

# COVID-19 STUDENT SURVEY



## Worries about the Impact of COVID-19 Topic Summary

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### Washington State Middle School Students

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Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**



Washington State Department of  
**Health**

Washington State  
**Health Care Authority**

**W**

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

## Brief Overview of the COVID-19 Student Survey:

In March 2021, over 32,000 middle school students grades 6-8 completed an online survey to assess behaviors and attitudes across a number of health domains during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit: <https://csswashington.org>.

The purpose of this document is to describe students’ worries specific to the COVID-19 pandemic within subpopulations of our middle school sample to help assess whether certain populations have been affected differently than others. Specifically, this report will look at behaviors, feelings, and perceptions by racial and ethnic categories, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, and by migratory working family status.

## Background on COVID-19-Related Worries:

- In 2020 and 2021, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, students across Washington experienced changes in school, at home, and throughout their daily lives.
- Worry about family wellbeing, education, and social life, along with other measures of mental health assessed in the survey, can shed light on how students who took the survey were feeling throughout the academic year.
- Studies have shown that COVID-19-related stressors are related to poorer mental health and wellbeing (Graupensperger et al., 2021), and experts are concerned about the negative impacts of these stressors on adolescents (see related links from University of Chicago and Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia):
- <https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/forefront/news/too-young-to-be-stressed-out-ingalls-behavioral-health-focuses-on-adolescents-too>
- <https://www.chop.edu/news/health-tip/teens-stress-covid-19>

## What Does the Middle School Sample Look Like?

Survey participation was voluntary at both the school and student level. Therefore, this is a convenience sample and is not intended to be generalized to the state population. It is important to be thoughtful in how you interpret and use these results. When framing the findings, you might consider using language such as “Among participating students...” or “Of students who took the COVID-19 Student Survey...”.

The proportion of participating students within each demographic category are described in the table below.

**Note** that percentages may not equal 100% because students who reported “I do not know what this question is asking” or “I prefer not to answer” were not included in the analyses described in this document.

## Sample Size and Proportion of Middle School Participants by Demographic Group

Race and Ethnicity								Disability Status		Migratory Status	
AIAN	Asian	Black	Hispanic	NHOPI	White	Other	Multiple	Yes	No	Yes	No
1,161	1,896	1,369	7,507	407	13,053	2,288	3,868	1,919	24,918	3,160	26,393
(3.7%)	(6.0%)	(4.3%)	(23.8%)	(1.3%)	(41.4%)	(7.3%)	(12.3%)	(6.0%)	(77.2%)	(9.8%)	(81.6%)

Gender Identity					Sexual Orientation					
Male	Female	Transgender	Questioning	Other	Heterosexual	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Questioning	Other
14,614	14,787	287	963	689	20,869	233	609	3,094	1,896	1,144
(45.1%)	(45.6%)	(0.9%)	(3.0%)	(2.1%)	(65.2%)	(0.7%)	(1.9%)	(9.7%)	(5.9%)	(3.6%)

**Key:** AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native, NHOPI = Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. For Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, “Other” refers to students who indicated that “Something else fits better”.

## Survey Items to Identify Student Subgroups

### Race/Ethnicity

Students were asked, “How do you describe yourself?” They were shown a list of racial and ethnic categories and encouraged to select one or more responses. Students who selected more than one racial or ethnic group were included in the Multiple Race/Ethnicity category.

### Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation

For both gender identity and sexual orientation, students were asked to select a response that best described themselves. Students were asked, "how do you currently identify yourself?" and "which of the following best describes you?" They were shown a list of responses, and they were given the option of selecting "I do not know what this question is asking" and "I prefer not to answer." Students who did not know what the question was asking or who preferred not to answer were not included in the analyses for these respective subgroup comparisons.

- **LGBTQ+:** In this document, we use LGBTQ+ to describe a diverse and encompassing range of minority sexualities and gender-identities that include (L)esbian, (G)ay, (B)isexual, (T)ransgender, (Q)uestioning and (+) additional gender identities and sexual orientations.

### Students identifying as having a disability or long-term health condition

Disability status was defined by whether a student selected the item, “Are you limited in any activities because of a disability or long-term health problem including physical health, emotional, or learning problems expected to last 6 months or longer?”

### Students from a migratory working family

Migratory working family status was defined by whether a student selected the item, “Have you or your family moved in the past 3 years to another school district or city for **temporary or seasonal** work in agriculture, dairy or fishing?”

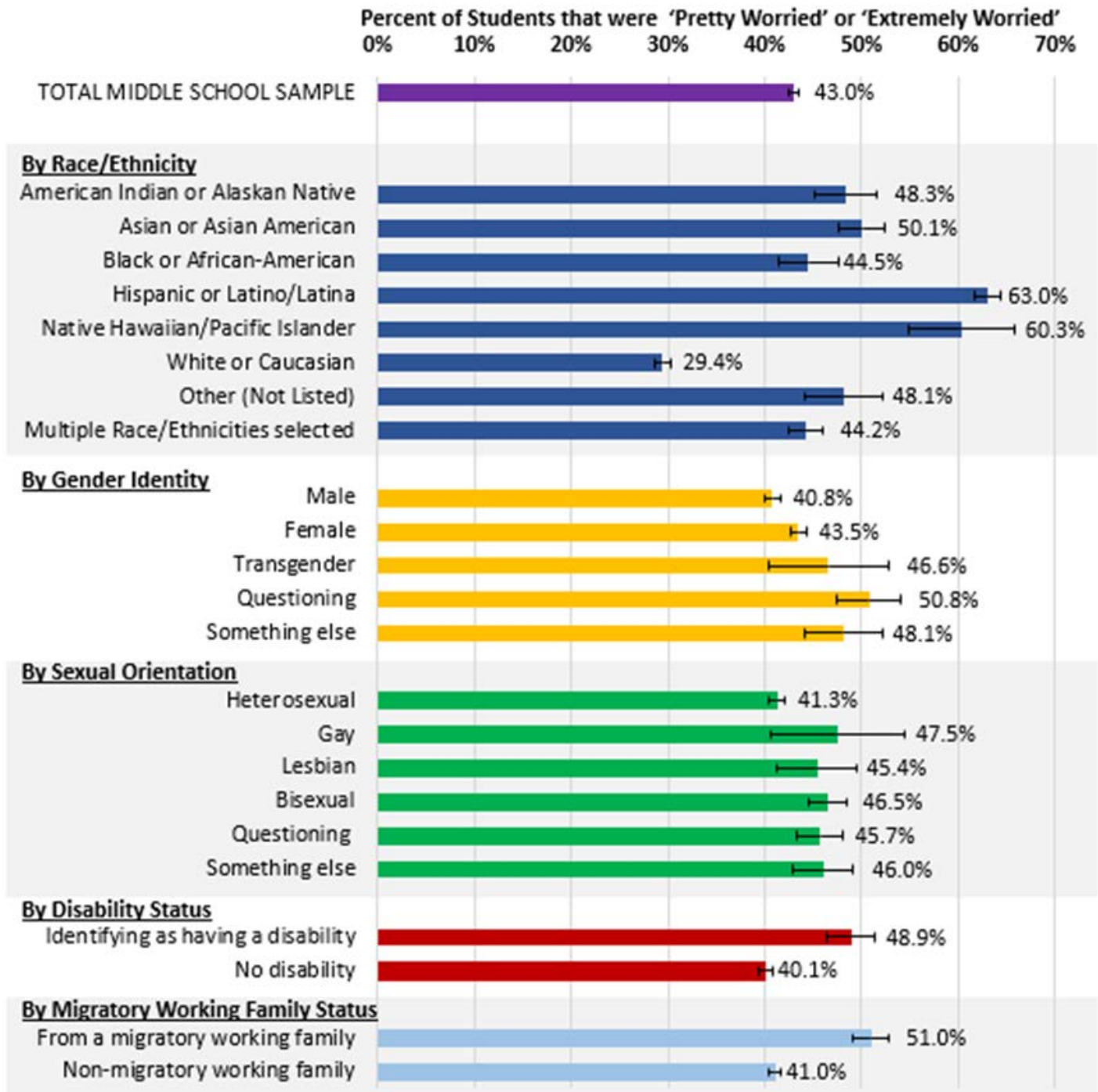
**Legal requirements:** Federal and Washington state regulations prohibit discrimination against LEP individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, or visually impaired. Read HCA [Policy 01-27](#) "Language Access Services" and [Policy 01-30](#) "Equal Access to Services for Individuals with Disabilities" for more information. If you have a question about an accommodation, please contact the HCA Prevention Section at [prevention@hca.wa.gov](mailto:prevention@hca.wa.gov).

## Key Takeaways from Middle School Students Who Took the Survey

- 43% reported worrying about their parents/guardians losing their job(s) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These worries were especially common among students identifying as Hispanic/Latinx and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, as well as students from migratory working families.
- Worries about their family being unable to afford rent or housing were reported by over a third of middle school respondents (36.9%). Housing worries were especially common among students identifying as Hispanic/Latinx and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, students identifying as having a disability, and students from migratory working families.
- Over a quarter (26.9%) reported worries about not having enough food to eat. Food insecurities were most common among students identifying as Hispanic/Latinx and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.
- Nearly one third (32.8%) reported worrying about being alone or lonely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Worries about loneliness were more common among female students relative to male students. These worries were also more common among students identifying as LGBTQ+ and those who identified as having a disability.
- More than half (50.2%) reported worrying about falling behind in their schooling and/or learning. These worries about falling behind in school were generally more common among students identifying as LGBTQ+ and among those identifying as having a disability.

## COVID-19-Related Worries: Middle School Students Worries about Parents/Guardians Losing their Job(s)

**Question:** How much are you worried right now about the following things as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? Your parents or guardians losing their job(s)?



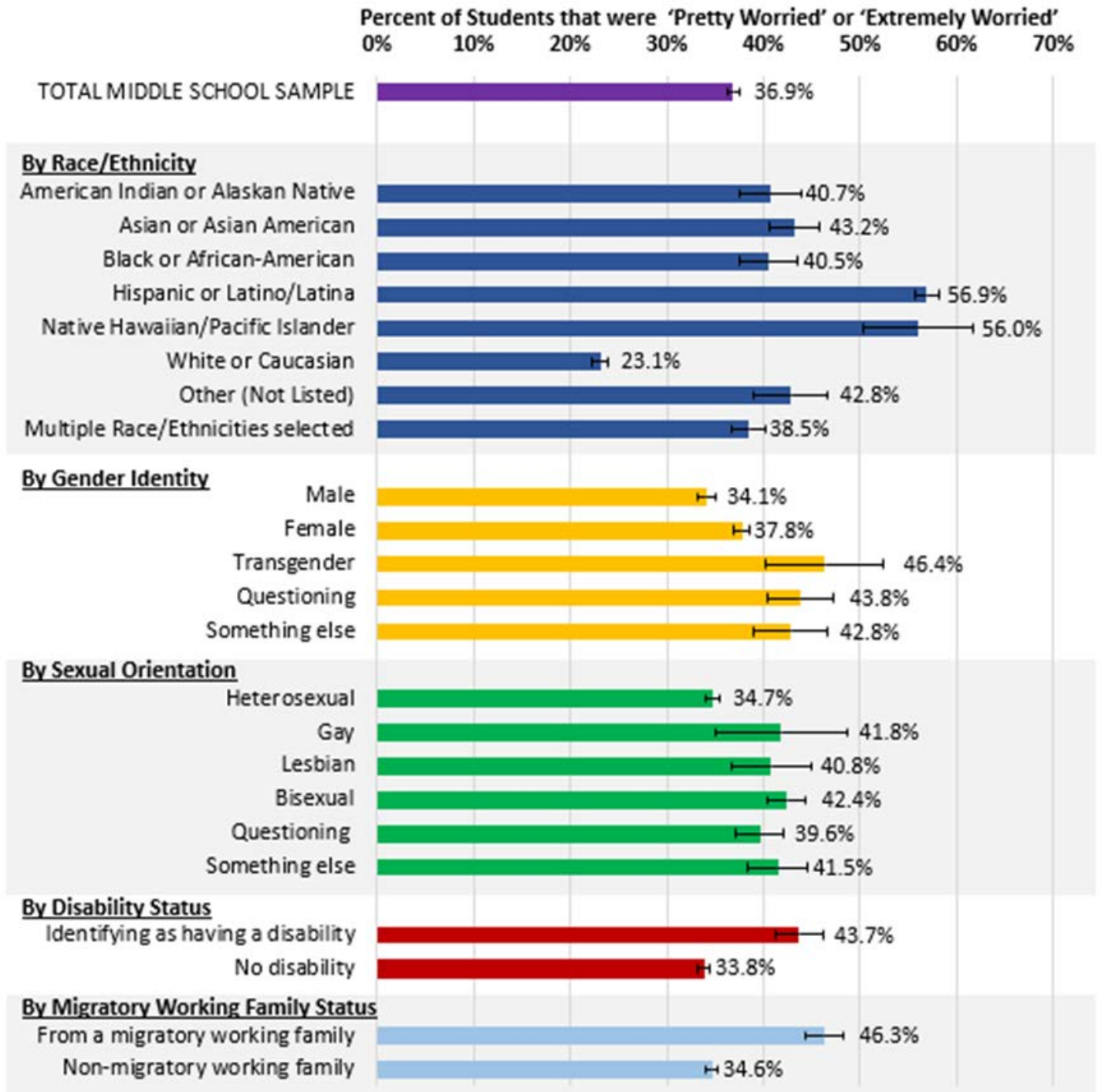
**NOTES:**

- Higher percentages indicate more students reported worrying about parents/guardians losing their job(s).
- Prevalence is displayed with 95% confidence intervals shown with black error bars.
- Response options included: 'Not at all worried', 'A little worried', 'Pretty worried', and 'Extremely worried'. Percentages indicate those who reported feeling 'Pretty worried' or 'Extremely worried'.
- For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit: <https://csswashington.org>.

# COVID-19-Related Worries: Middle School Students

## Worries about Family being Unable to Afford Rent or Housing

**Question:** How much are you worried right now about the following things as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? Your family being unable to afford rent or housing?



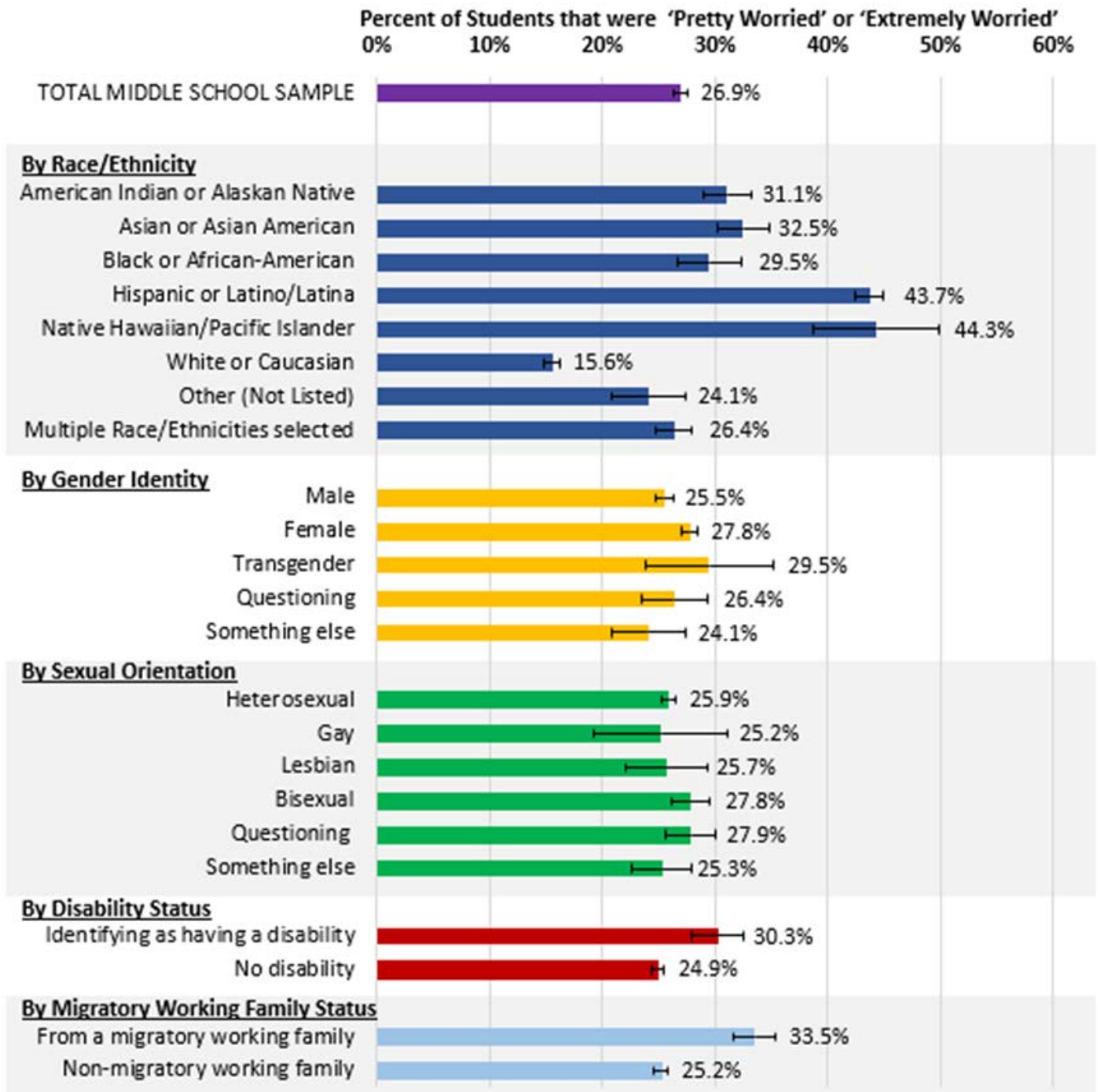
**NOTES:**

- Higher percentages indicate more students reported worrying about being unable to afford housing.
- Prevalence is displayed with 95% confidence intervals shown with black error bars.
- Response options included: 'Not at all worried', 'A little worried', 'Pretty worried', and 'Extremely worried'. Percentages indicate those who reported feeling 'Pretty worried' or 'Extremely worried'.
- For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit: <https://csswashington.org>.

# COVID-19-Related Worries: Middle School Students

## Worries about Food Insecurity

**Question:** How much are you worried right now about the following things as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? Not having enough food to eat?



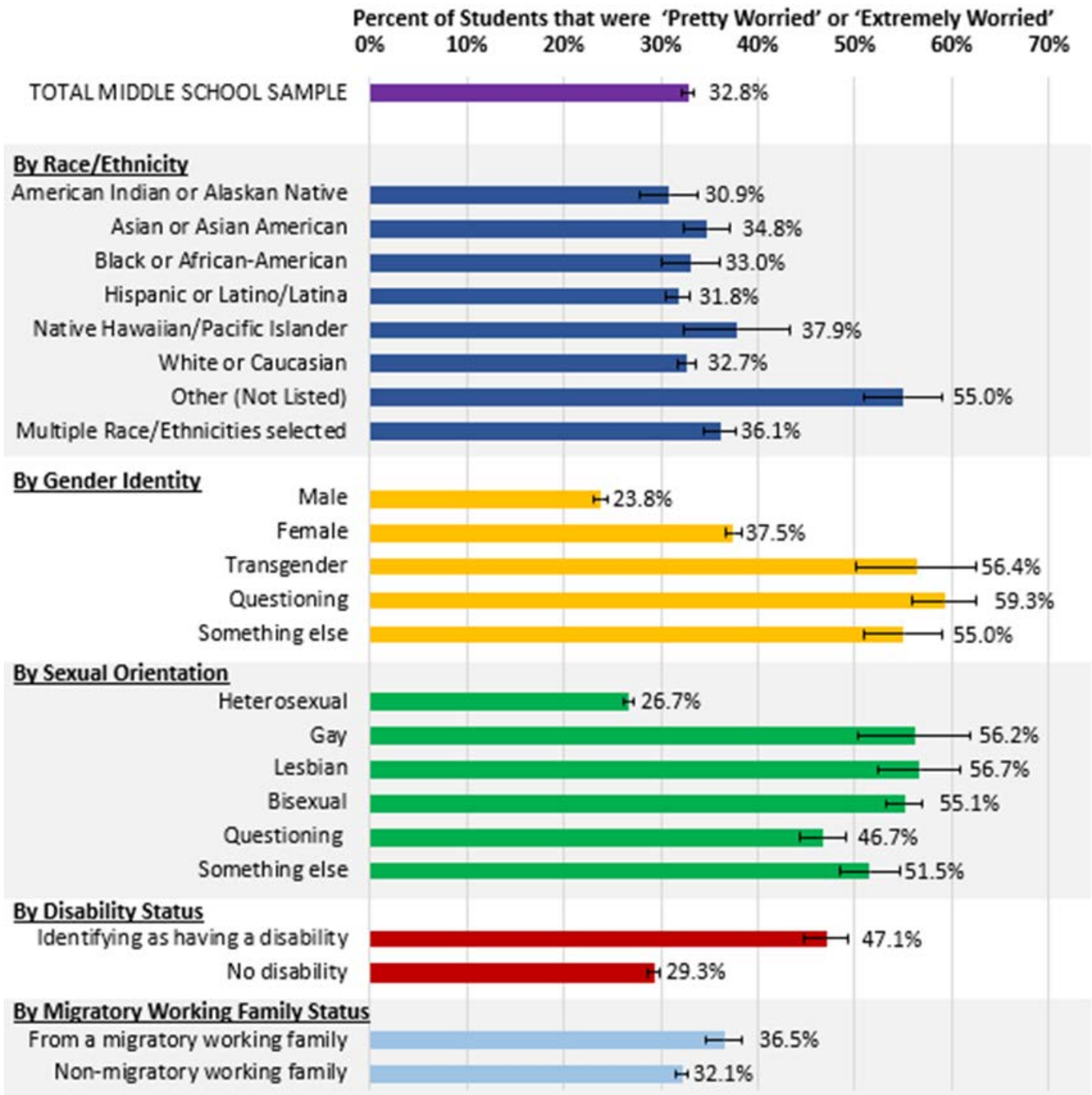
**NOTES:**

- Higher percentages indicate more students reported worrying about not having enough food to eat.
- Prevalence is displayed with 95% confidence intervals shown with black error bars.
- Response options included: 'Not at all worried', 'A little worried', 'Pretty worried', and 'Extremely worried'. Percentages indicate those who reported feeling 'Pretty worried' or 'Extremely worried'.
- For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit: <https://csswashington.org>.

# COVID-19-Related Worries: Middle School Students

## Worries about Loneliness

**Question:** How much are you worried right now about the following things as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? Feeling alone or lonely?



**NOTES:**

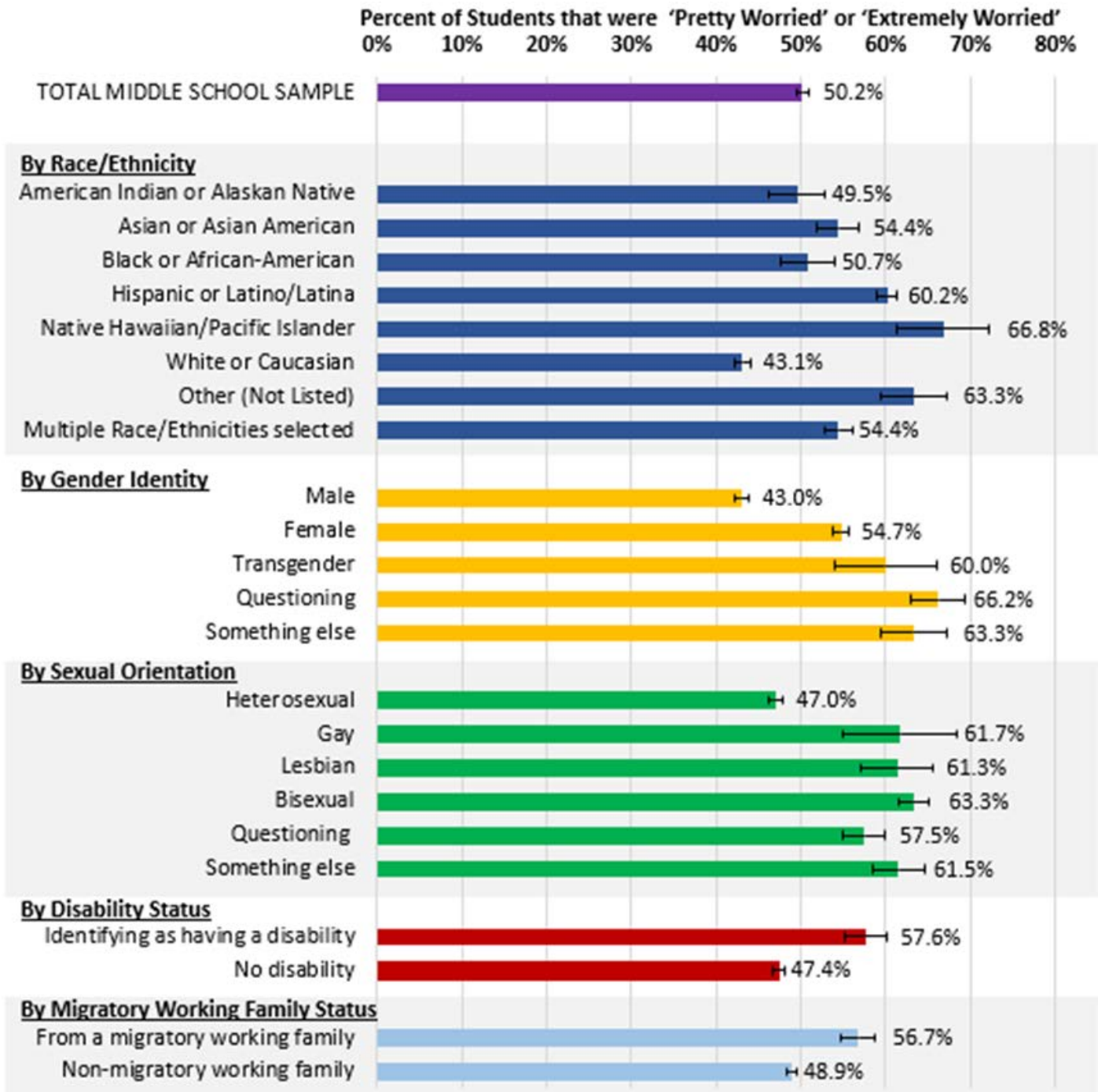
- Higher percentages indicate more students reported worrying about feeling alone or lonely.
- Prevalence is displayed with 95% confidence intervals shown with black error bars.
- Response options included: 'Not at all worried', 'A little worried', 'Pretty worried', and 'Extremely worried'. Percentages indicate those who reported feeling 'Pretty worried' or 'Extremely worried'.
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# COVID-19-Related Worries: Middle School Students

## Worries about Falling Behind in School

**Question:** How much are you worried right now about the following things as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? Falling behind in your schooling or learning?



**NOTES:**

- Higher percentages indicate more students reported worrying about falling behind in school/learning.
- Prevalence is displayed with 95% confidence intervals shown with black error bars.
- Response options included: 'Not at all worried', 'A little worried', 'Pretty worried', and 'Extremely worried'. Percentages indicate those who reported feeling 'Pretty worried' or 'Extremely worried'.
- For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit: <https://csswashington.org>.

## COVID-19 Worries Topic Summary Washington State Middle School Students

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### References Cited in this Document:

1. Graupensperger, S., Cadigan, J. M., Einberger, C., Lee, C. M. (2021). Multifaceted COVID-19-related stressors and associations with indices of mental health, well-being, and substance use among young adults. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*.

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