

Pastor Views on Suicide

Survey of Protestant Pastors

Sponsored by:

American Association of Christian Counselors

Liberty University Graduate Counseling program

Liberty University School of Medicine

Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention

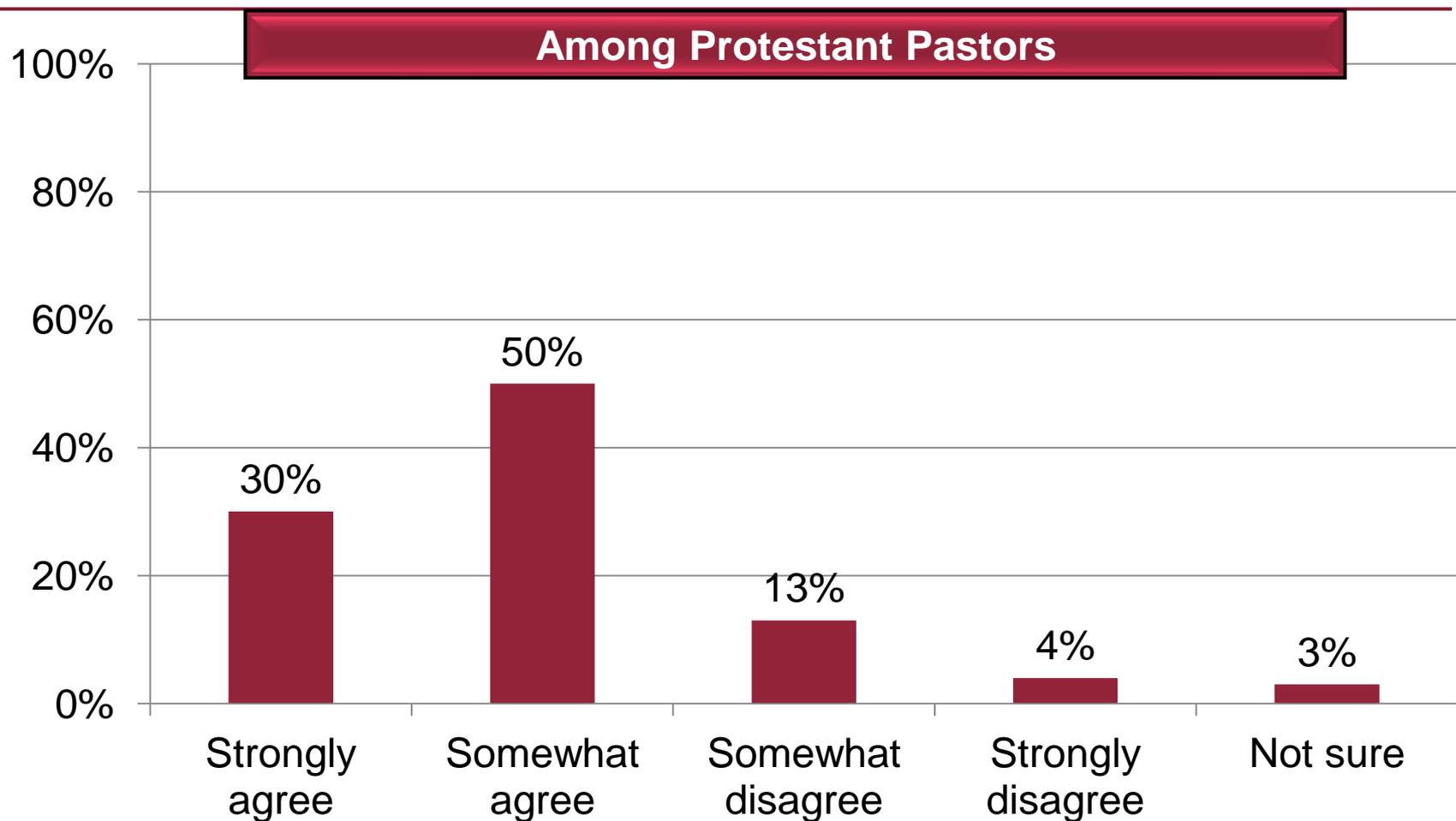


Methodology

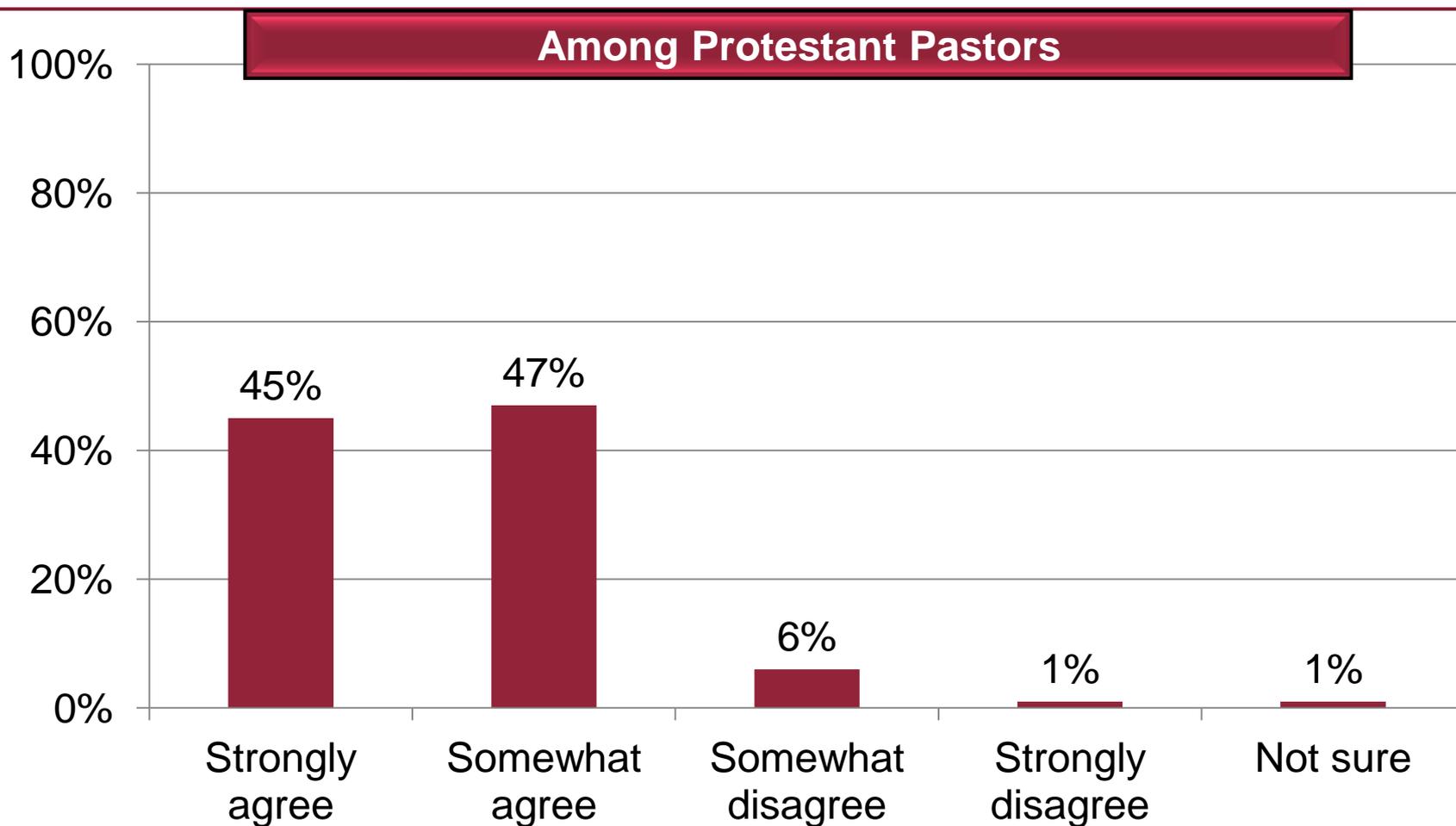
- ❑ The phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors was conducted August 30 – September 18, 2017
- ❑ The study was sponsored by the American Association of Christian Counselors, Liberty University Graduate Counseling program, Liberty University School of Medicine, and Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention
- ❑ The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- ❑ Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest of the church called
- ❑ Responses were weighted by region to more accurately reflect the population
- ❑ The completed sample is 1,000 surveys.
- ❑ The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$
- ❑ Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

Survey Responses

80% agree that their church is equipped to assist someone threatening to take his or her own life

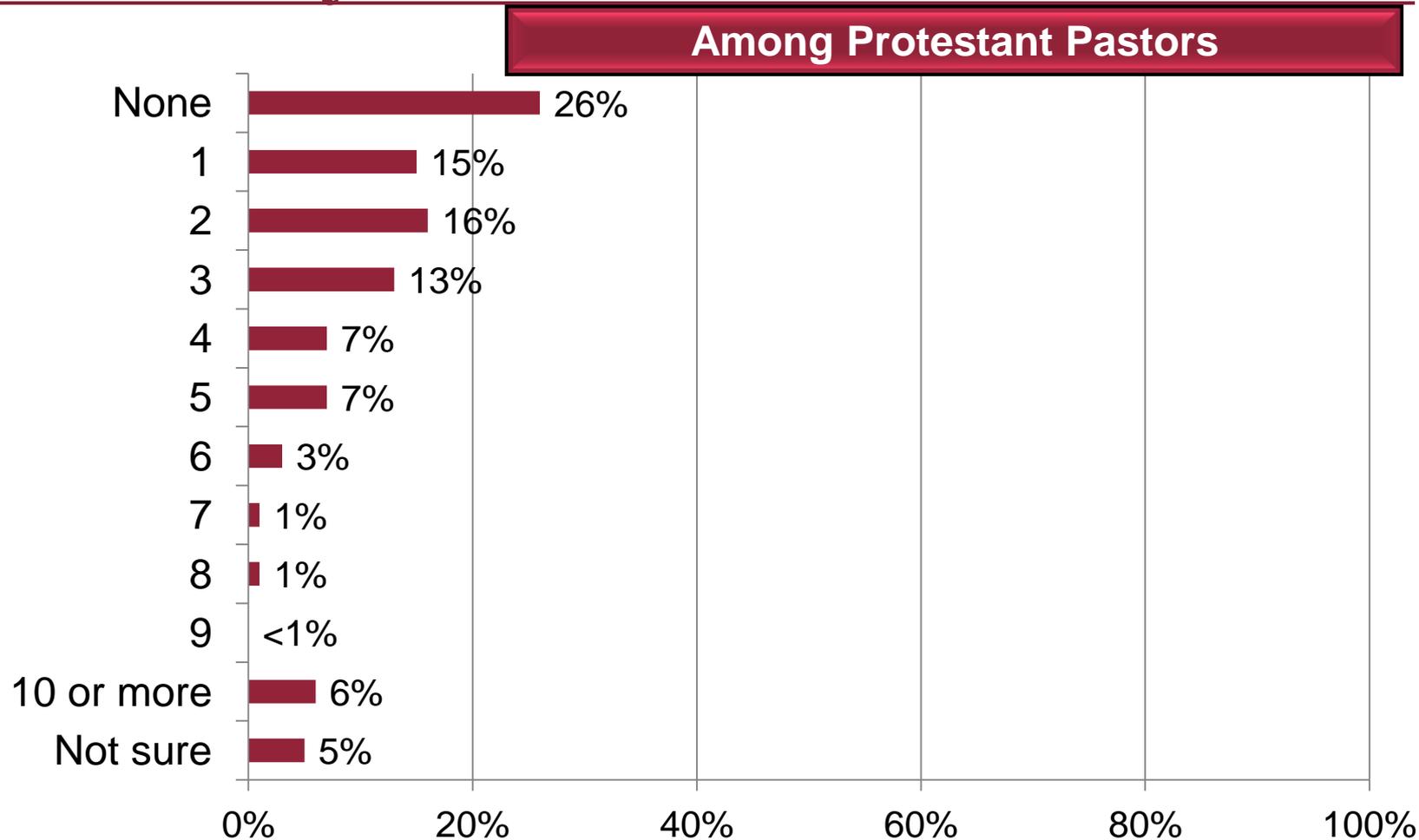


92% agree that their church is equipped to care for a family that experiences the suicide of a loved one



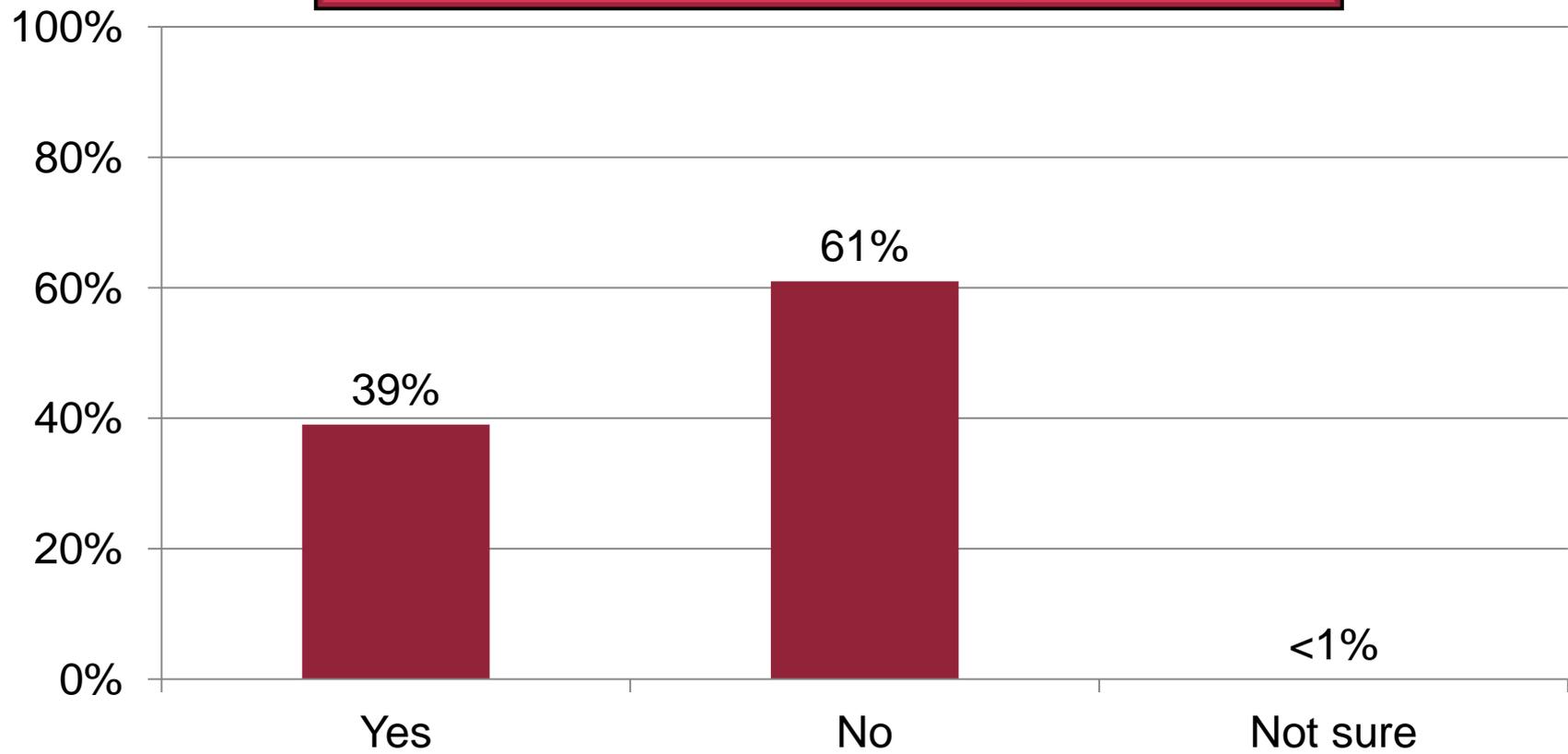
Q12: "Our church is equipped to care for a family that experiences the suicide of a loved one."

Number of suicides in local community in the last year



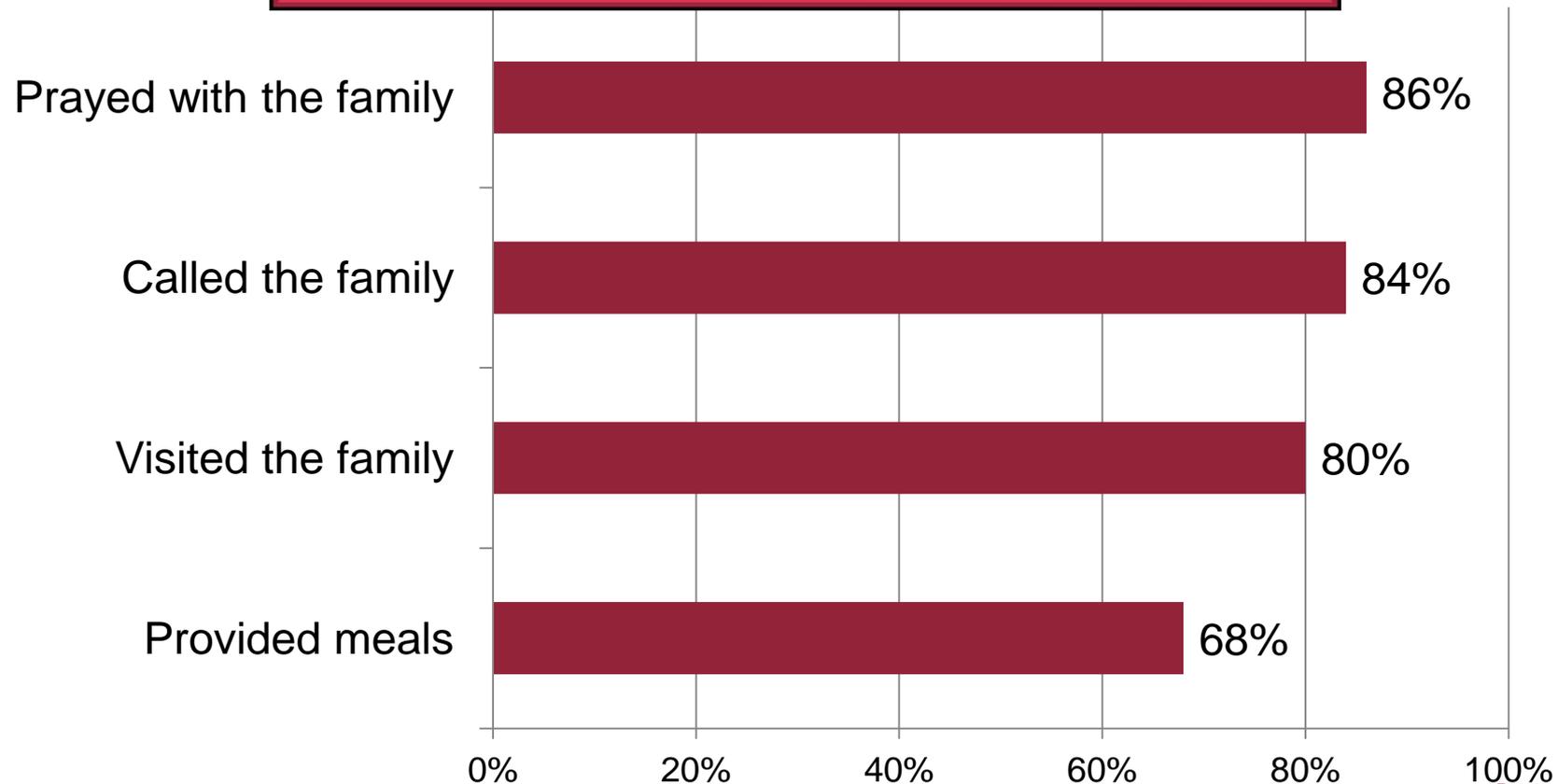
39% say that suicides in local community had a connection to their churches

Among Protestant Pastors With a Suicide in Local Community



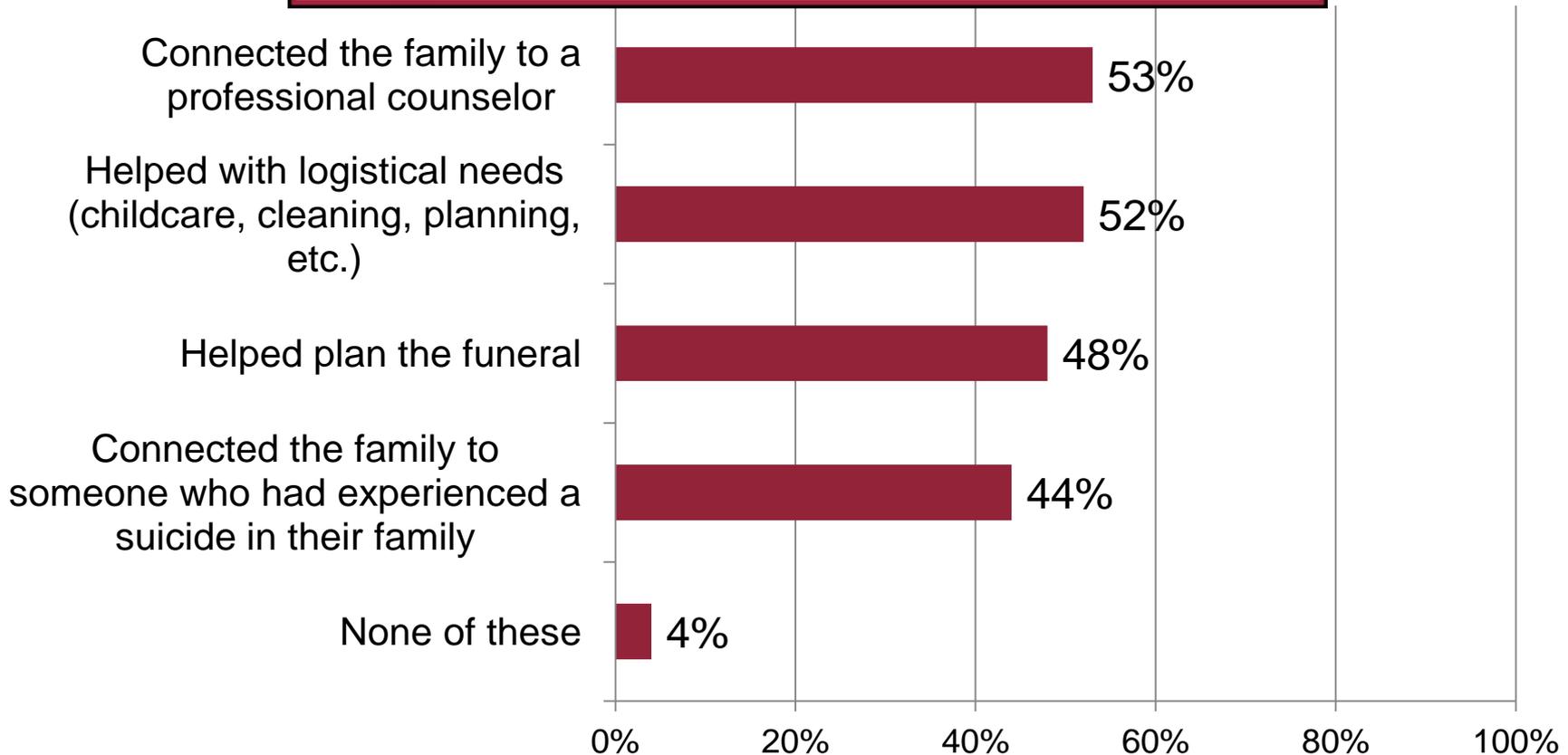
“What did your church do in response to this tragedy?”

Among Protestant Pastors With a Suicide
Connected to Their Church

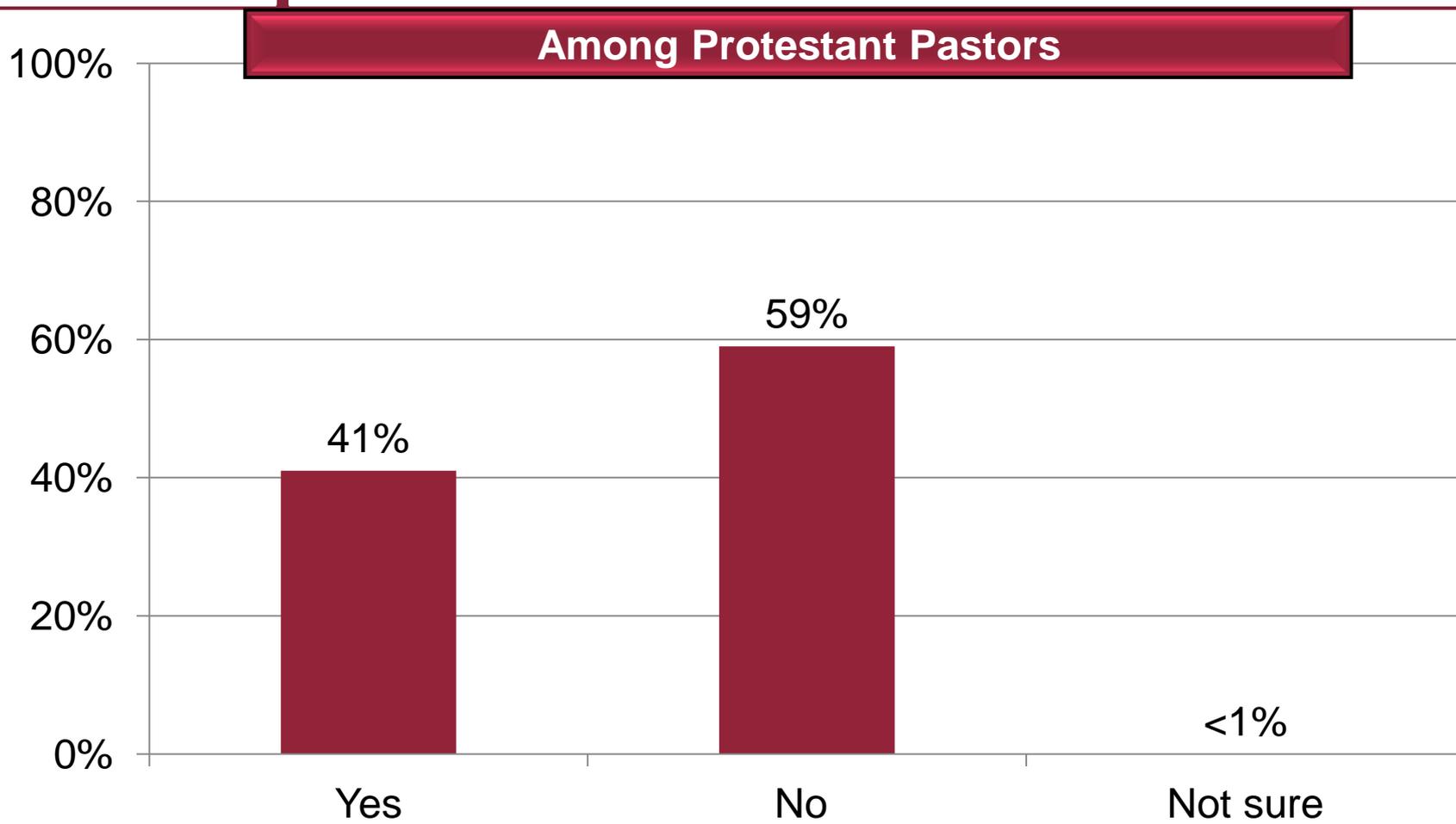


“What did your church do in response to this tragedy?” (continued)

Among Protestant Pastors With a Suicide Connected to Their Church

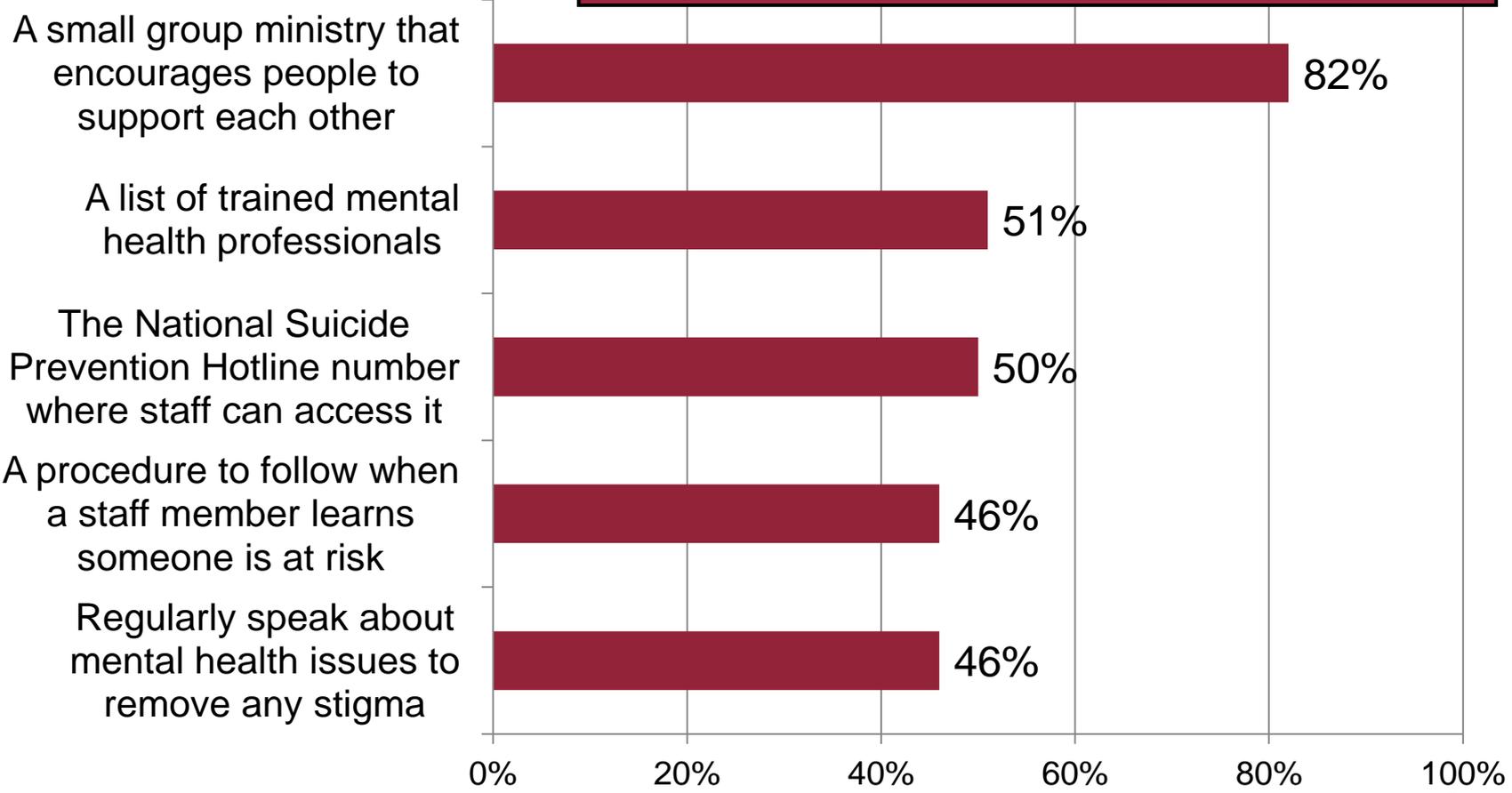


41% have received formal training in suicide prevention



“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide?”

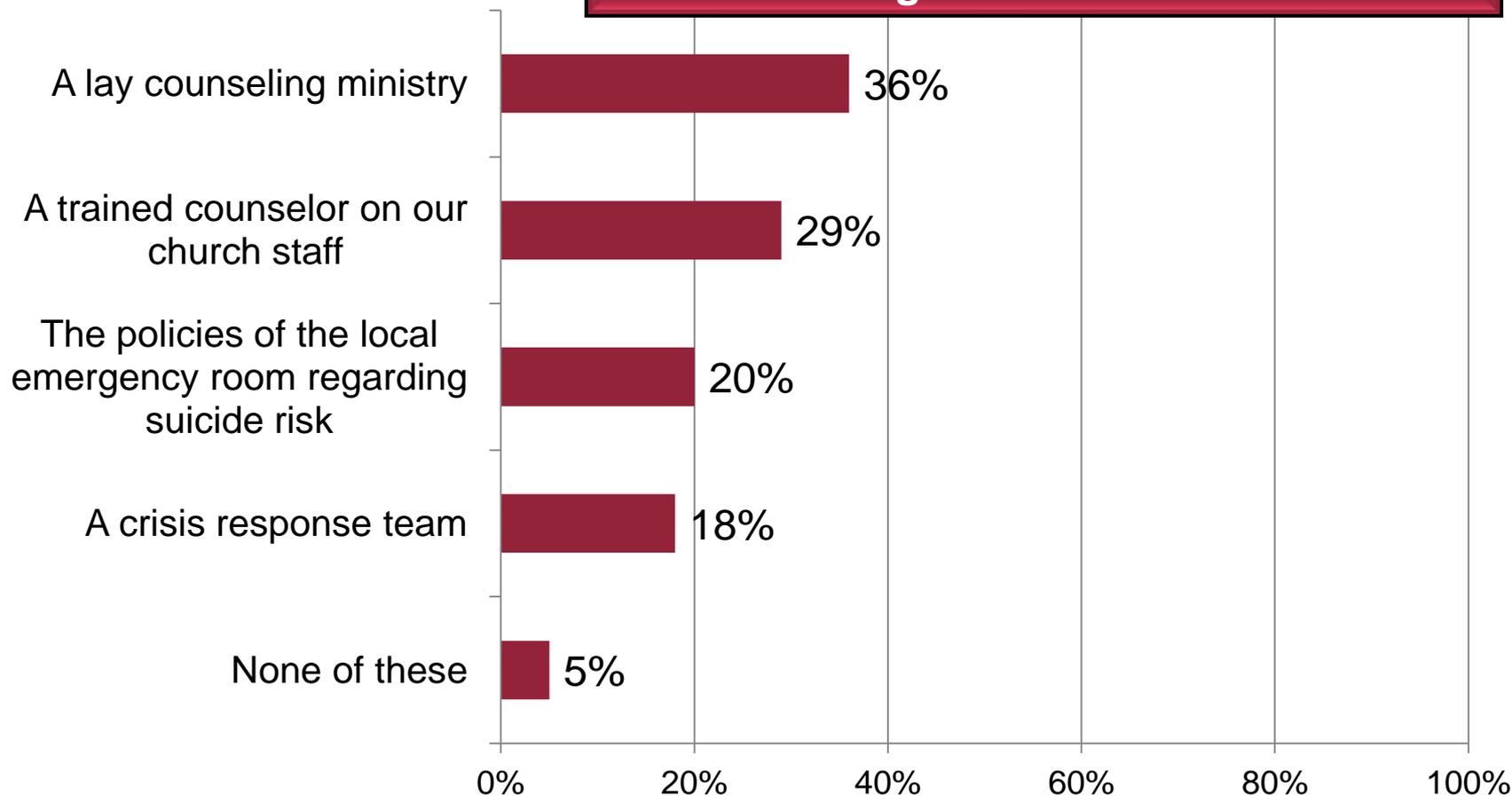
Among Protestant Pastors



Q17: “Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)”

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide?” (continued)

Among Protestant Pastors



Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

Significant Statistical Differences

- Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church's attendance and region, the pastor's gender, age and ethnicity.

Attendance	Region	Pastor's Gender	Pastor's Age	Pastor's Ethnicity
0-49	Northeast	Male	18-44	White
50-99	Midwest	Female	45-54	African-American
100-249	South		55-64	Other Ethnicities
250+	West		65+	

Note: Region is defined by US Census regions

Significant Statistical Differences

- Comparisons were also made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among education level, the self-identified Evangelical or Mainline, and denomination.

Education Level	Self-Identified	Denomination
No College Degree	Evangelical	Baptist
Bachelor's Degree	Mainline	Lutheran
		Methodist
		Pentecostal
		Presbyterian/ Reformed
		Holiness

“Our church is equipped to assist someone who is threatening to take his or her own life.”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to Agree (71%)
- African-American pastors (92%) are more likely to Agree than pastors of Other Ethnicities (74%)
- Baptists (83%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (81%) are more likely to Agree than Holiness (67%)

“Our church is equipped to care for a family that experiences the suicide of a loved one.”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (96%) and 250+ (98%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 0-49 (85%) and 50-99 (90%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (96%) are more likely to Agree than those 65+ (89%)
- African-American pastors (98%) are more likely to Agree than pastors of Other Ethnicities (87%)

“In the last year how many suicides have you heard about happening in your local community?”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are most likely to select “None” (46%), while those with attendance 250+ are least likely to select “None” (14%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are most likely to select 5 or more (30%)
- Pastors age 45-54 (20%) are more likely to select 5 or more than those 18-44 (13%)
- African-American pastors (38%) are more likely to select “None” than White pastors (25%)
- Methodists (35%), Pentecostals (33%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (32%) are more likely to select “None” than Baptists (22%) and Holiness (14%)
- Pentecostals (24%), and are more likely to select 5 or more than Presbyterian/Reformed (11%)

“Were any of these suicides people connected to your church including attendees or family members or friends of attendees?”

- Pastors in the South (43%) are more likely to select Yes than Pastors in the Midwest (33%)
- Female pastors (51%) are more likely to select Yes than male pastors (37%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (46%) are more likely to select Yes than those 55-64 (36%) and 65+ (32%)
- White pastors (39%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (46%) are more likely to select Yes than African-American pastors (20%)

“What did your church do in response to this tragedy? (Select all that apply)”

Visited the family

- Pastors in the South (84%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the Midwest (70%)
- Female pastors (92%) are more likely to select than male pastors (77%)

Prayed with the family

- No significant differences

Called the family

- No significant differences

“What did your church do in response to this tragedy? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

Helped with logistical needs (childcare, cleaning, planning)

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (74%)
- Pastors in the South (59%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (33%)

Connected the family to a professional counselor

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (73%)

Connected the family to someone who had experienced a suicide in their family

- No significant differences

“What did your church do in response to this tragedy? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

Helped plan the funeral

- No significant differences

Provided meals

- Pastors in the South (76%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the Midwest (53%)
- Those with a Bachelor's (78%) or a Doctoral degree (81%) are more likely to answer “Yes” than those with a Master's degree (62%)

“Have you ever received formal training in suicide prevention?”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (46%) are more likely to answer “Yes” than those with attendance of 0-49 (35%)
- Those with a Master’s (43%) or a Doctoral degree (48%) are more likely to answer “Yes” than those with no college degree (28%)
- Lutherans (43%) and Methodists (47%) are more likely to answer “Yes” than Holiness (25%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)”

A list of trained mental health professionals

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (56%) and 250+ (66%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (40%) and 50-99 (48%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (58%) and 45-54 (55%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (42%)
- African-American pastors (70%) are more likely to select than White pastors (51%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (40%)
- Those with no college degree are the least likely to select (35%)
- Lutherans (55%) are more likely to select than Baptists (42%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline number where staff can access it

- Pastors in the Northeast (63%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the South (44%) and Midwest (51%)
- Female pastors (61%) are more likely to select than male pastors (48%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (68%), followed by those age 45-54 (53%)
- Those with a Master's degree (53%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor's degree (45%)
- Mainline pastors (56%) are more likely to select than Evangelical pastors (46%)
- Methodists (63%) are more likely to select than Baptists (44%), Pentecostals (37%), Presbyterian/Reformed (49%), and Holiness (45%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

The policies of the local emergency room regarding suicide risk

- African-American pastors (43%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (34%) are more likely to select than White pastors (17%)
- Methodists (29%) are more likely to select than Pentecostals (13%), Presbyterian/Reformed (16%), and Holiness (14%)

A procedure to follow when a staff member learns someone is at risk

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (64%)
- African-American pastors (61%) and Other Ethnicities (62%) are more likely to select than White pastors (44%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

A lay counseling ministry

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (41%) and 250+ (50%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (27%) and 50-99 (32%)
- African-American pastors (64%) are more likely to select than White pastors (34%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (39%)
- Those with no college degree (47%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (35%) or a Doctoral degree (32%)
- Baptists (41%), Methodists (36%), and Pentecostals (43%) are more likely to select than Holiness (19%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

A trained counselor on our church staff

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (38%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (23%) and 50-99 (27%)
- Pastors in the West (36%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the South (27%) and Midwest (26%)
- African-American pastors (49%) are more likely to select than White pastors (28%)
- Those with Bachelor's (36%) or a Doctoral degree (40%) are more likely to select than those with a Master's degree (24%)
- Baptists (34%) and Pentecostals (36%) are more likely to select than Methodists (21%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

A crisis response team

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (22%) and 250+ (27%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (11%) and 50-99 (16%)
- Male pastors (19%) are more likely to select than female pastors (10%)
- African-American pastors (31%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (31%) are more likely to select than White pastors (16%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

A small group ministry that encourages people to support each other

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (86%) and 250+ (90%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (74%) and 50-99 (80%)
- Pastors in the West (87%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the Midwest (79%)
- Evangelical pastors (84%) are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (79%)
- Baptists (86%), Methodists (86%), and Holiness (93%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (71%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (76%)

“Does your church have any of the following in place to help prevent suicide? (Select all that apply)” (continued)

Regularly speak about mental health issues to remove any stigma

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (56%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (41%) and 100-249 (45%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (54%) and West (54%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the South (42%)
- Female pastors (65%) are more likely to select than male pastors (44%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (59%)
- Mainline pastors (52%) are more likely to select than Evangelical pastors (41%)
- Lutherans (49%), Methodists (54%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (48%) are more likely to select than Pentecostals (30%)

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