



**stronger
together**

COMMUNITY

+

BROTHERHOOD

working definitions

<p>Community: A body of people linked by shared characteristics or commonalities</p>	<p>Belonging: Close or intimate relationship</p>
<p>Perseverance: Pushing beyond barriers</p>	<p>Resolve: An inner commitment to achieve and become</p>



"According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), feeling disconnected or uncared for by others are not just painful emotional states but represent the thwarting of a fundamental human need – the need to belong. The interpersonal psychological theory of suicidal behavior proposes that the need to belong is so fundamental that when it is met it can prevent suicide but when thwarted, it substantially increases risk for suicide."

The issue is belonging.

**Does the person in question
feel like they belong?**



How can communities cultivate a sense of belonging that regularizes connection, minimizes upsets in inner conflict, and curbs mental health crisis, including suicidal ideation?





**Unity is defined by the bonds
that gather.**



In 2017, roughly 7.1% of U.S. adults were living with MDD (major depressive disorder) and 10% described having some degree of depression every year. Almost 18.1% of the population, about 40 million people, live with some degree of anxiety every year. Depression alone costs the economy an estimated \$210.5 billion annually in direct and indirect costs.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXCLUSION:

- Family instability
- Increased homelessness, poverty, crime
- Reduced employment, employee retention, and productivity
- Increased healthcare costs
- Lower productivity in schools
- Higher costs for emergency services, resolving judicial matters
- Lower utilization of social services



People exposed to more unfavorable social circumstances are more vulnerable to poor mental health over their life course, in ways that are often determined by structural factors which generate and perpetuate intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and poor health. Addressing these challenges is an imperative matter of social justice.

The responsibility of belonging is not given to one individual. It is a communal response to pivot gaps that better serve as bridges. This promotes connection.

**Lead with empathy
Foster inclusiveness
Engage inquisitively**





**Care Genuinely
Include Intentionally
Talk Genuinely**



Socioeconomic disadvantage can be operationalized in several ways, and is a multifaceted construct encompassing different dimensions, including education, finance, occupation, and living standards. All these dimensions have been associated with mental health and disorder, and social inequalities in mental health may arise from a series of interrelated structural and cultural processes operating in society

in translation

Let's adopt a
people-first model
for engagement!



According to structural explanations, social stratification creates unequal access to resources – such as wealth and knowledge – that help individuals avoid exposure to harmful stressors. Higher levels of wealth and income enable access to key determinants of positive mental health, including adequate and safe housing, sufficient food security, and effective health care. Indeed, while there is a long-standing debate about the so-called “social causation” and “social drift” theories of mental disorders, recognizing the bi-directional and cyclical relationship between socioeconomic disadvantage and mental health is likely to be vital for promoting prevention strategies that interrupt the intergenerational transmission of environmental risks for mental disorders.

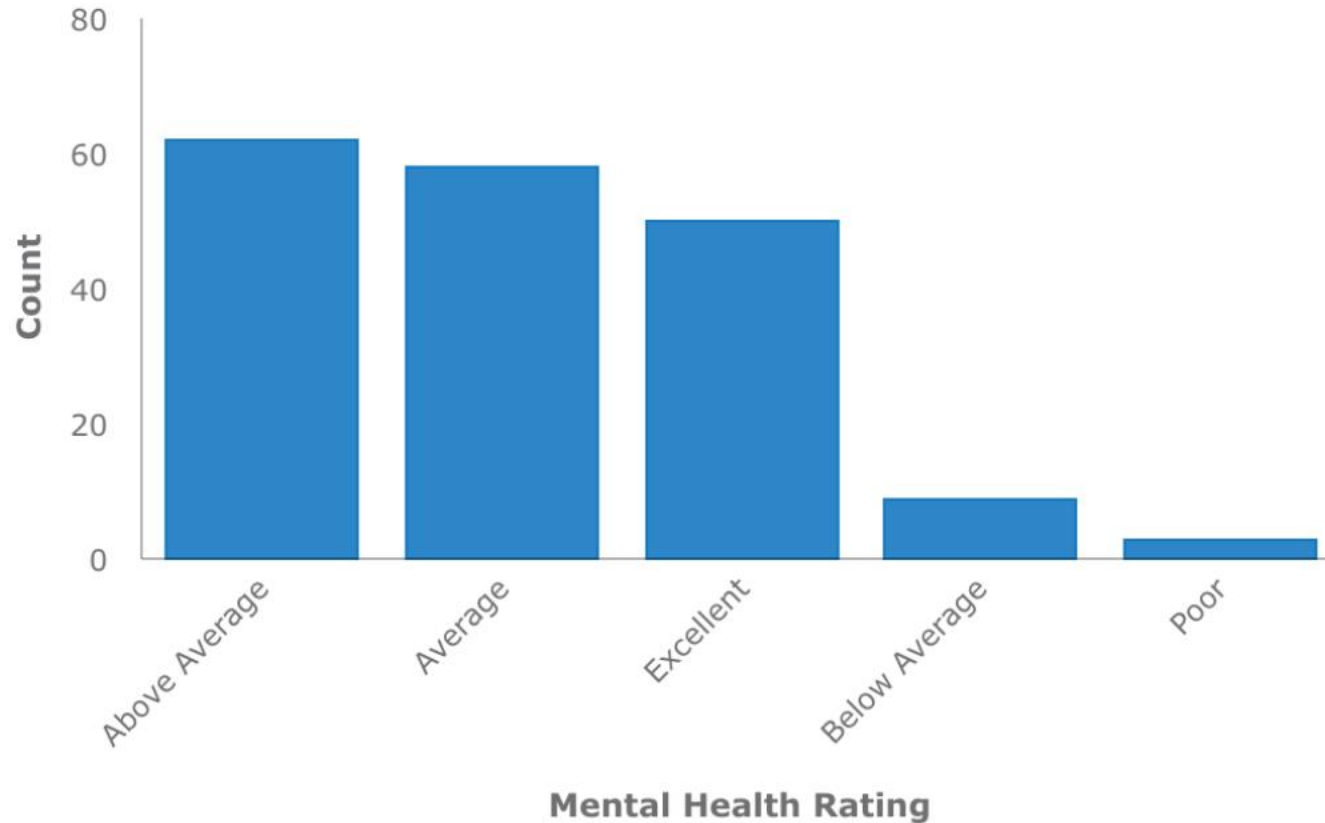


The Problem:

- Hutchinson has a growing problem of disconnection that is both communal and political
- Marginalized populations are often overlooked (and semi intentionally excluded)
- Men, African-Americans, unhoused persons, people with mental illnesses
- These populations are more susceptible to mental illness and hardship with regulating emotions
- Humanity stands in the disconnect between “people” and policy

2022 Reno County Health Assessment

How would you rate your household's mental health?

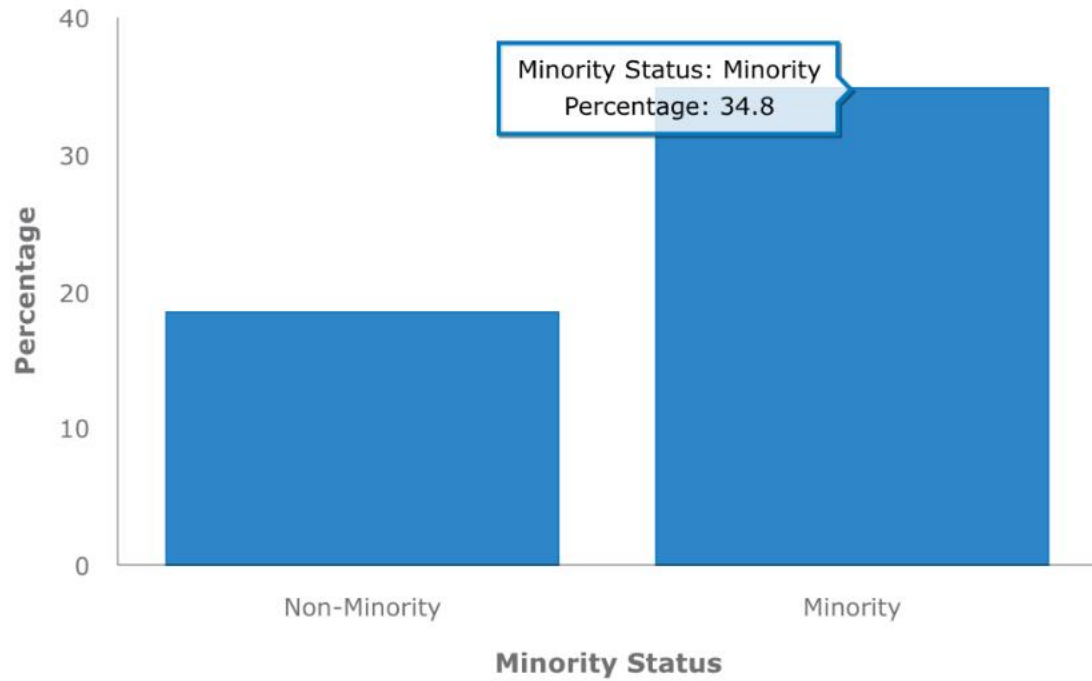


Nearly all the households surveyed rated their households overall mental health average or above. 6.6% of households rated their mental health as below average or poor.

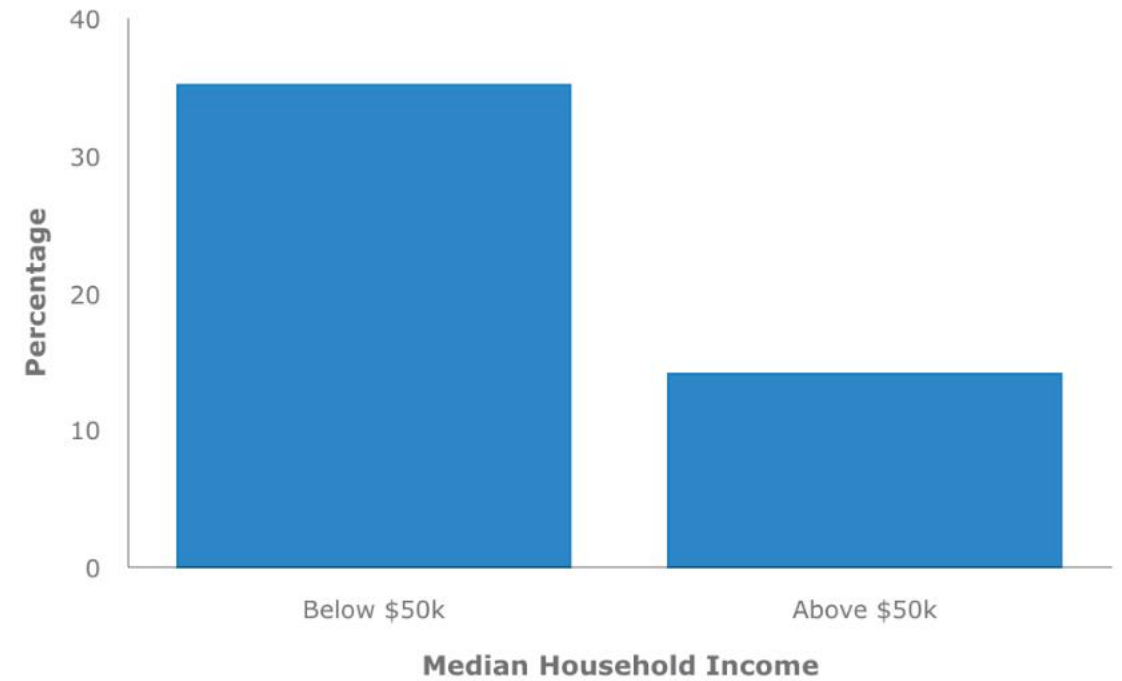
These numbers may suggest a normalization of mental health struggles in the household and households with a member struggling with mental health seeing themselves as at least "average."

2022 Reno County Health Assessment

HH Member Struggles w/Mental Health by Minority Status

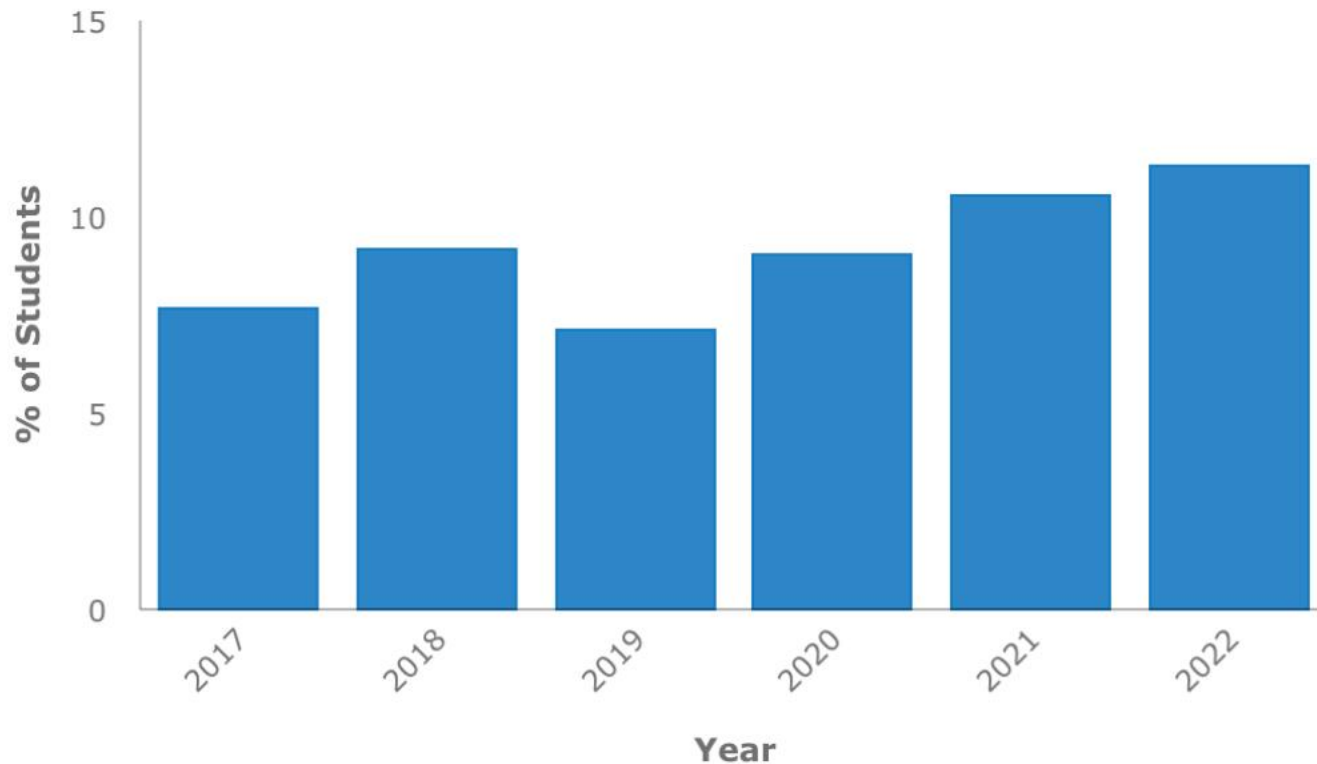


HH Member Struggles w/Mental Health by Income



2022 Reno County Health Assessment

Have you ever seriously thought about killing yourself? (Yes, in the past 30 days)



Mental health rates for youth in Reno County declined during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lifting of pandemic restrictions in 2022 did not alleviate the jump in depression and suicidal ideation from 2021.

In 2021, female students in Reno County make up 68.5% of student-age suicide-related ED visits while female adults in Reno County make up 47.3% of adult suicide-related ED visits.



**So, how did we
implement
a people-first
approach?**

CONVERSATION

Intentional conversation.

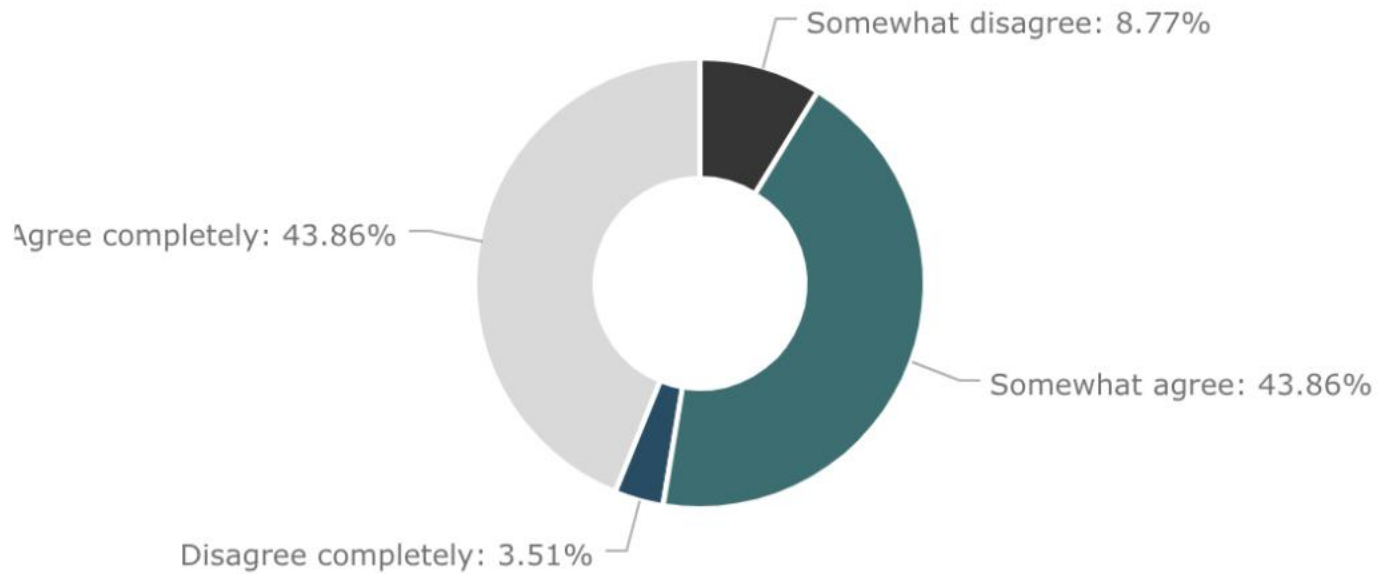
A horizontal yellow brushstroke is located below the underlined text.

The Solution:

- A conversation series entitled “Common Thread Chats” was launched in 2024 by the Human Relations Commission
- Creating a connection of trust by becoming a container of trust
- Rallying neighbors and civic groups to create safe spaces
- Intentionally displaying empathy

2024 Reno County Health Assessment

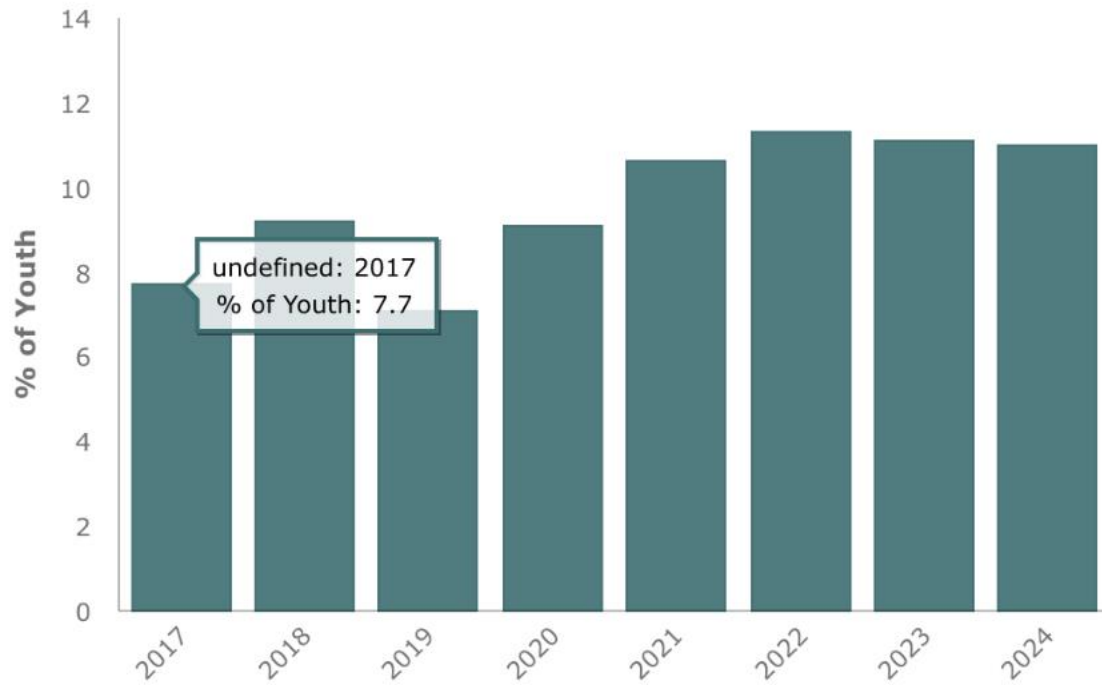
Household Feels a Sense of Belonging



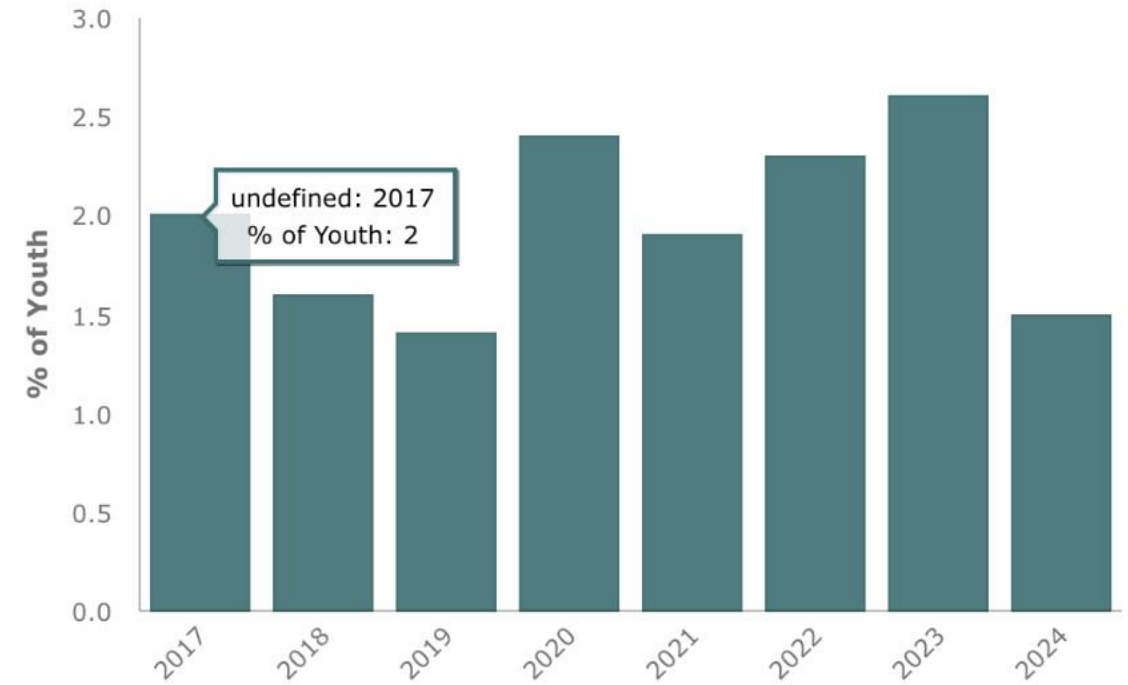
Overall, the data shows that when people feel more socially connected and physically healthy, they also tend to report better mental health—highlighting the importance of community, support, and well-being.

2024 Reno County Health Assessment

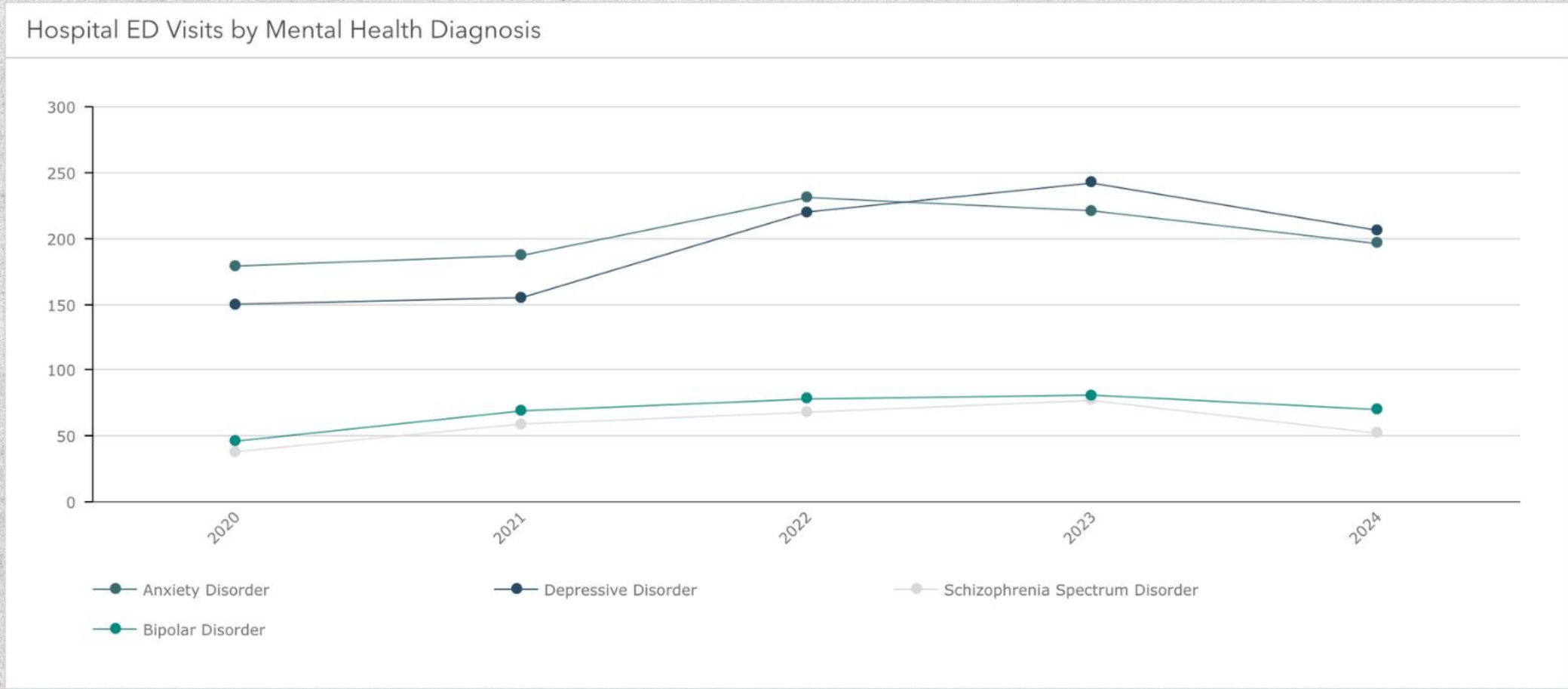
Youth Suicidal Ideation (Lifetime)



Youth Attempted Suicide (Lifetime)



2024 Reno County Health Assessment



What We Learned:

- People were experiencing mental health crisis because they couldn't work through everyday crisis
- Many people don't have a community or network of association. People want to be connected to their community.
- Relationships should never be transactional
- Relationships are the ultimate currency: even exchange of information that promotes learning and understanding by all
- Intentionally displaying empathy

COMMUNITY

&

BROTHERHOOD



trust

+

empathy



community

**You are the conduit of
change. Love and
kindness is the
vehicle that moves
progress.**

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Let's Connect



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