-17 yr olds living in poverty & high level of income disparity	
• struggled to afford monthly bills/rent/mortgage	Medium - SS - men more than 15-25 women 8.65-7.4 yr olds struggle less than 35-64 yr olds					EXTREME	EXTREME	EXTREME	EXTREME	Medium			
• couldn't afford internet	Low/Medium					High				Low			
• affordable childcare	Low/Medium					High				Low			
• food security/children have access to healthy food/ability to afford 3 healthy meals per day	Low - SS - 45-74 yr olds struggle less than 35-64 yr olds				Low	Medium	High	High	Medium but sufficiently addressed	Medium/low			
legal/justice challenges						High	High	High	Medium	Low			
mis-use of alcohol/drugs	Low	Low				High	High	High	Medium	Low		High	
unemployment/at risk of losing employment/struggled to find employment	Low/Medium - SS - women struggle more to find home/care taking & 55-64 yrs old and Area A vs more unemployed/struggling						High	High	Medium but overly addressed	Low		Low	
housing insecurity/affordable housing/homeslessness/poor housing/safe and stable housing	Low - SS - Area A distance travel to service greater barrier than B	Low				EXTREME - hard to find employment for youth	EXTREME - affordable housing	EXTREME - affordable housing	EXTREME - affordable housing	EXTREME - affordable housing - high - lack of local facilities	High - affordable housing - low - homeslessness	High - housing insecurity for renters and lack of affordability	
lack of safe, affordable/accessible and reliable transportation		Low		Low/Medium	Low/Medium	EXTREME	High	High	High	EXTREME - Distance	Medium		

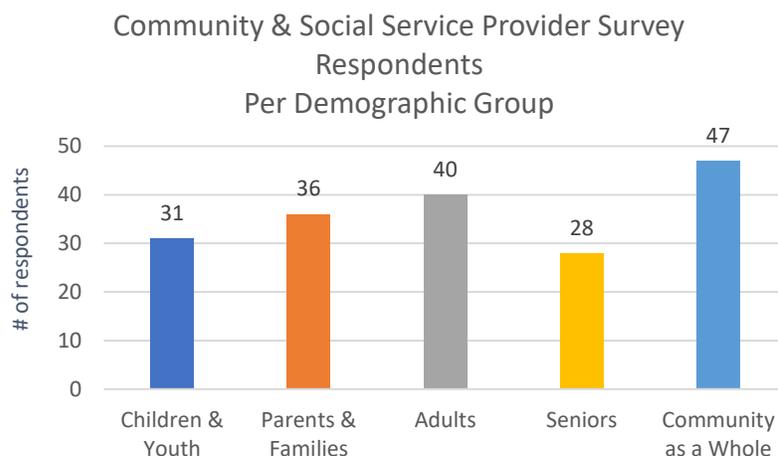
Figure 4: Evidence Rankings 3 of 3 – Community

Issue	COMMUNITY										Other		
	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - General	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Parents	Issue Ranking - Parents Identified for their Children/ Youth	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Community Residents - Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Children & Youth	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Parents & Families	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Adults	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Seniors	Issue Ranking - Service Providers - Community		Top 5 Issues - Service Providers - General	Top Seniors - Issues - Seniors - Focus Groups
stigma/discrimination/racism/recognition and respect for diversity and individual differences, thoughts, ideas, opinions/feel respected in the community	Low				High - community looks down on youth					Medium - discrimination, racism, low - community doesn't value youth/seniors & addressed	Low		Medium - Low levels of diversity
•stigma towards mental health challenges										Medium			
social exclusion/community where ALL people can be/are involved in the community	Low		Medium							Medium but fairly well addressed	Low		
community engagement/social and leisure participation/meaningful activities/able to contribute in some way/civic participation/volunteerism (formal and informal)	Medium/High - availability of affordable activities				Medium/High - opportunities to get involved in the community SS - Area A distance to trail greater barrier than Area B	Medium/High - transportation as a barrier to participating in opportunities	Medium/High - lack of affordable opportunities	High - lack of positive community engagement - lack of affordable opportunities	High, but fairly well addressed - affordability well addressed	Volunteerism - Medium but fairly well addressed	Low	Medium	
•don't know what's happening/activities/events in local area	Medium												
•no community activities/events in local area	Medium	Medium											
•inability to afford social/recreational/leisure activities													
sense of belonging/community where people feel connected to each other - C&Y Specific - positive school environment, sense of connectedness/belonging to school community, safety at school, positive school engagement	High - social distance between community members		Medium		Medium	High							
neighbourhood cohesion/feeling close to neighbour/feel like can trust neighbours/community cohesion (social divergences/discard, opposing politics/perspectives)	Low		Low		Low				Low and sufficiently addressed				
safety/feeling safe /walking alone/ being home alone								High (transportation to knowledge of)					
accessing services/not available/unaware/coordination of services between agencies/minimize barriers	Low - SS - Area A distance to trail more barrier than B	Medium			Medium	High	High	High			Low	Medium	
•services needed don't exist in area	Medium	Medium											
•inability to afford services	Medium/Low - SS 65-74 y olds struggling less	Medium											
•Lack of knowledge regarding what services are available	Medium/Low	Medium											
•supports for LGBTQ2S+	Low - SS - more men visible minority and English not first language								High				
•supports for newcomers, immigrant community members										Medium but fairly well addressed - mental health, poverty/low income, diversity			
•supports for people living with disabilities										Medium but fairly well addressed			
•supports for indigenous community members										Medium but sufficiently addressed			
community norms - value non-violence, anti - substance use/healthy substance use/mental health										Medium - mental health, poverty/low income, diversity	Low		
prevalence of crime - actual and/or perceived	High/Medium									Medium but overly addressed	Low		Low

Appendix B Respondent Profile

Community and Social Service Provider Survey Respondents

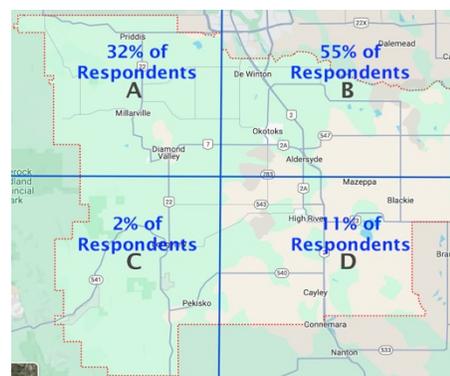
Fifty-eight local community and social service providers completed a survey, providing their observations from working directly with Foothills County residents. They were only given the opportunity to answer survey questions regarding specific demographic groups if they identified that they had experience working with those groups, making the data more experience and observation driven, as opposed to opinion driven. More information on the Community and Social Service Respondents can be found under 4, Community Asset Mapping.



General Community Household/Adult and Youth Survey Respondents

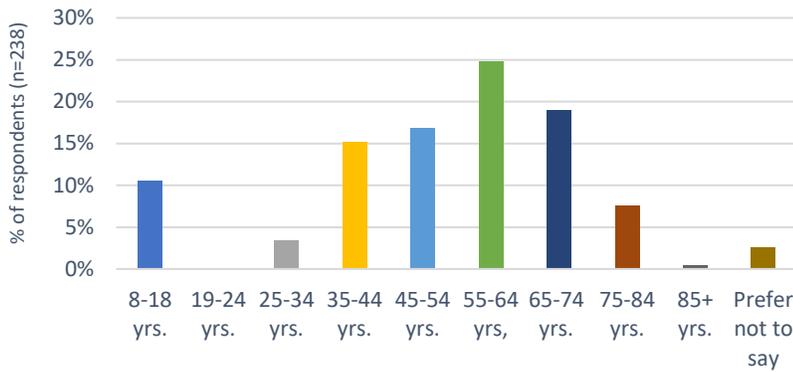
Community surveys were completed by an adult in 259 Foothills County households, plus 21 youth, between the ages of 8 and 18.

All respondents were screened to ensure they live within Foothills County, with the large majority living in the northern half of the County, with very few respondents from the southwest quadrant.



Area A - NW Quadrant 84 Total Respondents		Area B - NE Quadrant 181 Total Respondents		Area C - SW Quadrant 3 Total Respondents		Area D - SE Quadrant 29 total Respondents	
In/Around Priddis Greens	7	In/Around Heritage Pointe	24	In/Around Naphtha	1	In/Around Blackie	3
In/Around Priddis	19	In/Around De Winton	25	In/Around Hartell	1	Around High River	4
In/Around Millarville	22	Between Okotoks and Calgary	12	Around Longview	1	In/Around Cayley	18
Around Diamond Valley	14	Around Okotoks	38	Around Eden Valley	0	Other	4
In/Around Naphtha	0	Around Davisburg	11	Other	0		
Close to City of Calgary	17	In/Around Aldersyde	12				
Other	5	Other	59				

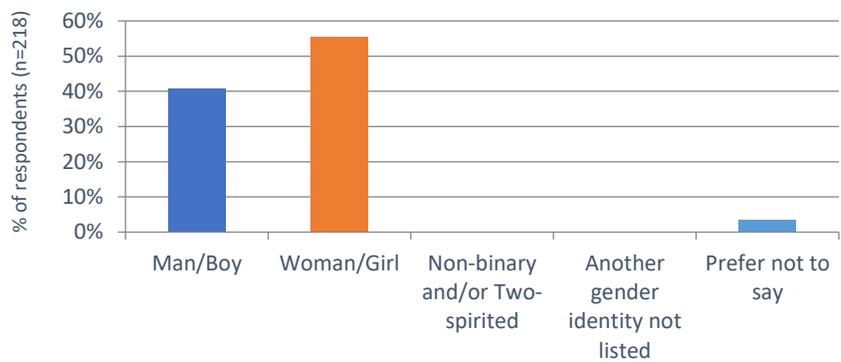
Age of Respondents



Based on community demographics, there was an overrepresentation of respondents ages 55 years and older and an underrepresentation of those ages 19-35 years of age.

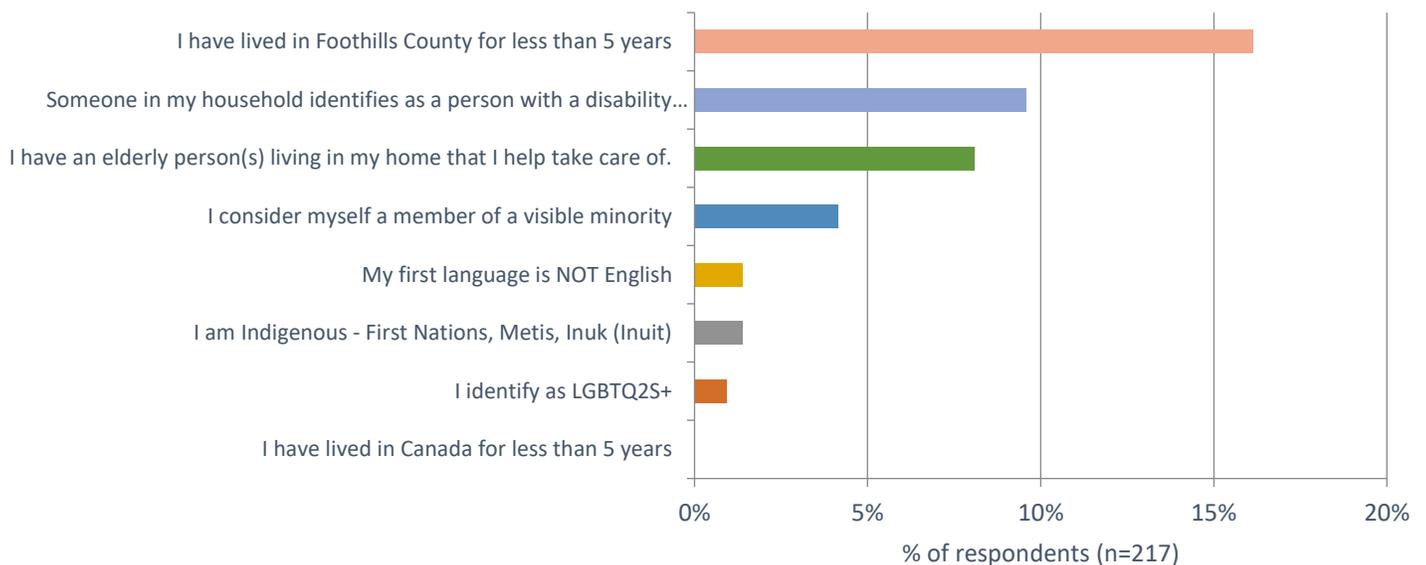
Gender of Respondents

More self-identifying women than men completed the survey, although more self-identifying boys completed the youth survey than girls.



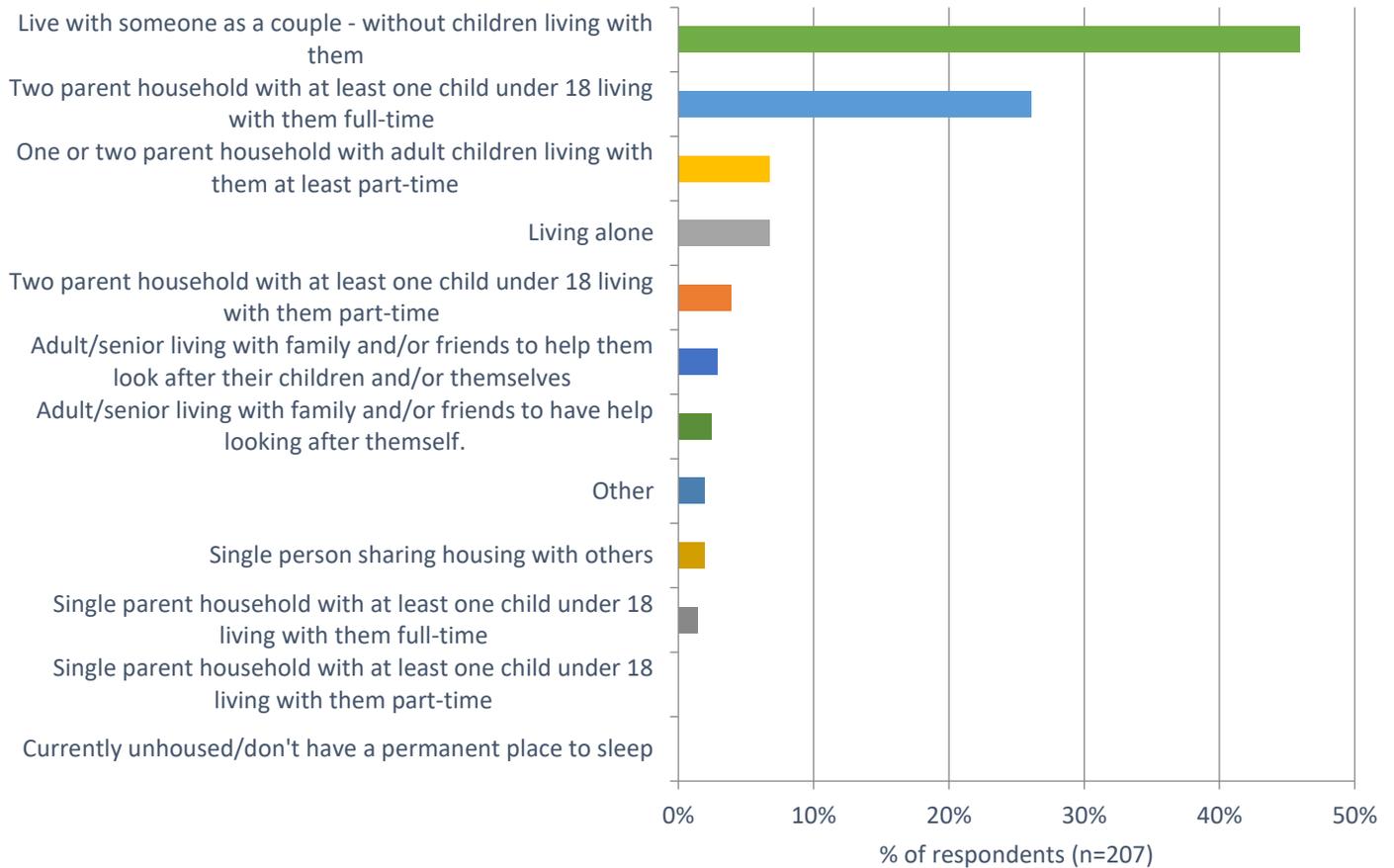
There was very little diversity represented in the respondents to the community surveys. Although community demographics supports that Foothills County has a less diverse population, it suggests slightly more diversity than the respondent profile.

Diversity of Respondents



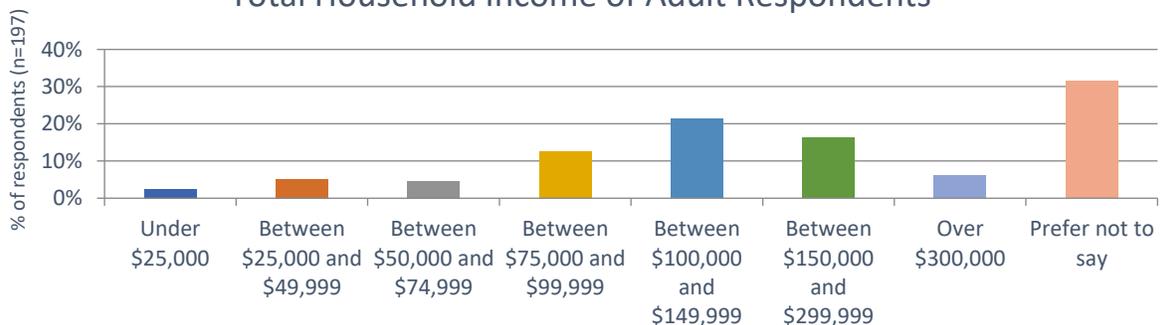
The large majority of the adults completing the survey were living as a couple, either with, or without children living with them, which is representative of the community, based on the quantitative data identified in the Community Profile. Additionally, the majority of parent respondents are living in a 2-parent household, again, in alignment with the data provided in the Community Profile.

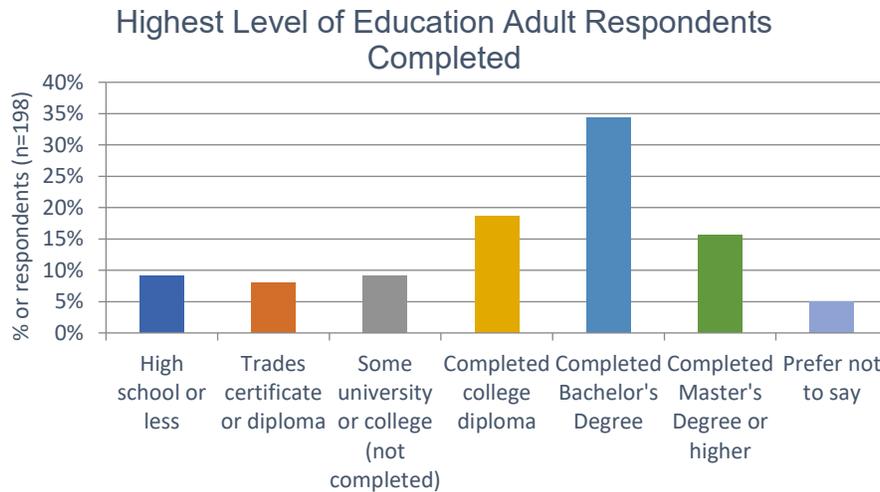
Living Status of Adult Respondents



The total household income of adult respondents is fairly reflective of the total household income of the community, with slight overrepresentation from households with incomes ranging from \$75,000 - \$150,000 and slight underrepresentation from residents from the remaining income categories.

Total Household Income of Adult Respondents

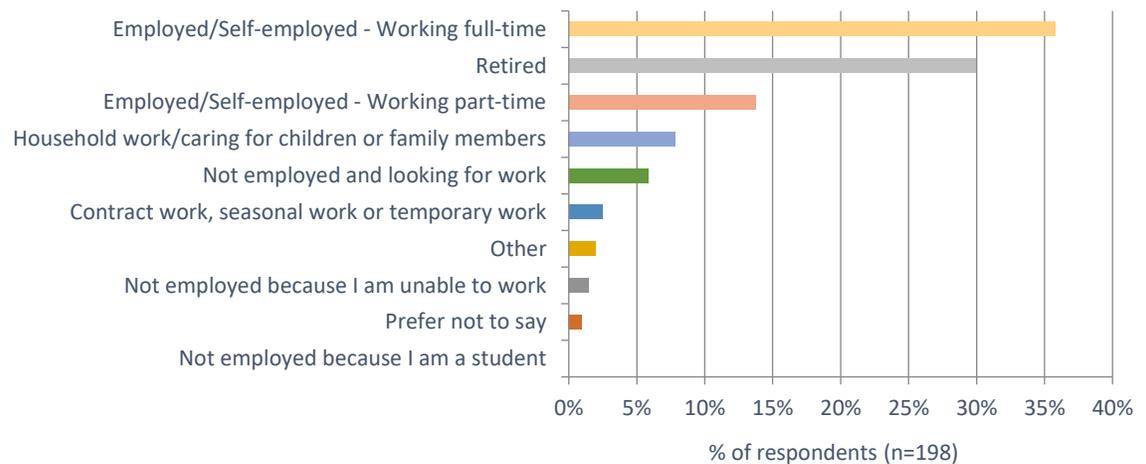




Compared to community demographics there was a fairly significant overrepresentation of survey respondents with a Bachelor's Degree or higher and a significant underrepresentation of respondents with a High School diploma or less.

The employment status of the adult respondents is relatively aligned with the quantitative data, suggesting a fair representation of perspectives.

Current Employment Status of Adult Respondents



Focus Group and Interview Respondents

Five focus groups for seniors were held around Foothills County and a total of 45 older adults participated, only 8 of which lived within Foothills County boundaries. Approximately 75% of attendees were female and 65% were between 70-80 years of age, with the remaining being split equally between under 70, and over 80 years of age.

Due to project limitations, only 13 brief interviews were conducted – 7 with parents, 4 with seniors and 2 with youth.

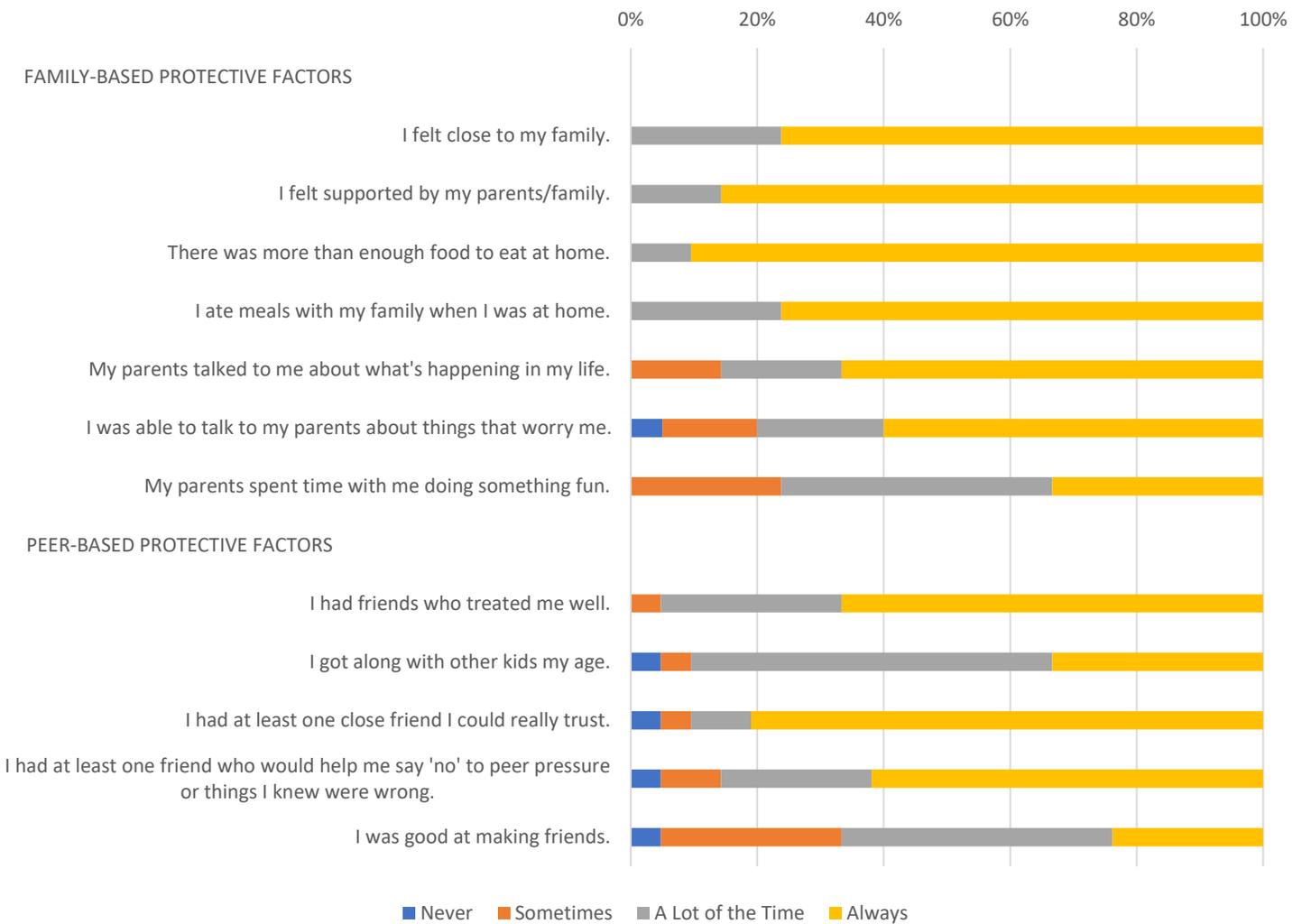
Due to the low representation of County residents in the focus groups and low number of people interviewed, the information gathered from these is only being used to confirm other data that was collected and not being used to draw any conclusions.

Appendix C

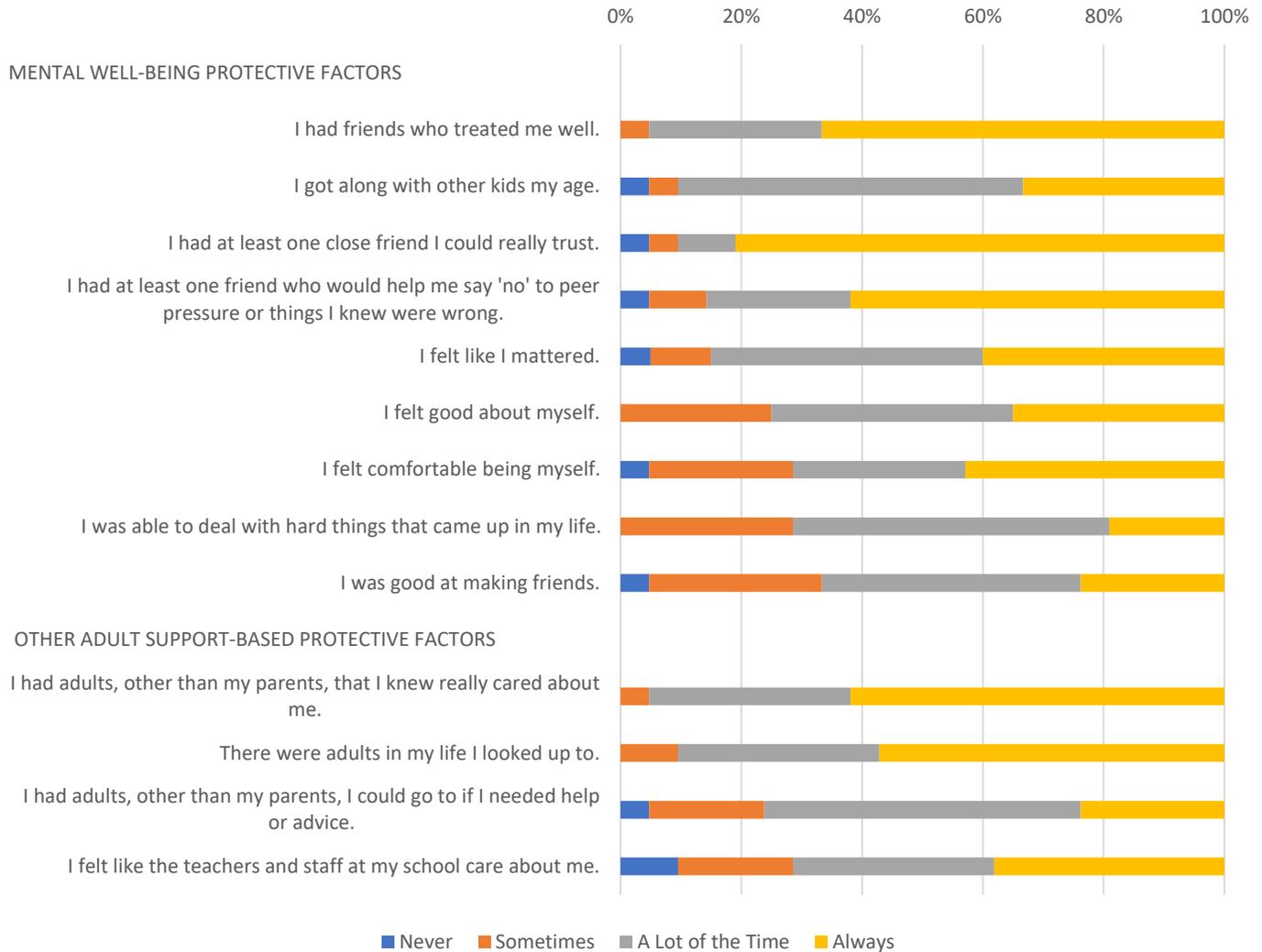
Additional Data Tables

FOOTHILLS COUNTY YOUTH SURVEY DATA TABLES

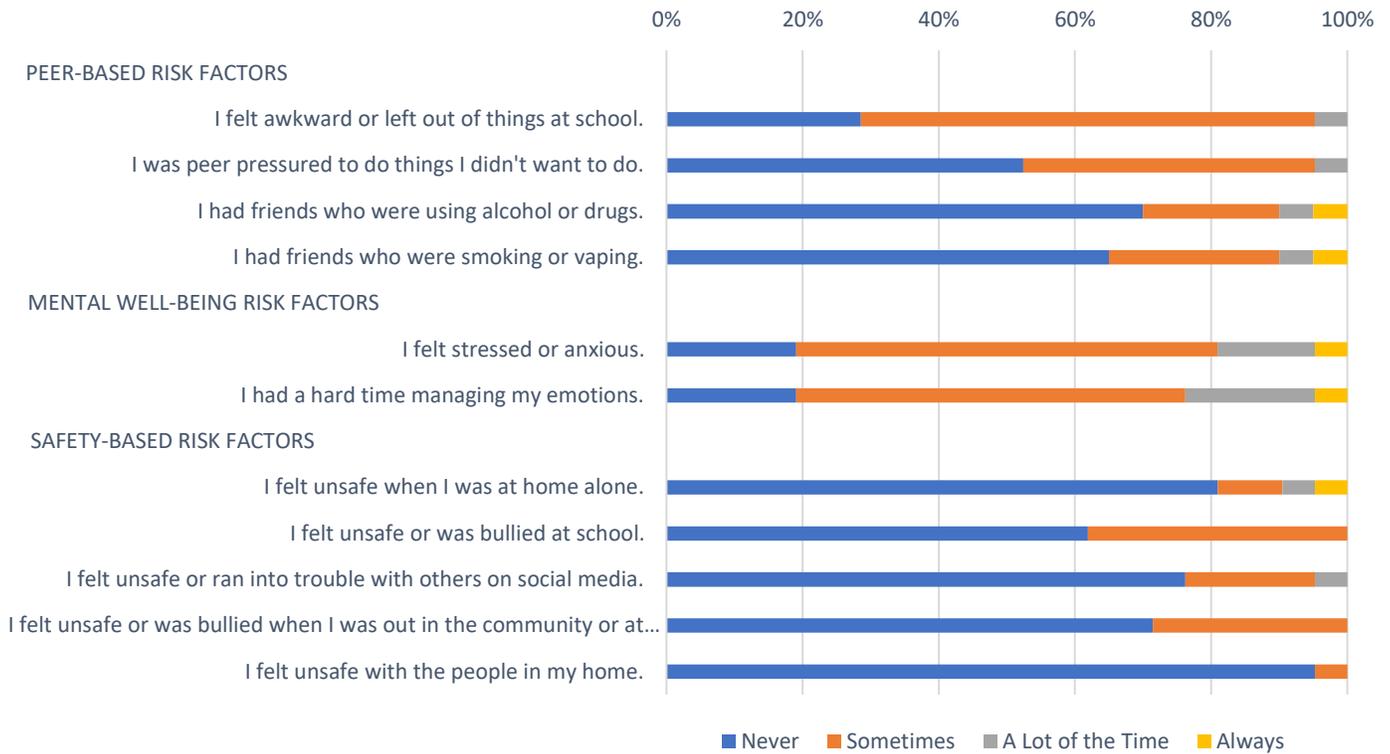
Youth Identified Family & Peer-Based Protective Factors (n=21)



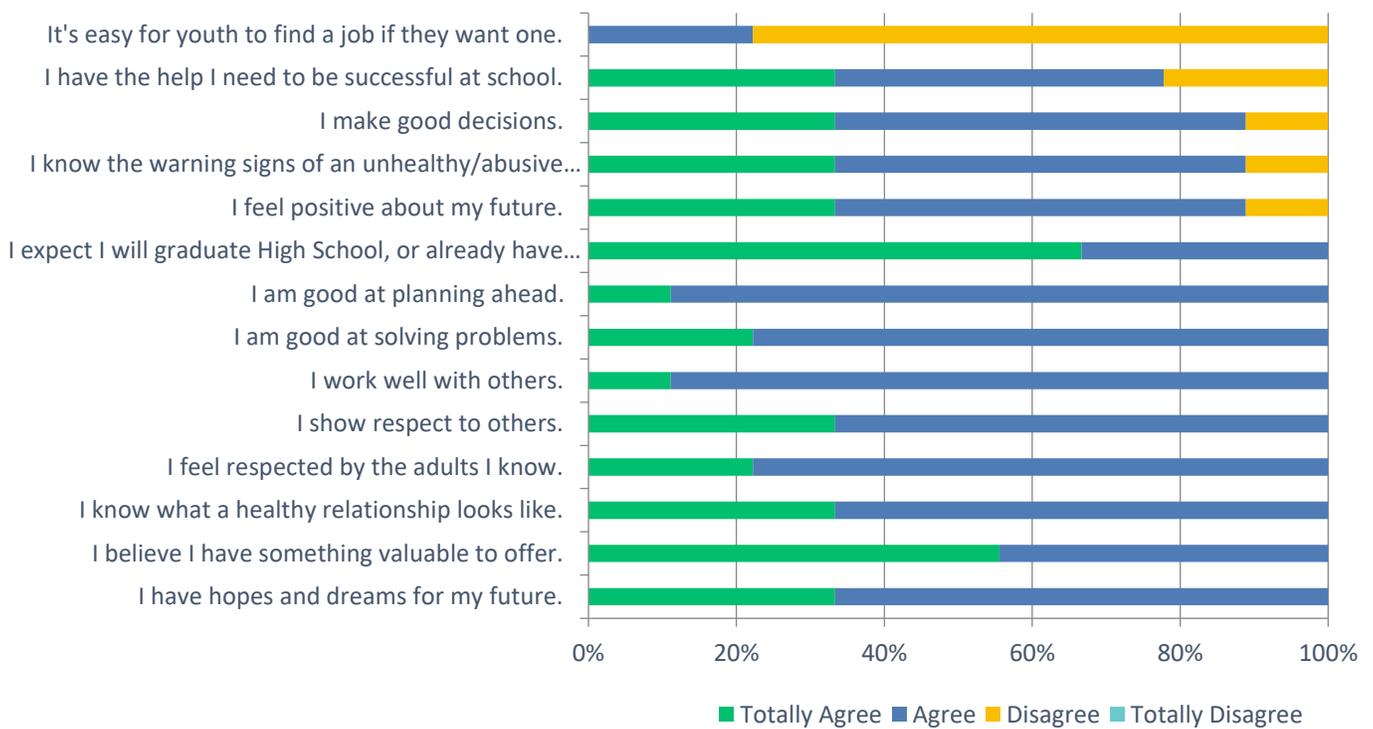
Youth Identified Mental Well-Being & Other Adult Support-Based Protective Factors (n=21)



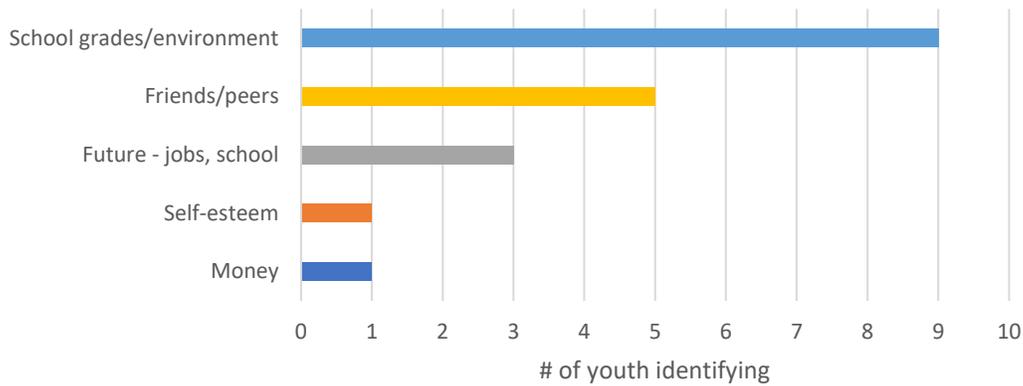
Youth Identified Risk Factors (n=21)



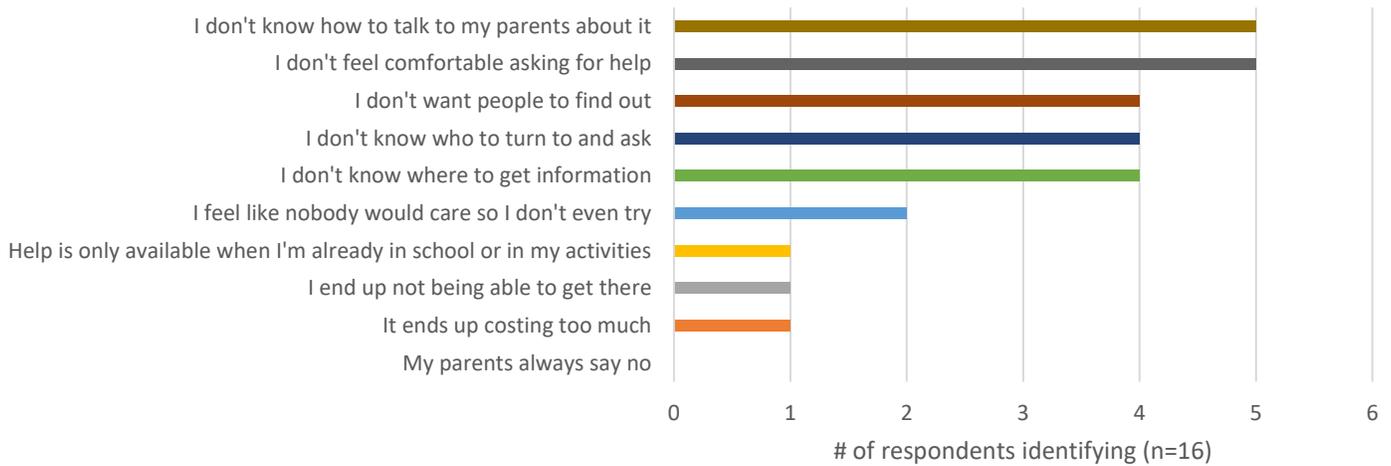
High School Aged Youth Protective Factors (n=9)



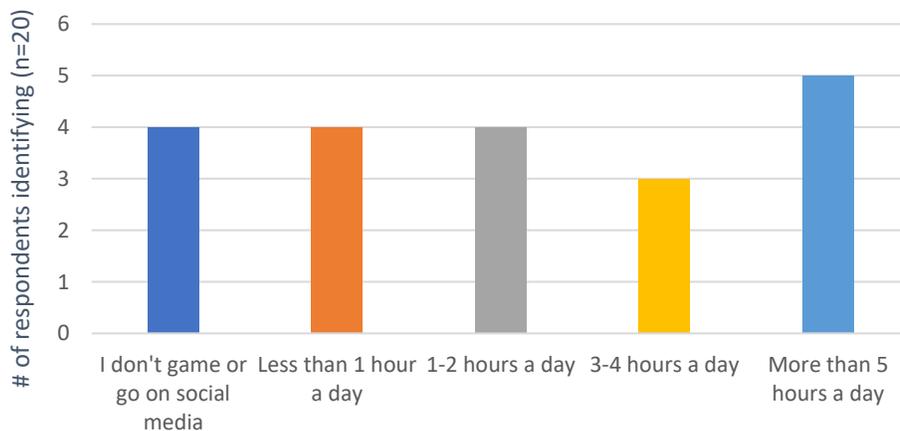
Primary Worries of Youth (n=15)



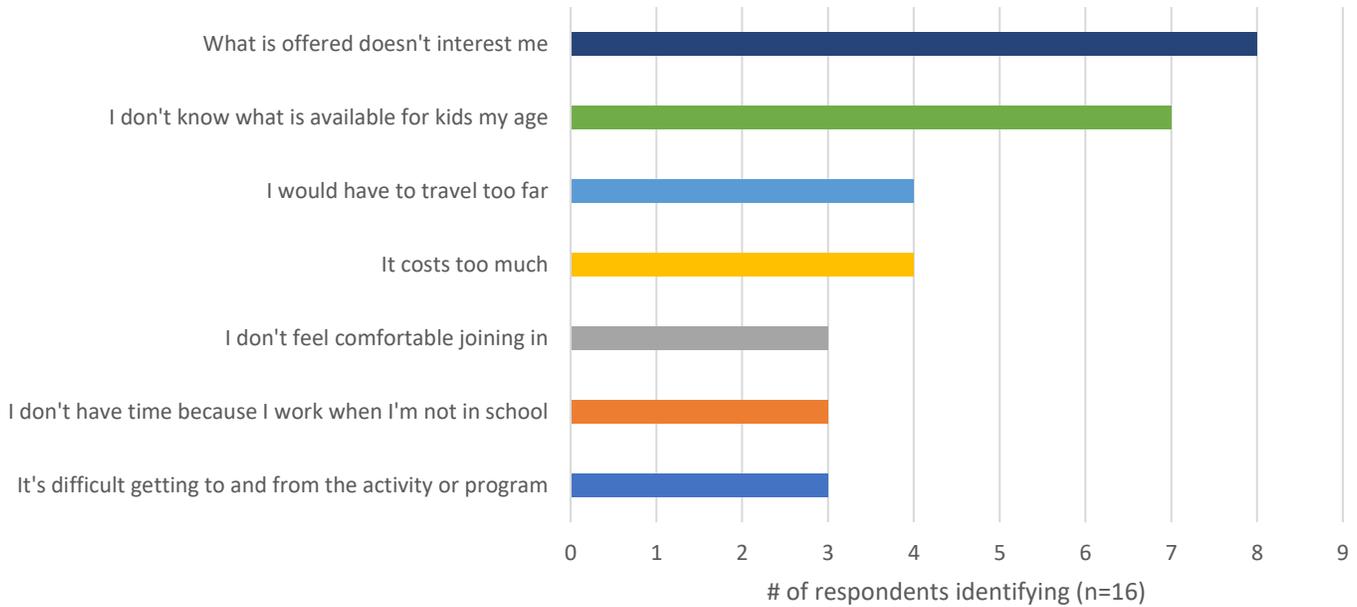
Barriers to Youth Getting Help



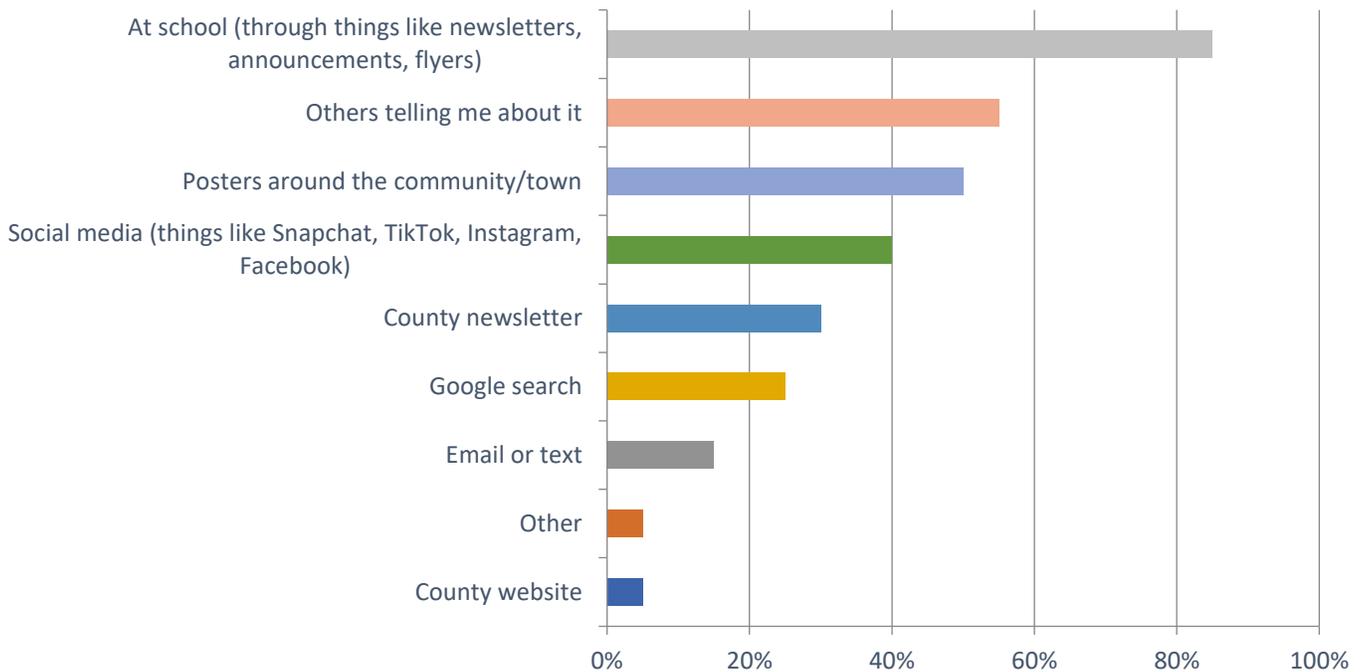
Non-School Days Gaming/Social Media Use (in hours)



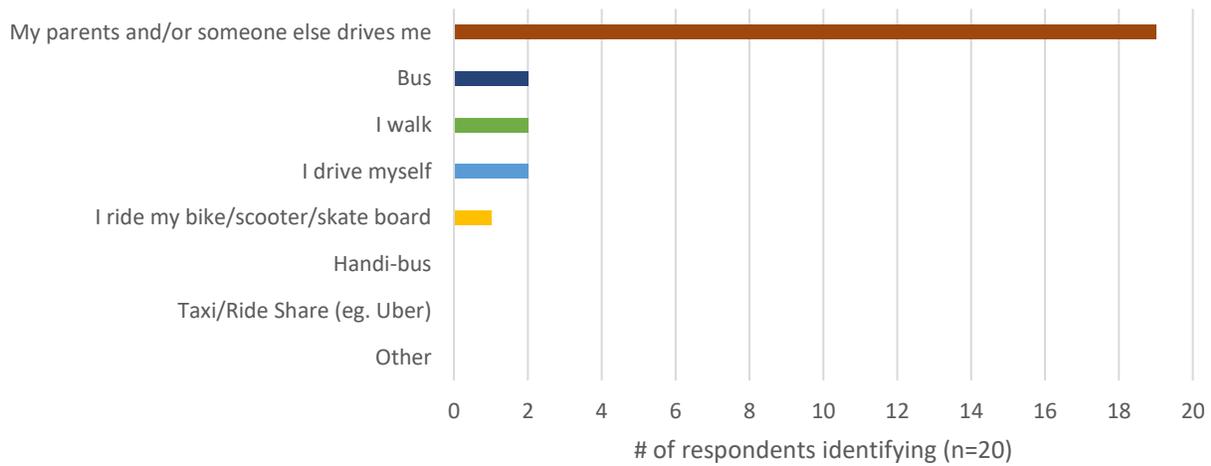
Barriers to Youth Engaging in Community



How Youth Prefer to Hear About What's Happening in the Community (n=20)

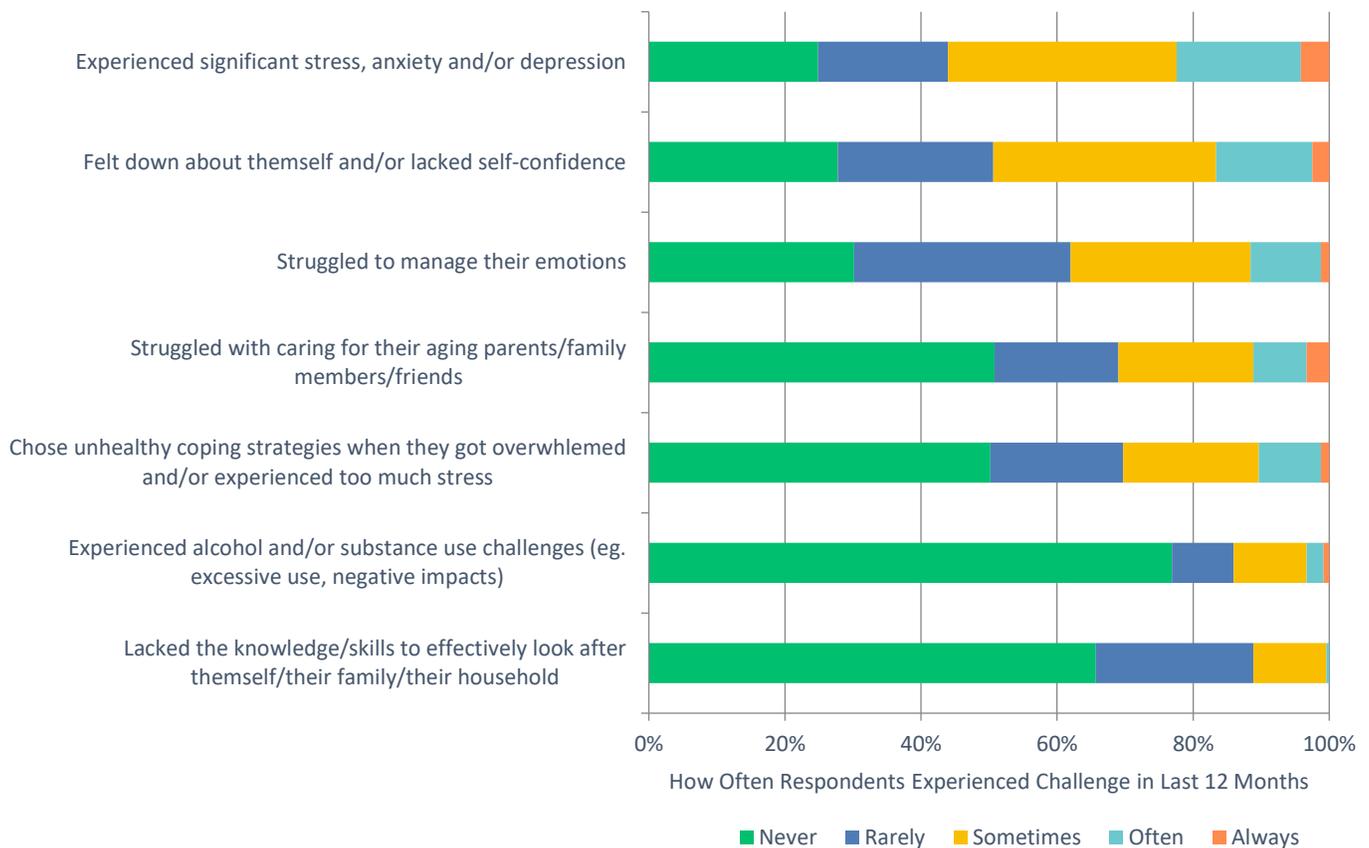


How Youth Get Around

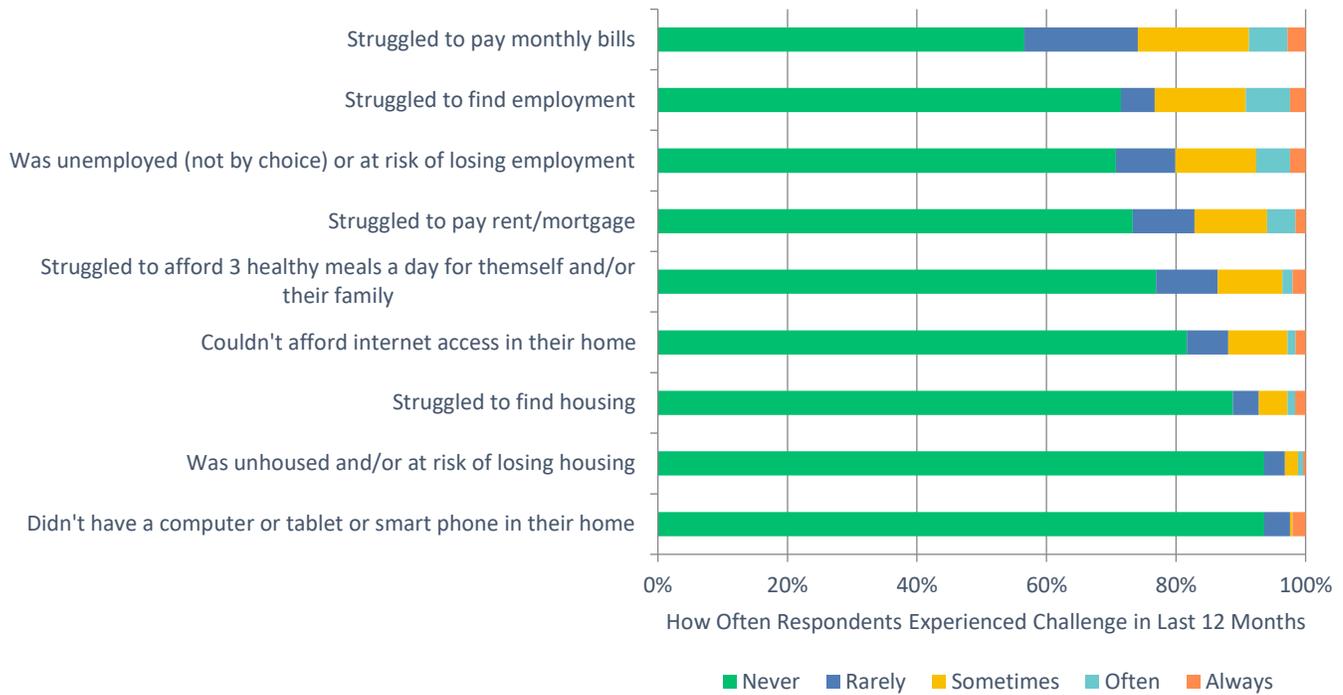


FOOTHILLS COUNTY HOUSEHOLD/ADULT SURVEY DATA TABLES

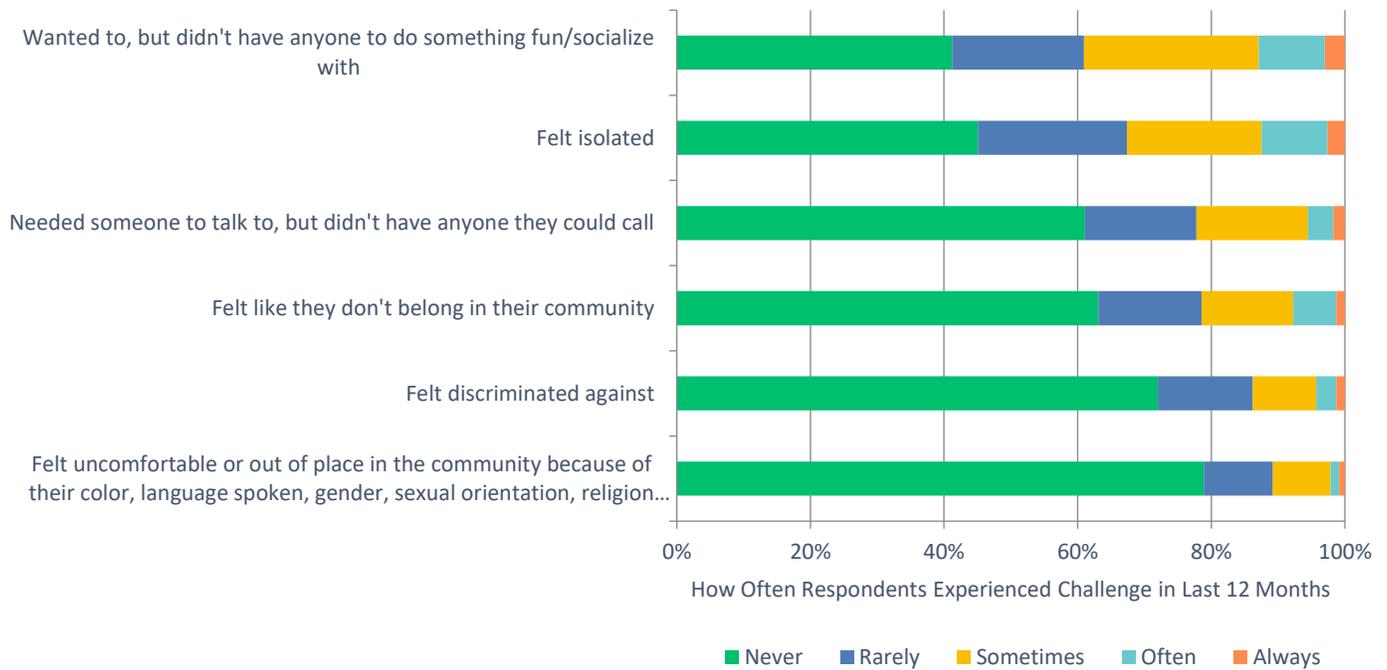
Mental Well-Being Risk Factors (n=248)



Housing, Employment & Affordability Risk Factors (n=251)



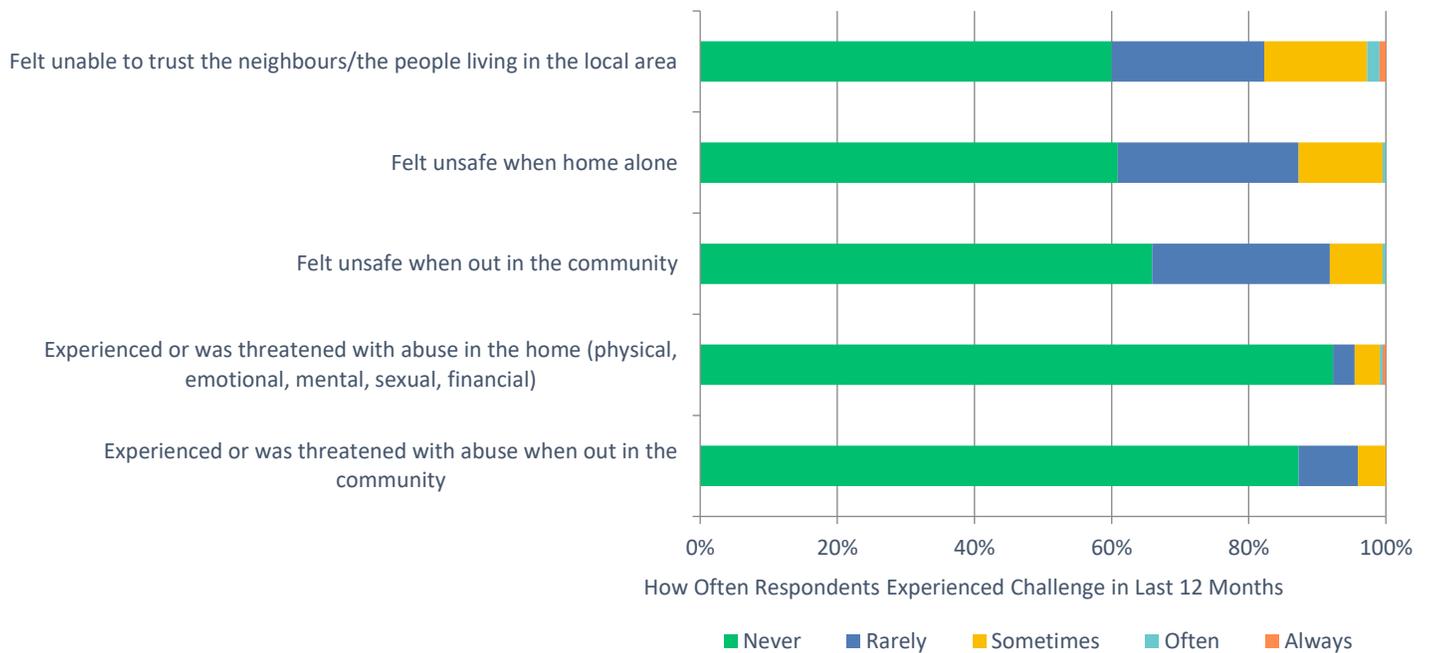
Connection & Sense of Belonging Risk Factors (n=234)



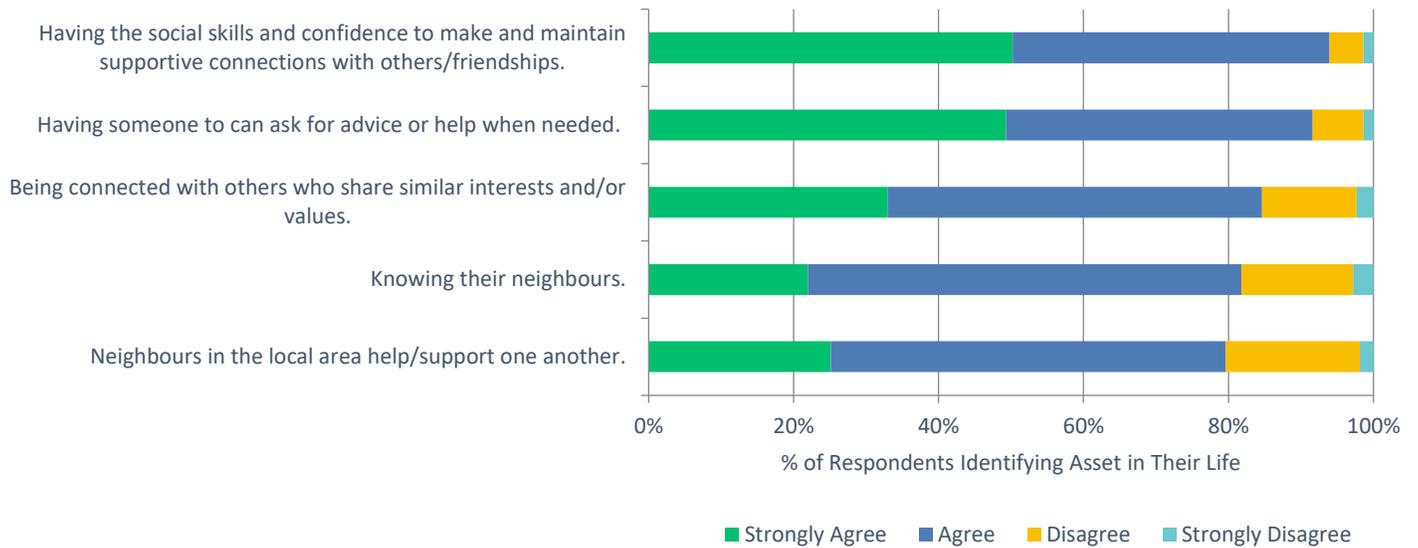
Accessing Resources Risk Factors (n=227)



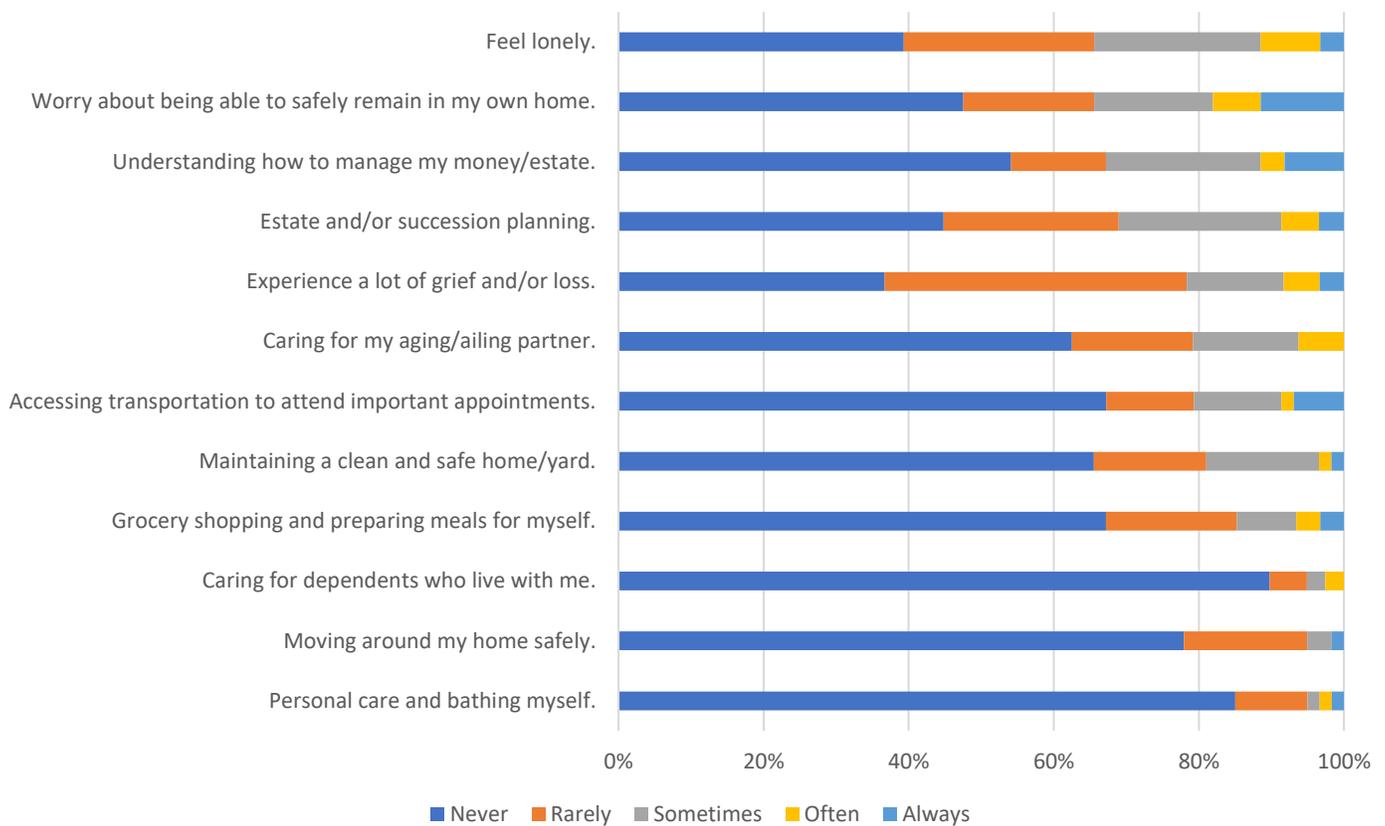
Safety Risk Factors (n=220)



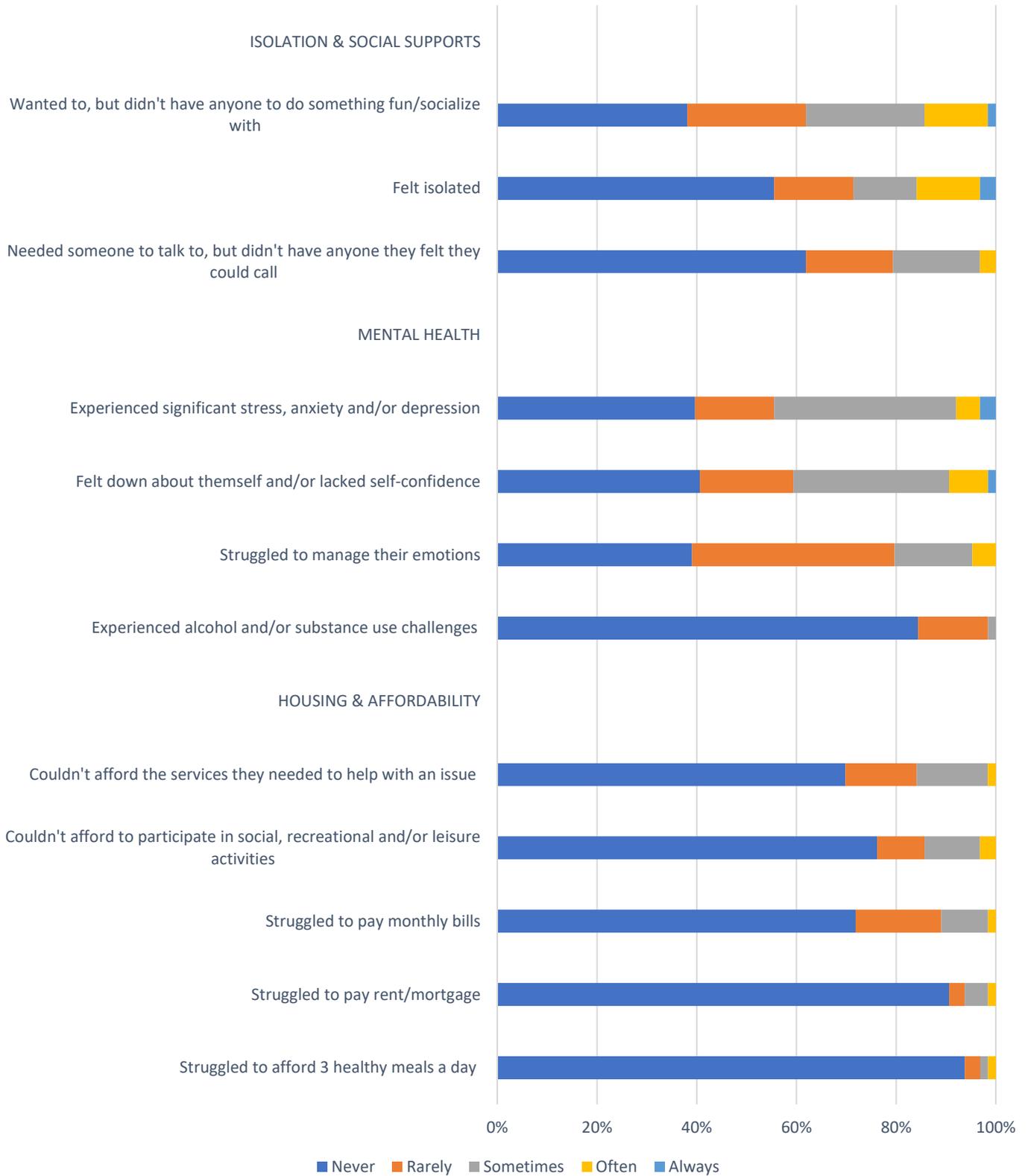
Social Support Protective Factors (n=215)



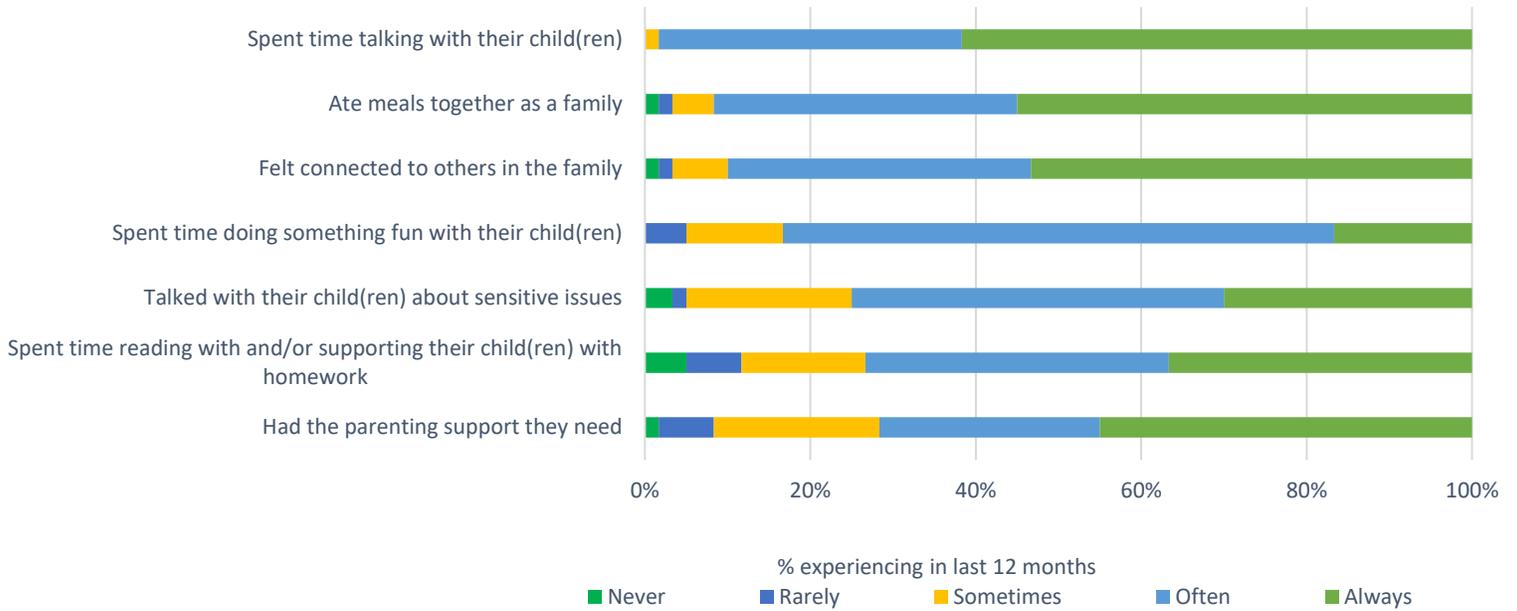
Seniors Well-Being Risk Factors (n=61)



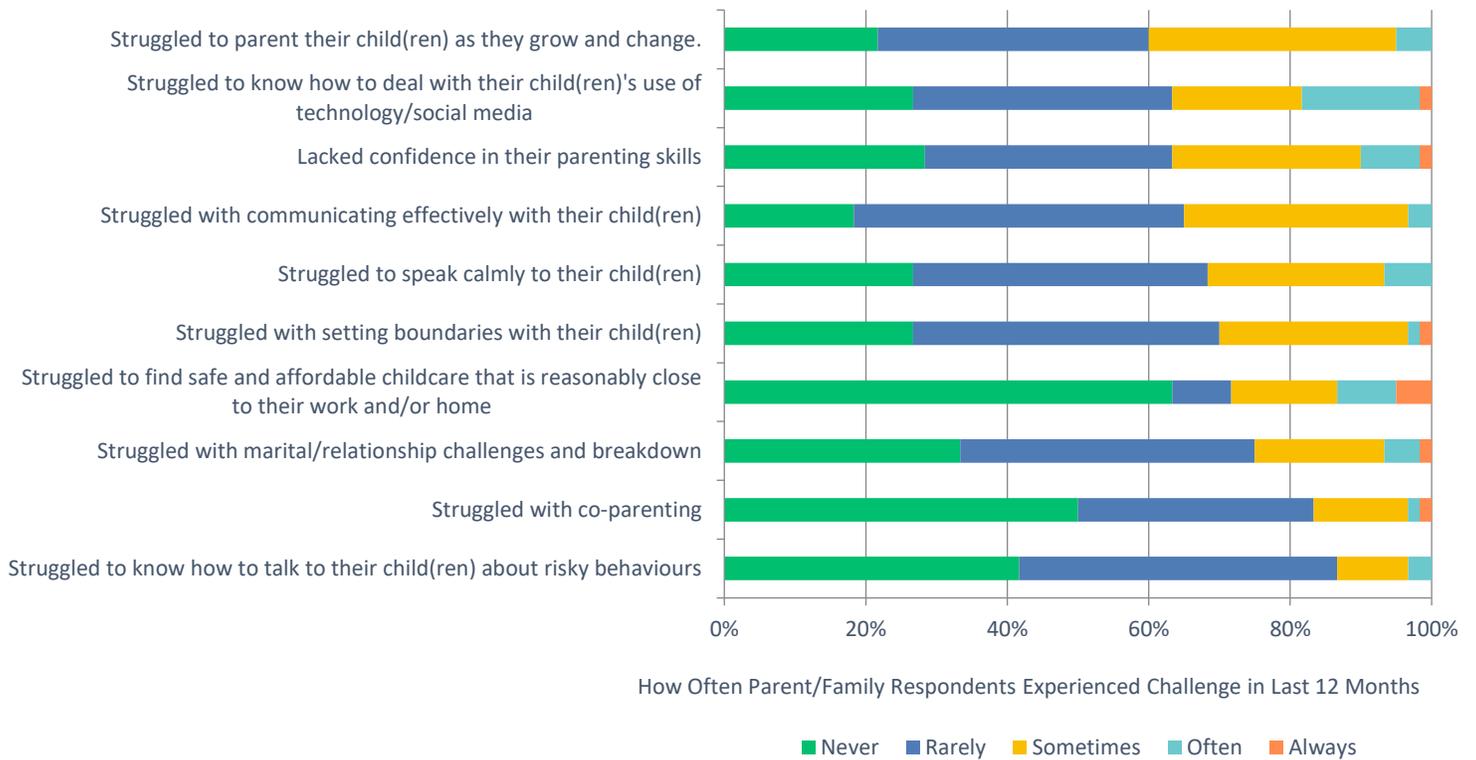
Seniors Risk Factors (n=64)



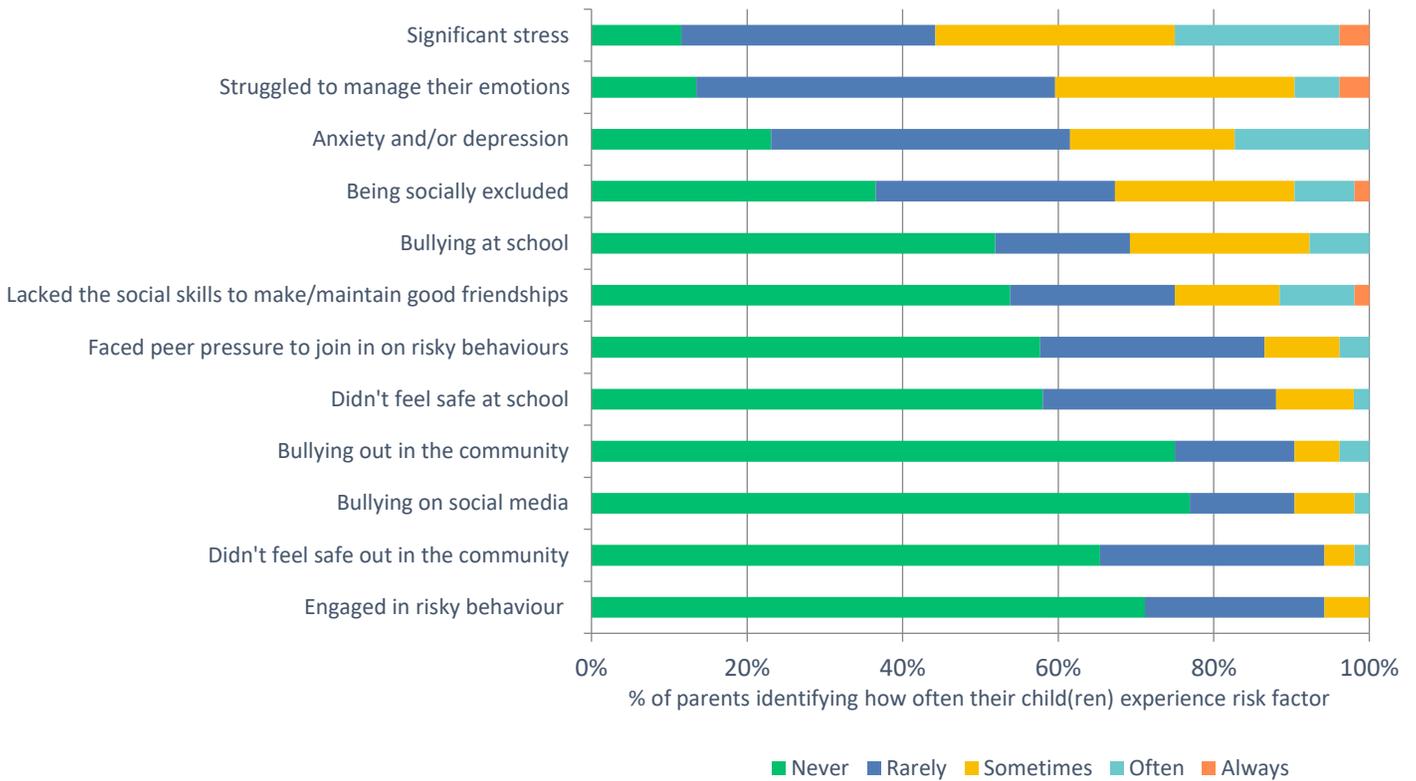
Parent and Family Well-Being Protective Factors (n=60)



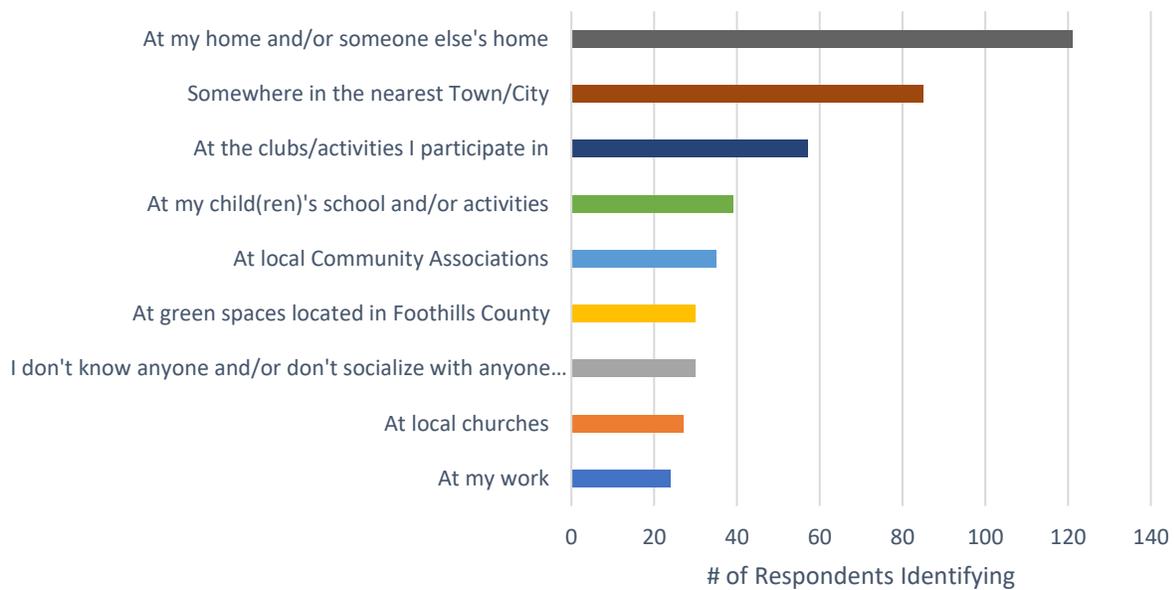
Parent and Family Well-Being Risk Factors (n=60)



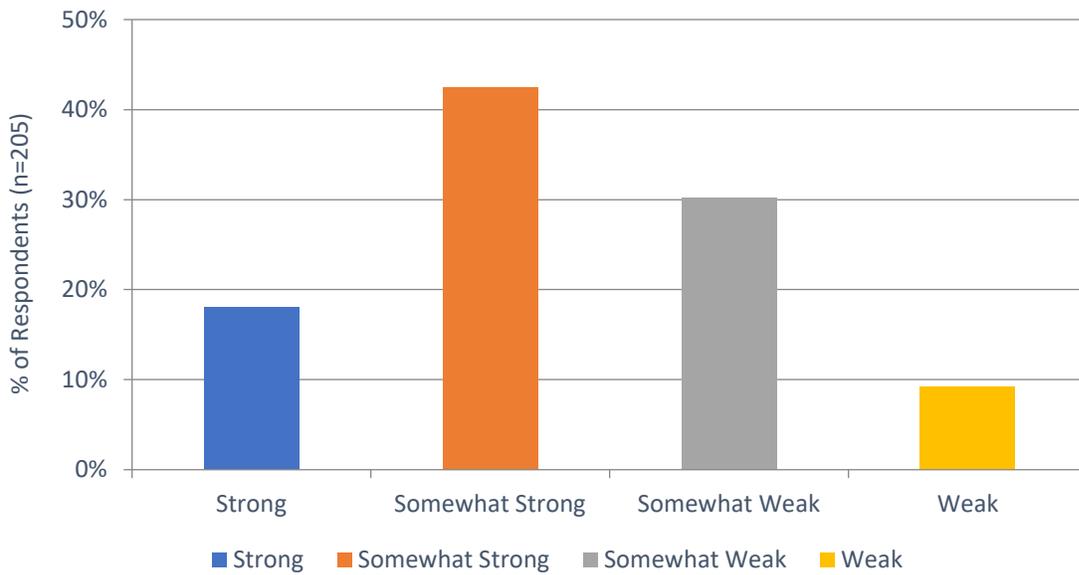
Parent Identified Youth Risk Factors (n=52)



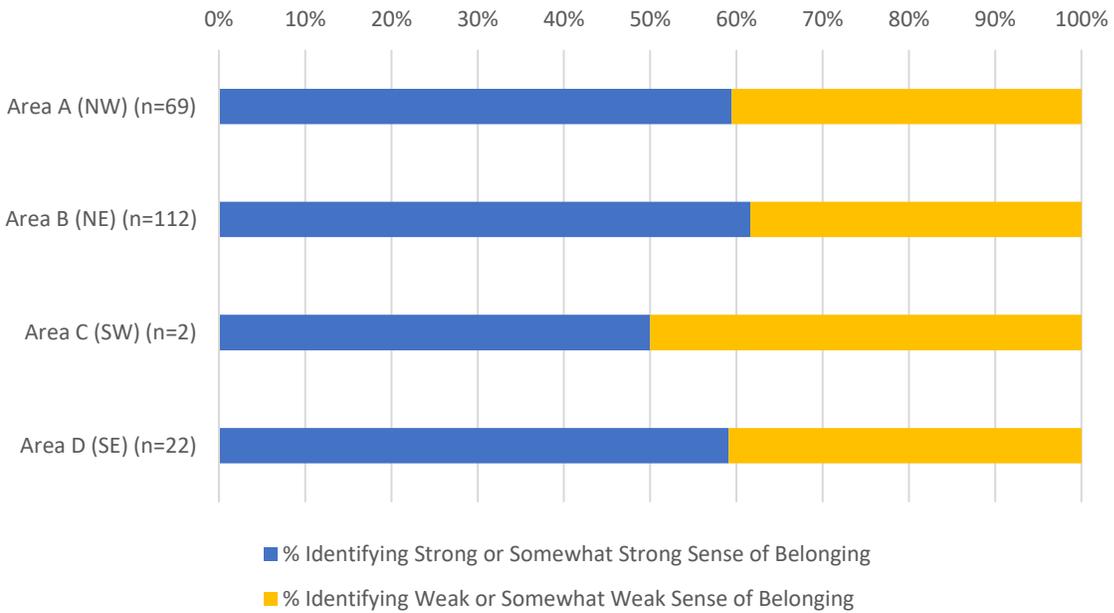
Where Adult Respondents Socialize (n=202)



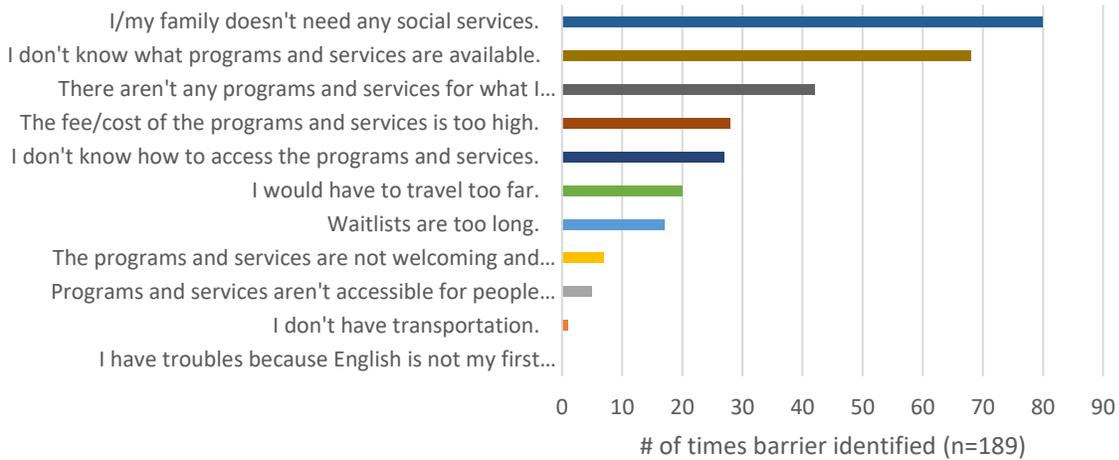
Degree of Sense of Belonging (n=205)



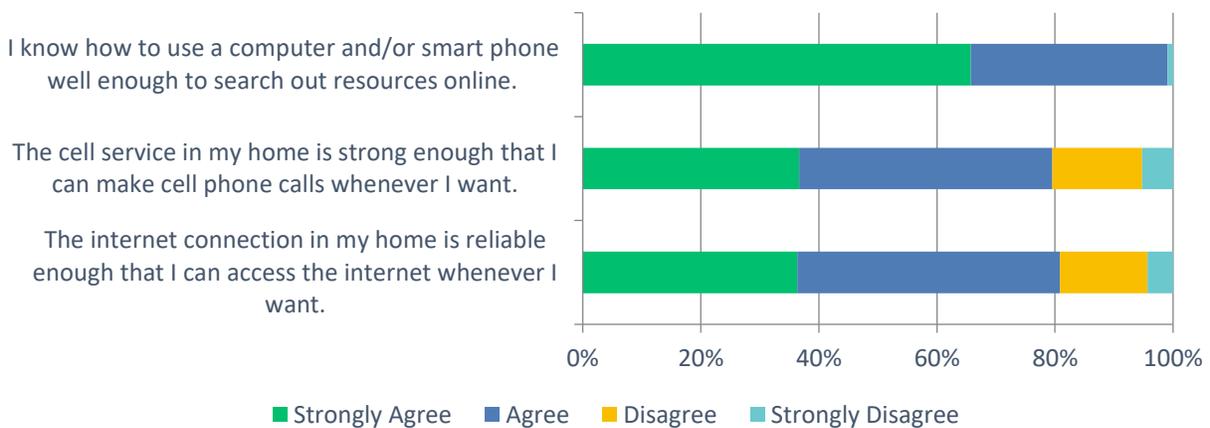
Sense of Belonging by Geographic Area



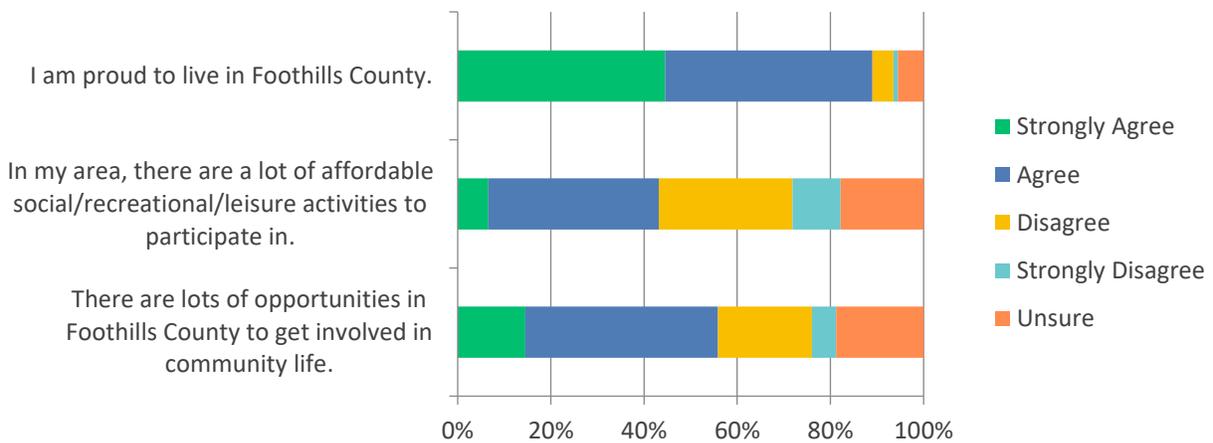
Barriers to Accessing Social Services & Programs



Access To/Use of Technology (n=210)



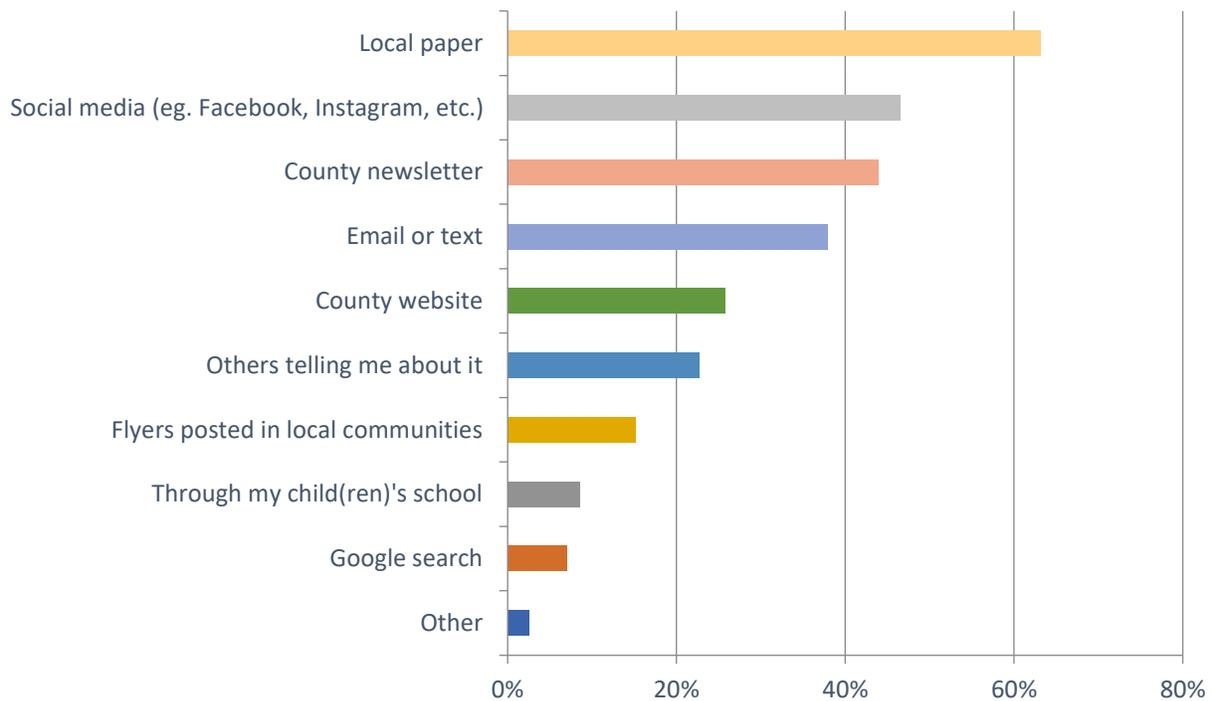
Community Pride and Engagement (n=213)



Barriers to Further Community Engagement

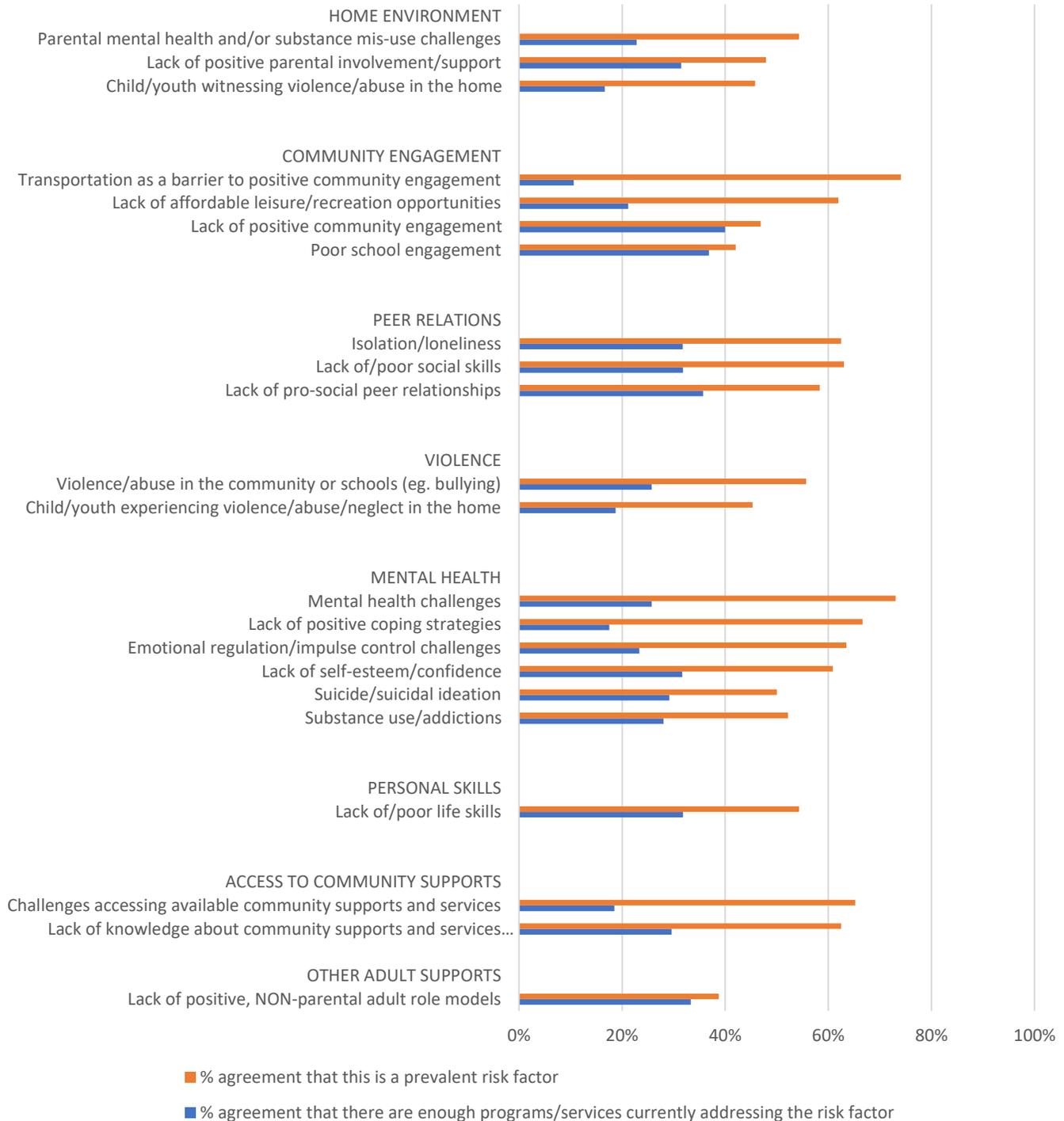


How Adult Respondents Prefer to Hear About What's Happening in Community (n=198)



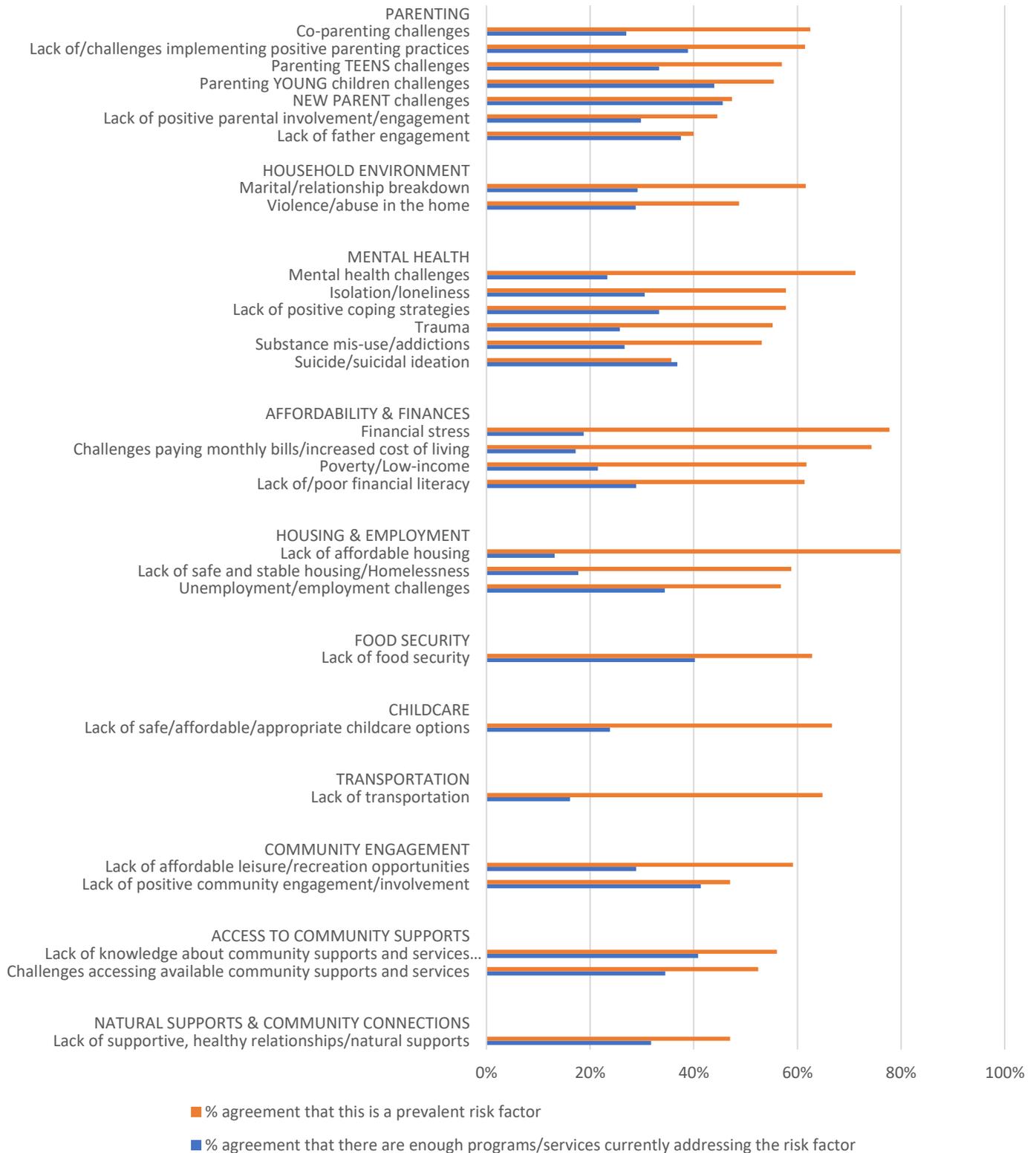
ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY & SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY DATA TABLES

Prevalence of Risk Factors & Services Addressing the Risk Factors CHILDREN & YOUTH (n=31)

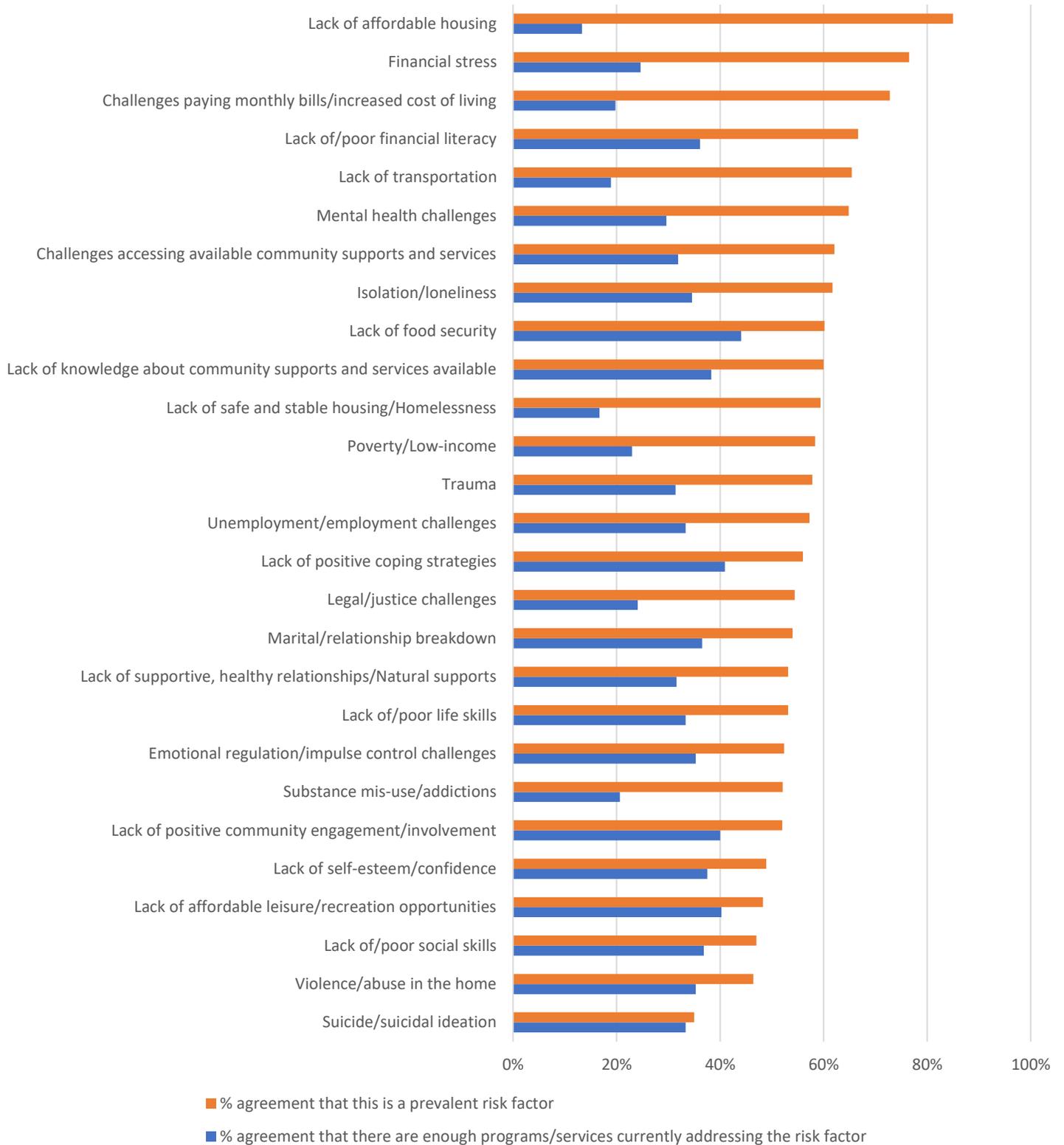


Prevalence of Risk Factors & Services Addressing the Risk Factors

PARENTS & FAMILIES (n=38)

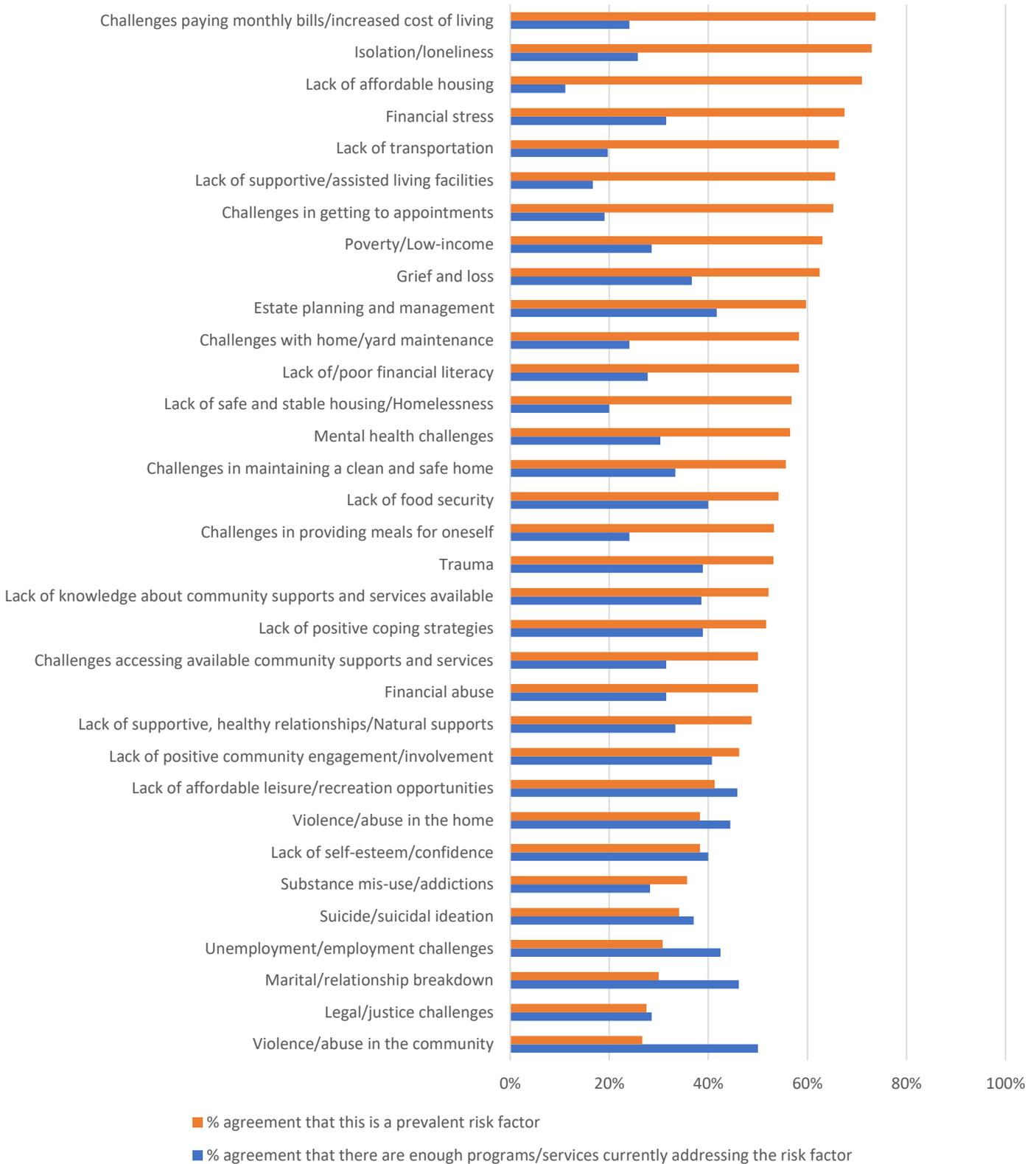


Prevalence of Risk Factors & Services Addressing the Risk Factors ADULTS (n=37)

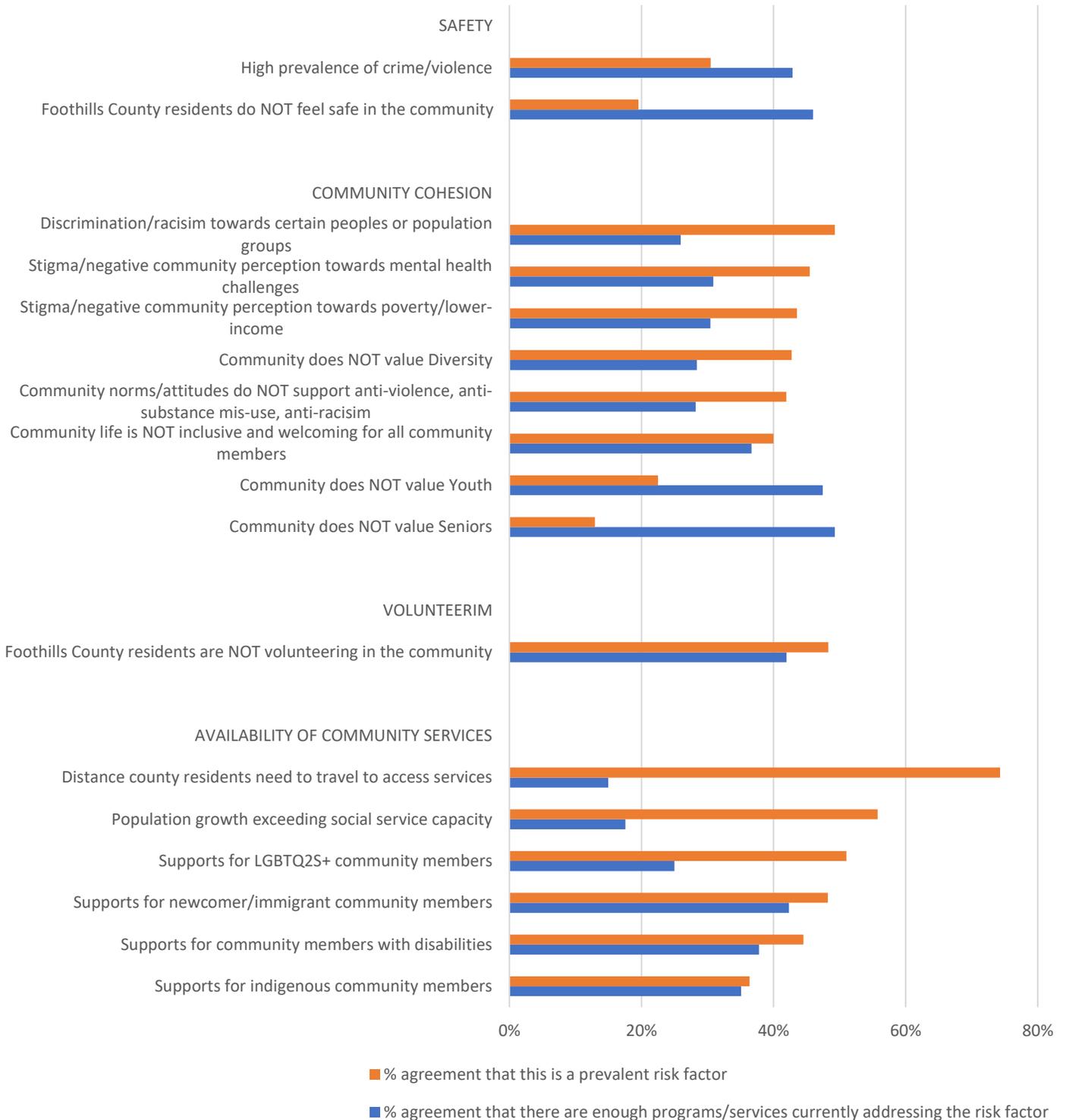


Prevalence of Issues and Services Addressing the Issues

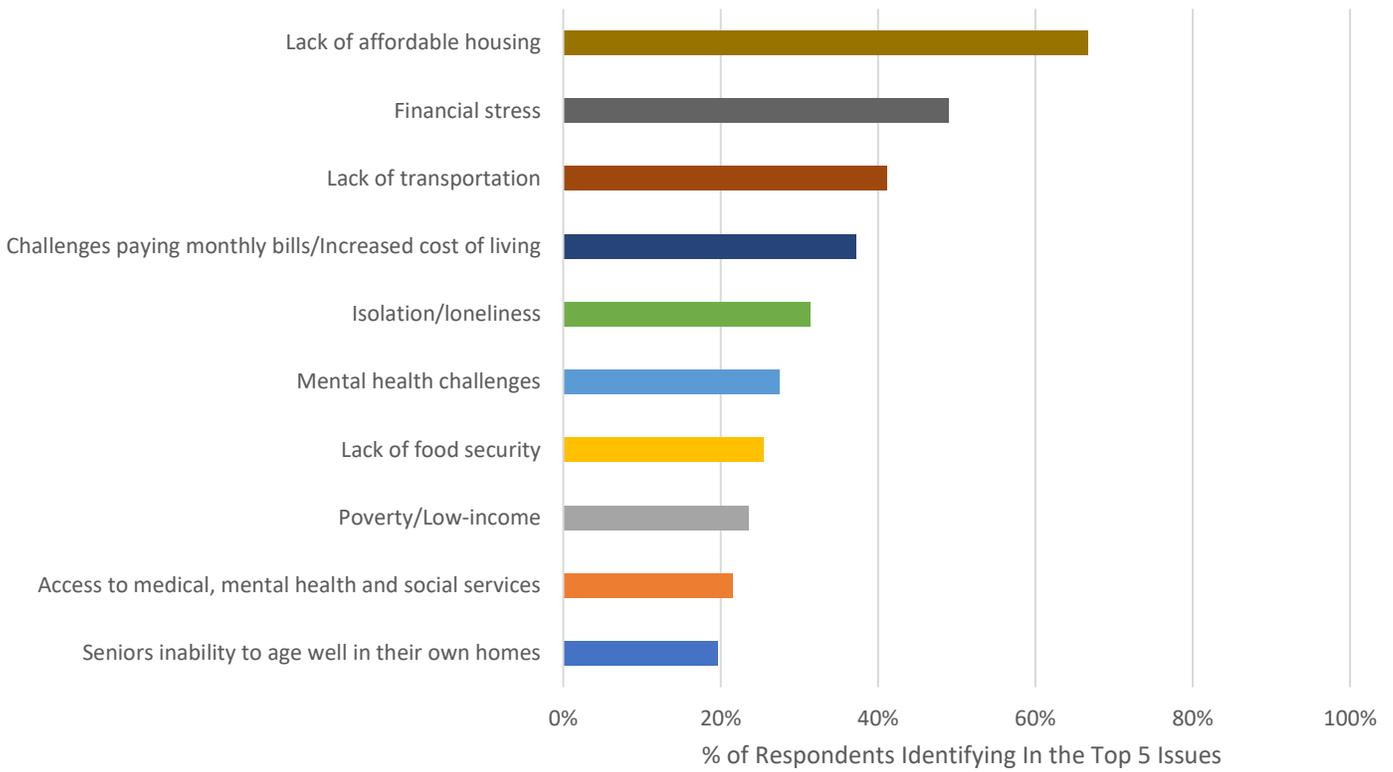
SENIORS ISSUES (n=28)



Prevalence of Issues and Services Addressing the Issues COMMUNITY ISSUES (n=47)



Top 10 Issues Identified by Service Providers (n=51)



APPENDIX D

References and Citations

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