

SURVEY SAYS:
WHAT OUR AA
MEMBERSHIP
SURVEYS SAY ABOUT
AA & HOW WE ARE
DOING

From research (2013-2022) and interviews on 50 years of reporting
Joe C, Beyond Belief Agnostics & Freethinkers Group, Toronto

AGENDA

Why a membership survey?

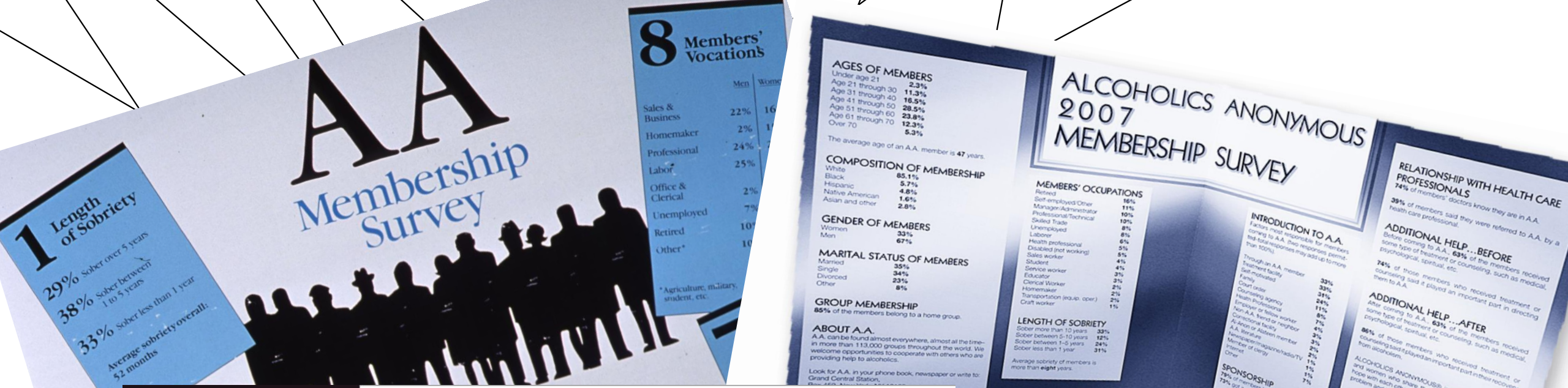
Should we? Primary purpose, outside issues, controversy?

Historical trends (USA/Canada triennial survey (since 1968) +

Great Britain quinquennial survey (since 1972)

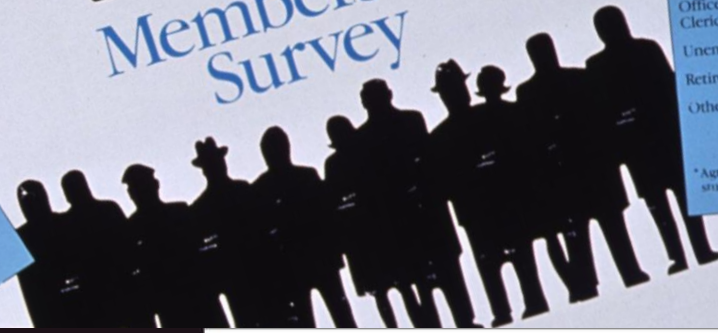
Taking our collective inventory: learning from data.

Discussion: Q&A, what if you were in charge ????



1 Length of Sobriety
 29% Sober over 5 years
 38% Sober between 1 to 5 years
 33% Sober less than 1 year
 Average sobriety overall: 52 months

AA Membership Survey



8 Members' Vocations

Vocation	Men	Women
Sales & Business	22%	16%
Homemaker	2%	1%
Professional	24%	1%
Laborer	25%	1%
Office & Clerical	2%	1%
Unemployed	7%	1%
Retired	10%	1%
Other*	10%	1%

* Agriculture, military, student, etc.

AGES OF MEMBERS

Under age 21	2.3%
Age 21 through 30	11.3%
Age 31 through 40	16.5%
Age 41 through 50	28.5%
Age 51 through 60	23.8%
Age 61 through 70	12.3%
Over 70	5.3%

The average age of an A.A. member is 47 years.

COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP

White	85.1%
Black	5.7%
Hispanic	4.8%
Native American	1.6%
Asian and other	2.8%

GENDER OF MEMBERS

Women	33%
Men	67%

MARITAL STATUS OF MEMBERS

Married	35%
Single	34%
Divorced	23%
Other	8%

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

85% of the members belong to a home group.

ABOUT A.A.

A.A. can be found almost everywhere, almost all the time in more than 113,000 groups throughout the world. We welcome opportunities to cooperate with others who are providing help to alcoholics.

Look for A.A. in your phone book, newspaper or write to: Grand Central Station, Box 469, New York, NY 10163

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 2007 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

MEMBERS' OCCUPATIONS

Retired	16%
Self-employed/Other	11%
Manager/Administrator	10%
Professional/Technical	10%
Skilled Trade	8%
Unemployed	8%
Laborer	8%
Health professional	6%
Disabled (not working)	5%
Sales worker	5%
Student	4%
Service worker	4%
Educator	3%
Clerical worker	3%
Homemaker	2%
Transportation (equip. oper.)	2%
Craft worker	1%

INTRODUCTION TO A.A.

Factors most responsible for members coming to A.A. (their responses permitted - total responses may add up to more than 100%):

Through an A.A. member	33%
Treatment facility	33%
Self-motivated	31%
Family	24%
Court order	24%
Health professional	21%
Employer or fellow worker	11%
Non-A.A. friend or neighbor	8%
Conscience/society	7%
A.A. literature	4%
Al-Anon or Alateen member	3%
Member of clergy	3%
Member of AA/Alateen/had a TV	2%
Internet	2%
Other	1%
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RELATIONSHIP WITH HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

74% of members' doctors know they are in A.A. health care professional.

39% of members said they were referred to A.A. by a health care professional.

ADDITIONAL HELP...BEFORE

Before coming to A.A., 63% of the members received some type of treatment or counseling, such as medical, psychological, spiritual, etc.

74% of those members who received treatment or counseling said it played an important part in directing them to A.A.

ADDITIONAL HELP...AFTER

After coming to A.A., 63% of the members received some type of treatment or counseling, such as medical, psychological, spiritual, etc.

86% of those members who received treatment or counseling said it played an important part in their recovery from alcoholism.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

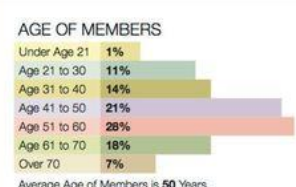
- Theory requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.
- A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not seek to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.
- Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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 New York, NY 10163
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www.aa.org

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

2014 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY



- ### INTRODUCTION TO A.A.*
- Through an A.A. member 32%
 - Treatment facility 32%
 - Self-motivated 30%
 - Family 27%
 - Judicial System 12%
 - Counselor/Mental Health Professional 13%
 - Medical Professional 4%
 - Employer or fellow worker 4%
 - Non-A.A. friend or neighbor 3%
 - Correctional facility 2%
 - Al-Anon or Alateen member 2%
 - A.A. literature 2%
 - Newspaper/magazine/radio/TV 1%
 - Member of clergy 1%
 - Internet 1%
 - Other 6%

RELATIONSHIP WITH HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

75% of members' doctors know they are in A.A.

57% of members said they were referred to A.A. by a counselor, medical or mental health professional.

SPONSORSHIP

82% of members have a sponsor.

74% got a sponsor within 90 days.

ADDITIONAL HELP...

BEFORE coming to A.A., 59% of the members received some type of treatment or counseling (such as medical, psychological, spiritual, etc.) related to their drinking.

74% of those members who received treatment or counseling said it played an important part in directing them to A.A.

AFTER coming to A.A., 58% of the members received some type of treatment or counseling (such as medical, psychological, spiritual, etc.) related to their drinking.

84% of those members who received treatment or counseling said it played an important part in their recovery from alcoholism.

MEMBERS OCCUPATIONS

19%	Retired
11%	Other (including self-employed)
8%	Unemployed
10%	Manager / Administrator
9%	Professional / Technical
7%	Skilled trade
5%	Disabled (not working)
6%	Health professional
5%	Laborer
4%	Sales worker
4%	Educator
2%	Student
4%	Service worker
2%	Clerical worker
2%	Homemaker
1%	Transportation
1%	Craft worker

* These numbers do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to select more than one.

/CANADA SURVEYS THROUGH THE YEARS

1983 - 2007 - 2014

P-48 “ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS CONDUCTS THIS SURVEY TO KEEP MEMBERS INFORMED ON CURRENT TRENDS IN MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS. THE SURVEY ALSO PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT A.A. TO THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY AND TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS PART OF A.A.’S PURPOSE TO CARRY OUR MESSAGE TO THOSE WHO STILL SUFFER FROM ALCOHOLISM.”

[2014 Membership Survey](#)

[2021 General Service Conference report by Mani Mehdikhani re: 2020 GR and CER membership survey](#)

“The subcommittee adapted the 2015 Survey instruments as templates and a number of the previous items were retained. However, several new questions of interest were identified for exploration.”

[2020 Membership Survey p. 6](#)

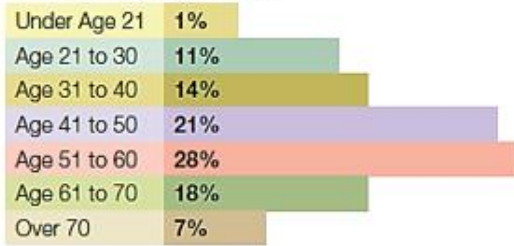
Confidence intervals

This survey followed a partial census method with a 95% confidence interval of +/-2%. For example, if 61% of respondents give a particular answer to a question, then the true figure for the population is 95% likely to lie in the range between 57% and 63%.

Rounding

Figures quoted for graphs and charts have usually been rounded to the nearest whole number value and so questions that allow one answer only may not always add up to 100%.

AGE OF MEMBERS



Average Age of Members is **50** Years.

MARITAL STATUS OF MEMBERS

Married/ Life Partner	Single	Divorced	Other
41%	32%	21%	6%

GROUP MEMBERSHIP



86% of the members belong to a home group.

LENGTH OF SOBRIETY (YEARS)



The average length of members sobriety is almost ten years.



INTRODUCTION TO A.A.*



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2013 GSC “The 2011 membership survey results were produced in pamphlet and table-top format. a **committee was formed to consider the methodology and how the survey information is used** as a public information tool. The subcommittee has gathered sharing from the fellowship regarding the AA membership survey pamphlet, and a final report will be reviewed at the July 2013 meeting.”

p. 45 final report: 63rd general service conference



April 24-30, 2022

(w/ meetings on 4/23)

“Does our A.A. membership reflect the population? **In past surveys, we have seen that the answer is no.** There are still millions who suffer from alcoholism who don’t know about A.A. or feel that A.A. is not a place for them. I think we are inclusive in our hearts and minds, but are we doing our best to find out all we can about these suffering alcoholics? We ask ourselves, if we were in their shoes, **how would we like to be approached?**”

Kathi F Pacific Region trustee **2022 GSC Keynote**

AA COMES OF AGE 2.0

NEW for the 2022 Survey

12. Have you attended an A.A. meeting virtually (online or by phone)? Do you prefer virtual meetings , in-person meetings or both equally?

13. What attributes do you prefer or need in meetings you attend?

- accessibility (such as no stairs, or served by public transit)
- held in a particular language (please list language)
- other members similar to me (please describe how)
- additional characteristics (please describe)

14. What is your age? ____ years

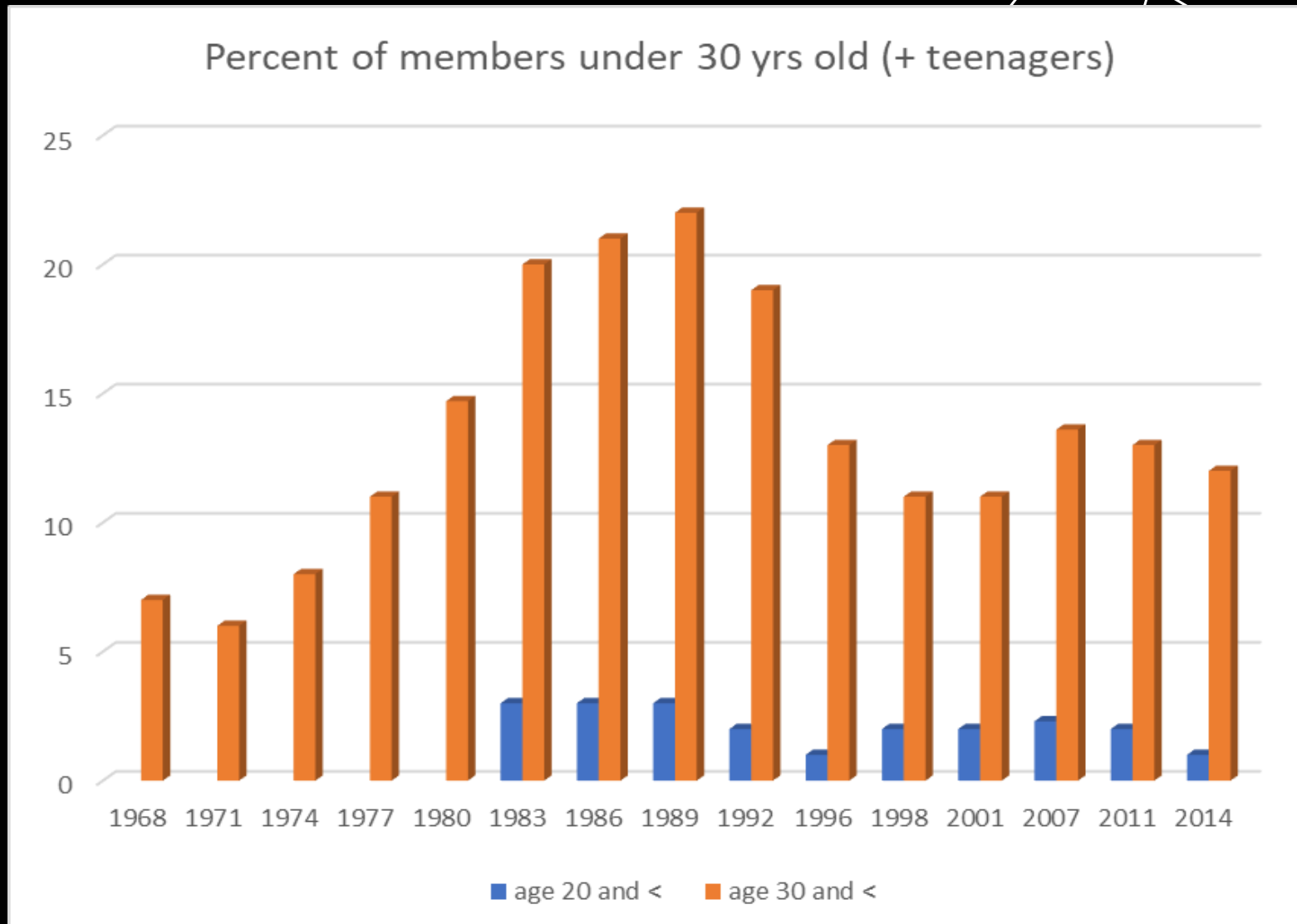
15. What best describes you: male, female, prefer to describe

16. Relationship status: Single, never married, married or life partner, divorced, separated, widowed, prefer to describe

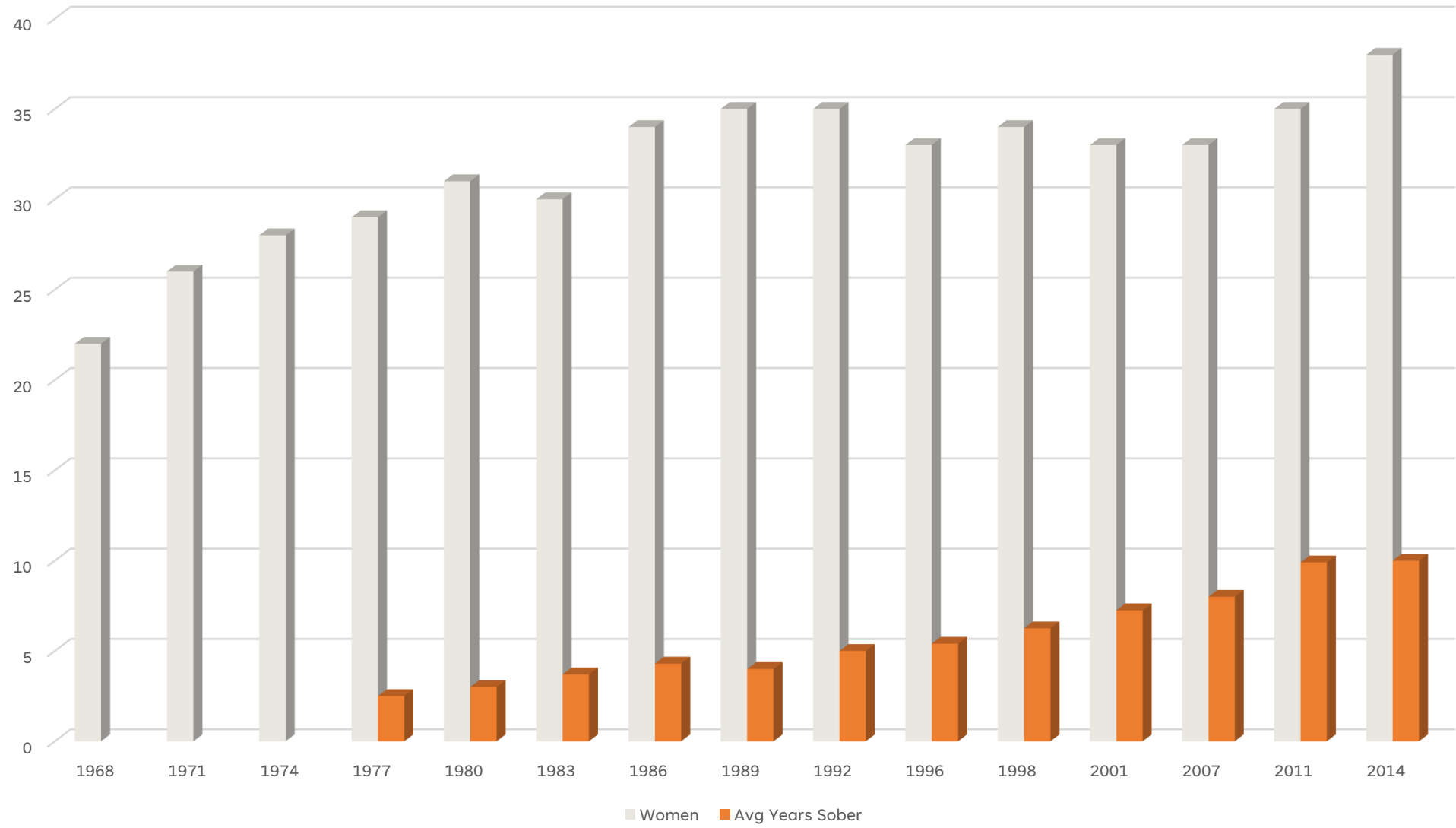
17. Racial and ethnic background (Check **all that apply**)

- Asian
- Black, or African American
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Native American, Alaska Native, First Nations, or Indigenous
- Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native
- White, Caucasian, or European American
- Prefer to describe _____

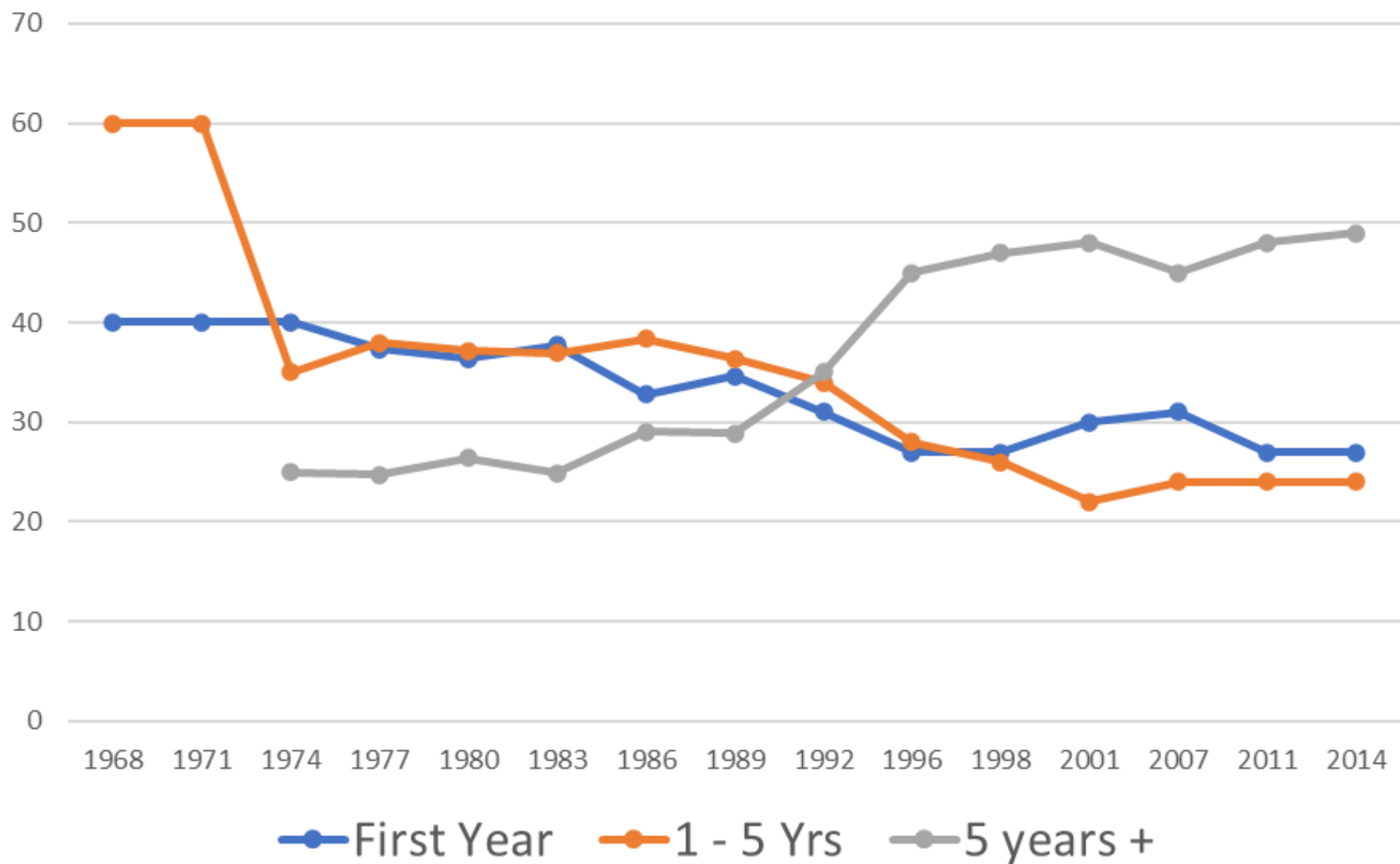
YOUTH IN AA, USA/CANADA



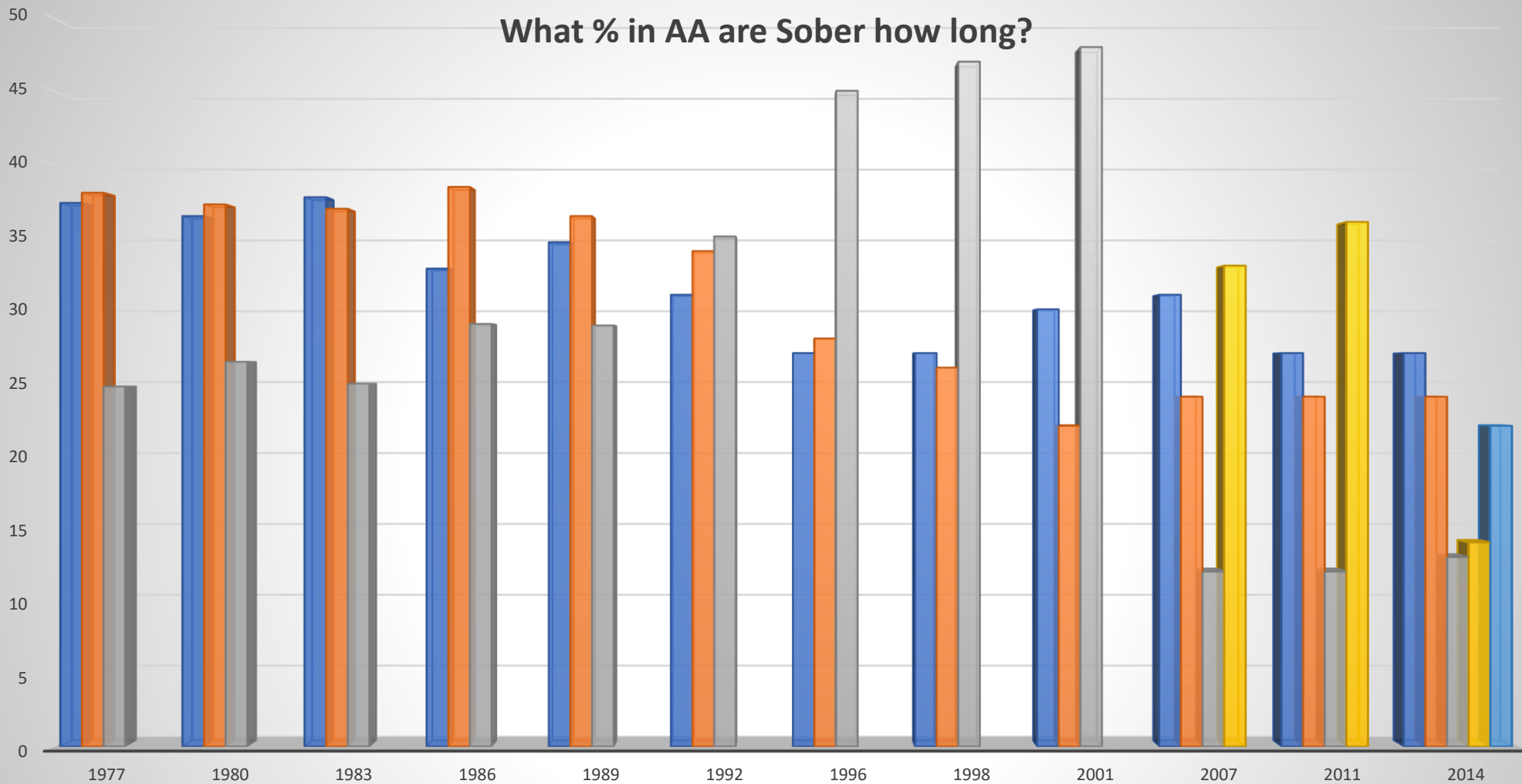
Gender, average years sober



less than 1 yr, 1 to 5, 5 yr + sober



What % in AA are Sober how long?



■ First Year

■ 1 to 5 yrs

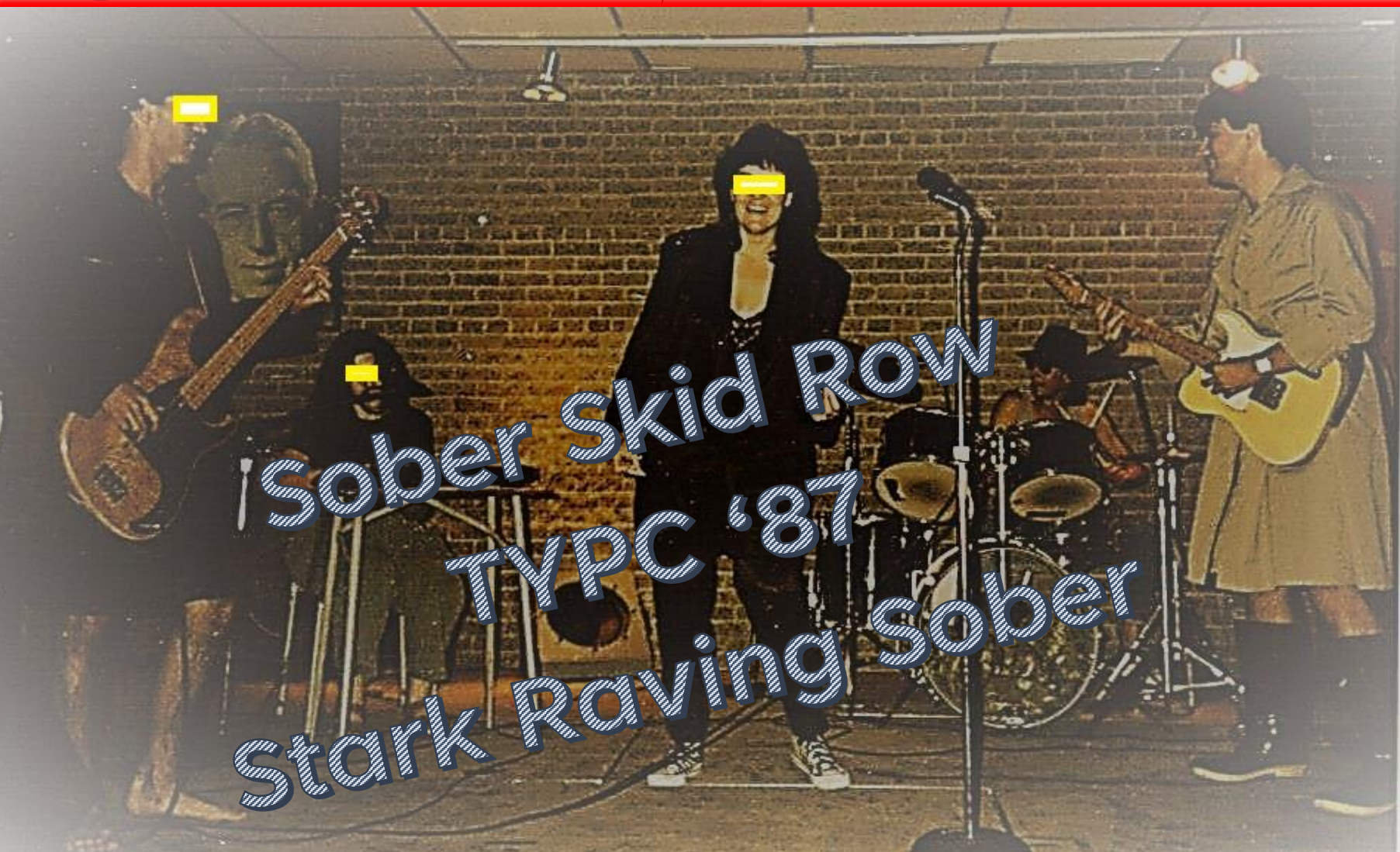
■ 5 years +

■ 10 Years+

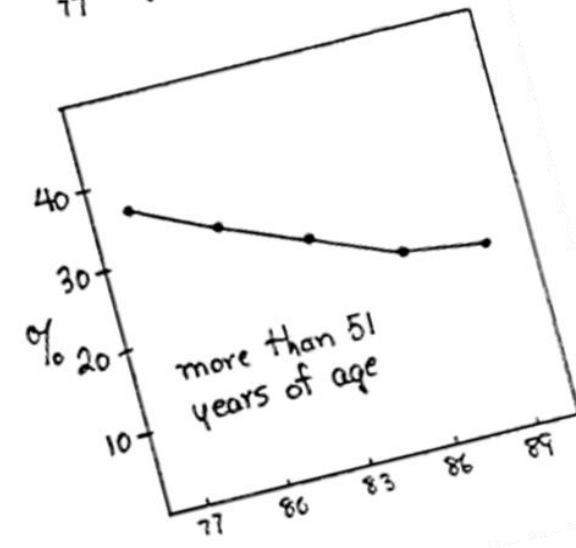
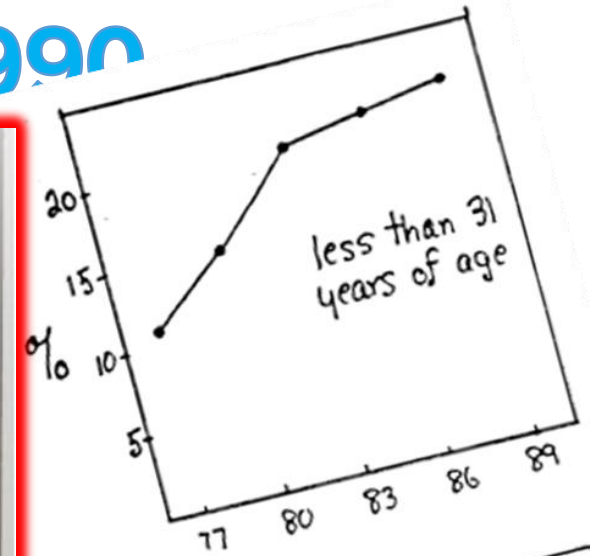
■ 20 Years+

The Kids R Alright

A growth: 500K in 1974 to 2 Mil in 1990



sober Skid Row
TYPC '87
Stark Raving Sober



PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL?

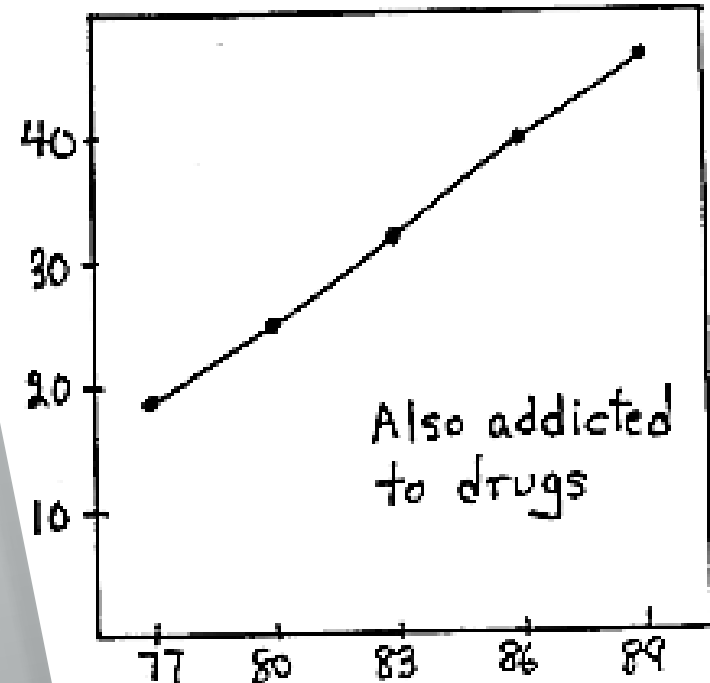
THIS IS AN OPEN MEETING OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are glad you are all here — especially newcomers. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states that “The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking,” we ask that all who participate confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol.

(The 1987 General Service Conference made this statement available as an A.A. service piece for those groups who wish to use it.)

25M - 11/19 (GP)

F-17



Past Year Substance Use Disorder (SUD): 2019

SAMHSA.gov

**14.5 Million People
with AUD
(71.1% of People
with SUD)**

AA's 2020 membership survey
**General Service
Conference**
- the Conscience
of AA GB

Great Britain membership survey, approximately every five years since 1972, to **carry the message to professionals and to inform members for future decision making**. We report...

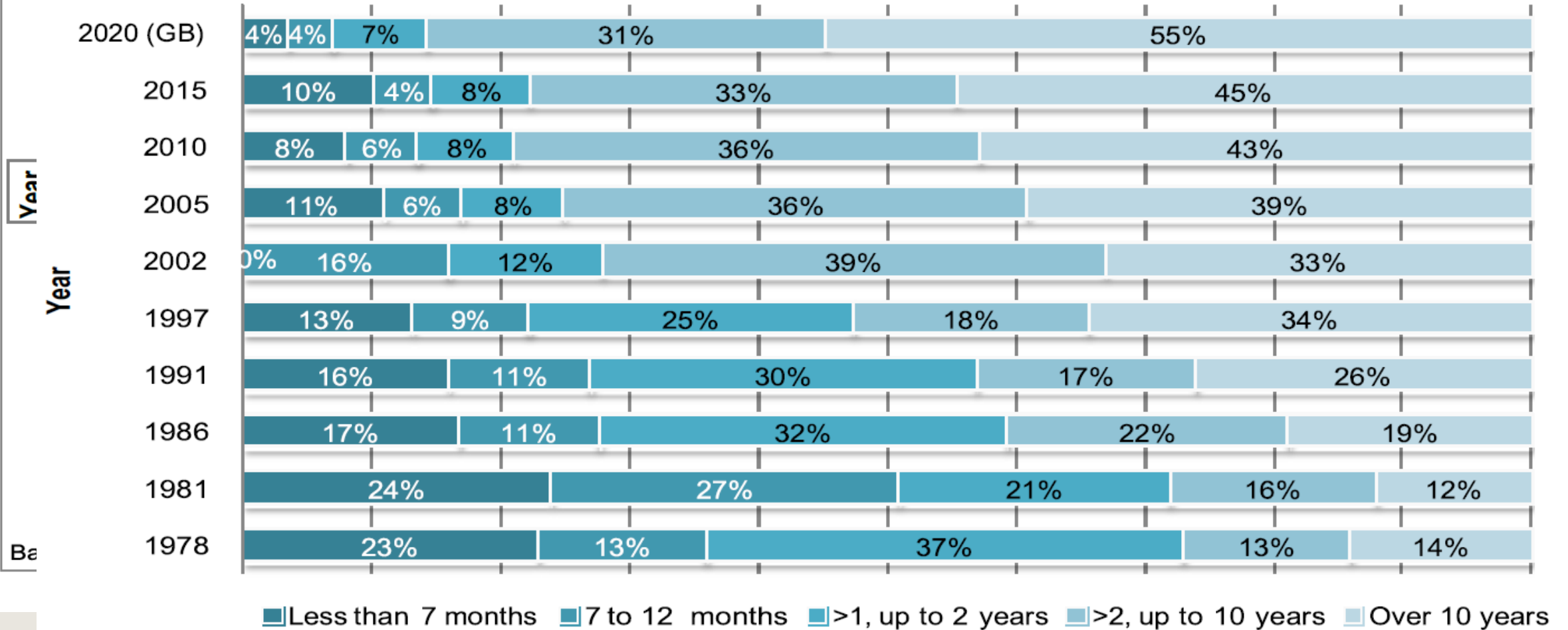
- demographics of the membership (age, gender);
- length of **membership of AA**
- **length of sobriety**
- frequency of attending AA group meetings
- how members first heard about AA

2020 questionnaire **asked new questions** including:

- + the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, online meetings, how well they are adapting
- + who believes in a higher power; is your concept of higher power religious or secular?

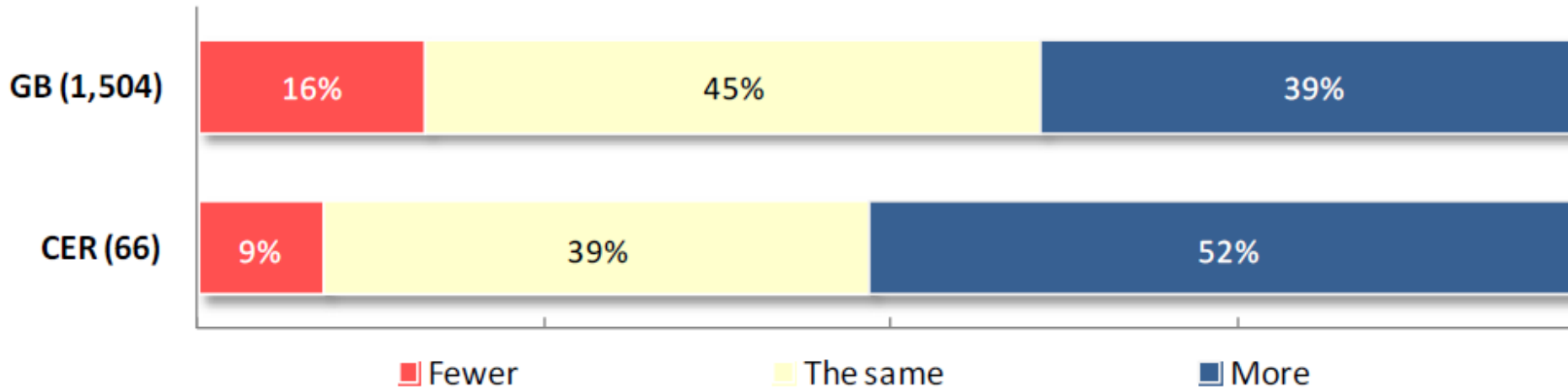
Q4. Length of sobriety - across 10 survey waves

Q5. Length of AA membership - across 10 survey waves



Q8b. Length of sobriety vs Q16 Frequency of attendance

Q6e Are you attending more AA meetings now that they are available online?



Base: All members who had changed to online meetings, and gave a valid response

- Members were also asked whether they were attending meetings in **other areas or countries**, whether or not they had changed their frequency of attendance. Most were doing so, 55% in GB and 80% in CER [it would be interesting to compare this in future with a similar question asked outside the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, to assess whether this is an unusually high proportion] .

Base: /

Q22 What is your ethnicity?

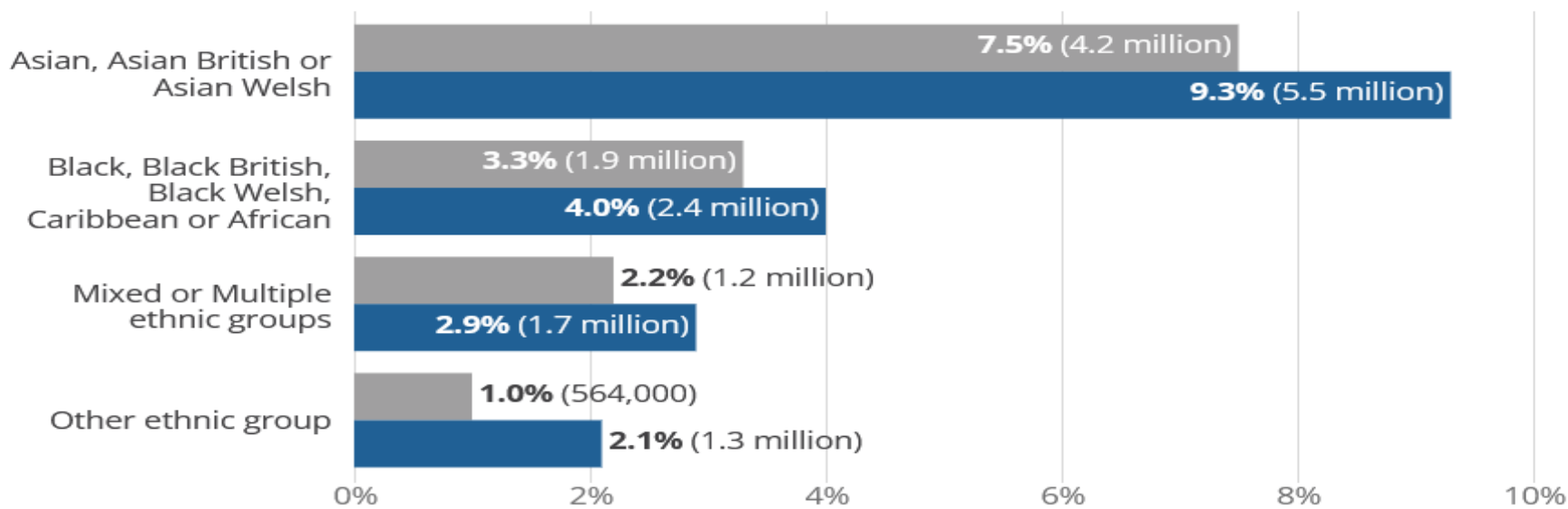
High-level ethnic groups in England and Wales

"White" remained the largest high-level ethnic group in England and Wales; 81.7% (48.7 million) of usual residents identified this way in 2021, a decrease from 86.0% (48.2 million) in 2011.

Figure 1: The percentage of the population in all high-level ethnic groups, excluding "White", has increased since 2011

Ethnic group distribution (high-level categories), 2011 and 2021, England and Wales

● 2011 ● 2021



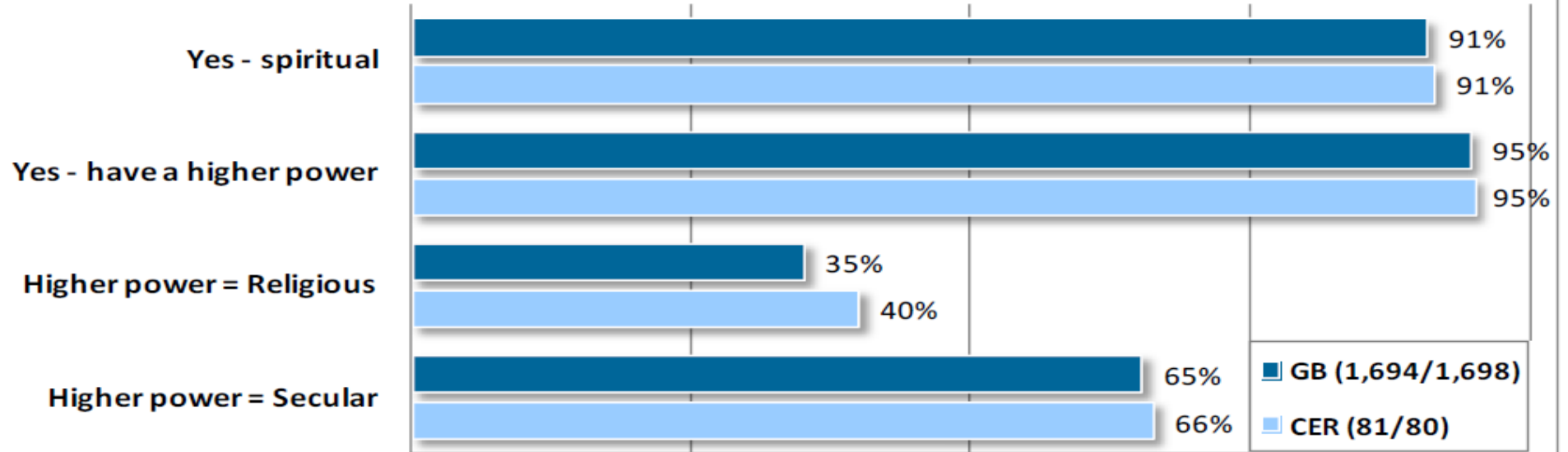
97%
98%

3 (1,672)
R (80)

more 'white'
the proportion

Chinese /Other
0.9%
0.5%
1.1%

**Q19 Are you spiritual?/ Q20a Do you have a higher power? /
Q20b What form does your higher power take?**

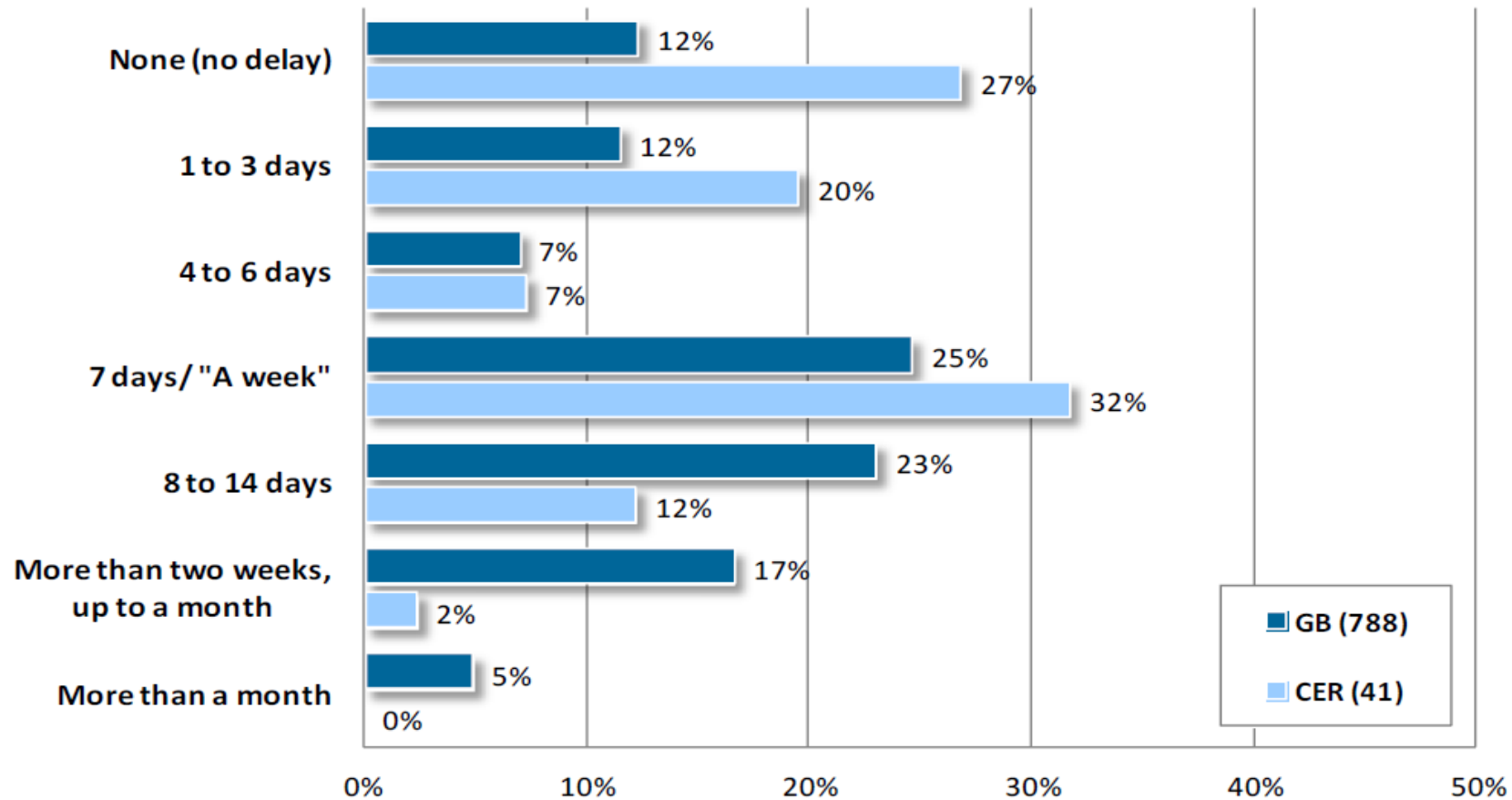


Base: All members who gave a valid response to Q19/Q20a

- There were no significant different differences between GB and CER in any of the results.
- Nine out of 10 members (91%) declared themselves **spiritual**.
 - This was significantly lower among those who had been sober for only up to 12 months (81%),but rose to 94% of those sober for >10 years. Similarly, while only 78% of those who first came to AA in the last 12 months declared themselves spiritual, this rose to 93% of those who first came to AA >10 years ago.
 - The same applied for Newcomers who had joined since the Covid-19 lockdown, only 77% of whom

2020 SURVEY: AA IN THE ERA OF COVID

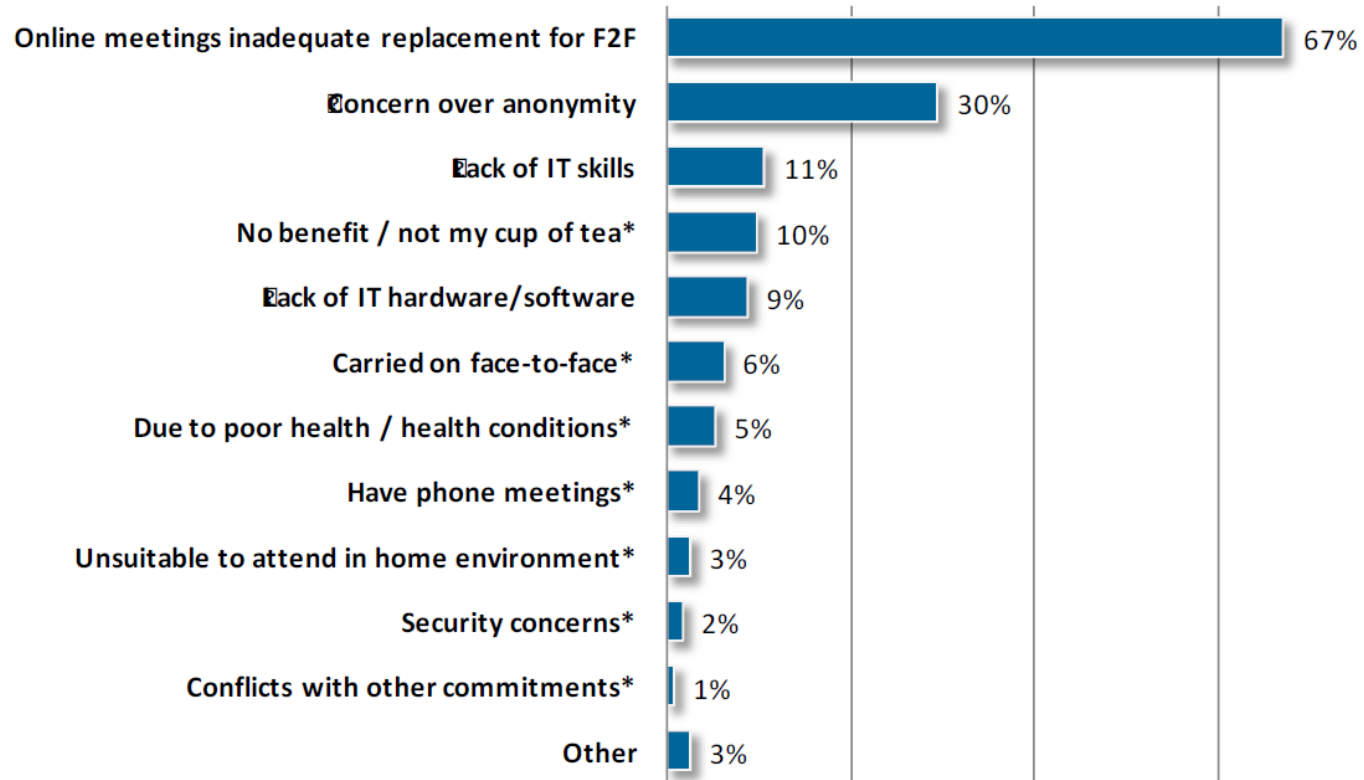
Q11a After the March 2020 lockdown, how quickly did your group set up a regular online meeting? (DAYS)



Base: All groups who set up an online meeting after lockdown and confirmed how long this took

2020 SURVEY: AA IN THE ERA OF COVID

Q6g Did you not change to online AA meetings due to:

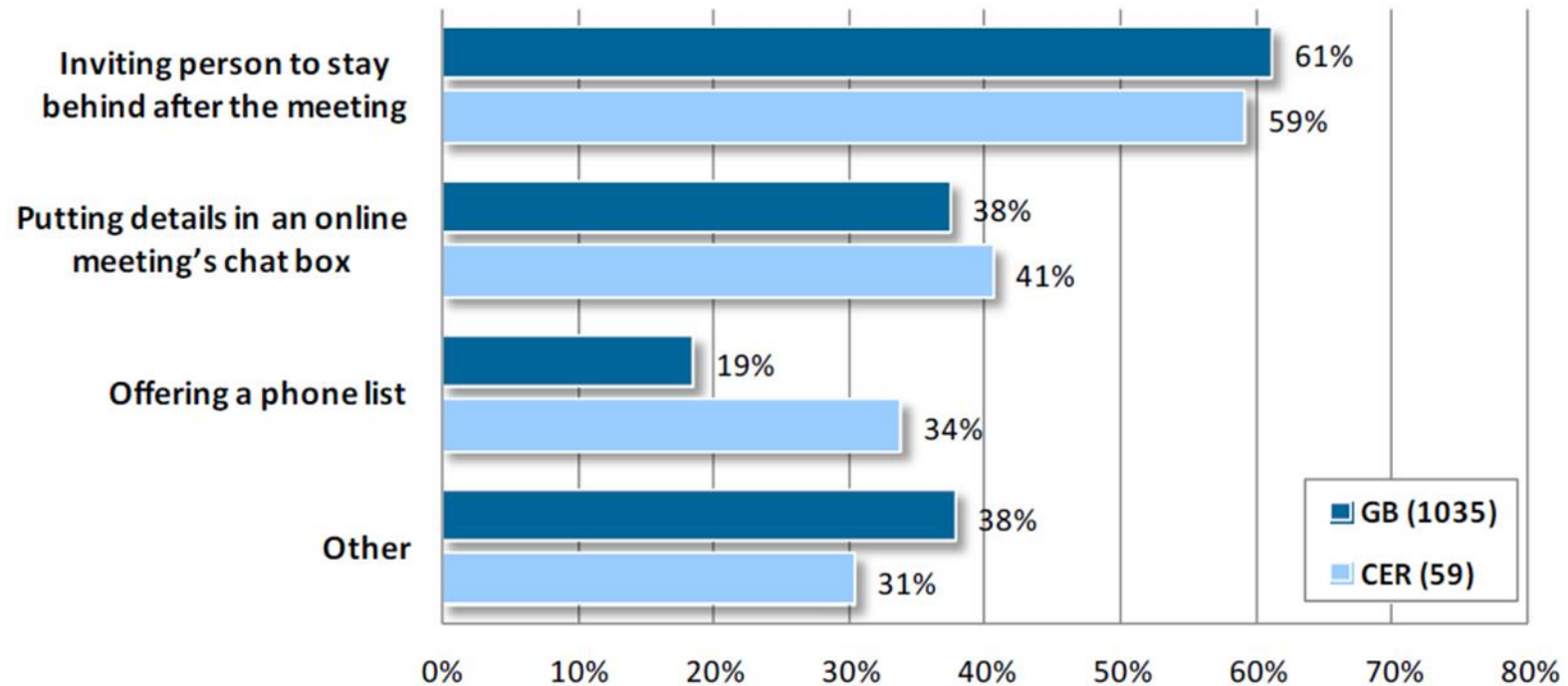


Base: All members who had not changed to online meetings, and gave a valid response (112 = 105 GB, 7CER)

2020 SURVEY: SERVICE IN AA

Q14 Overall in the past month, how much did helping other alcoholics help you to not drink?

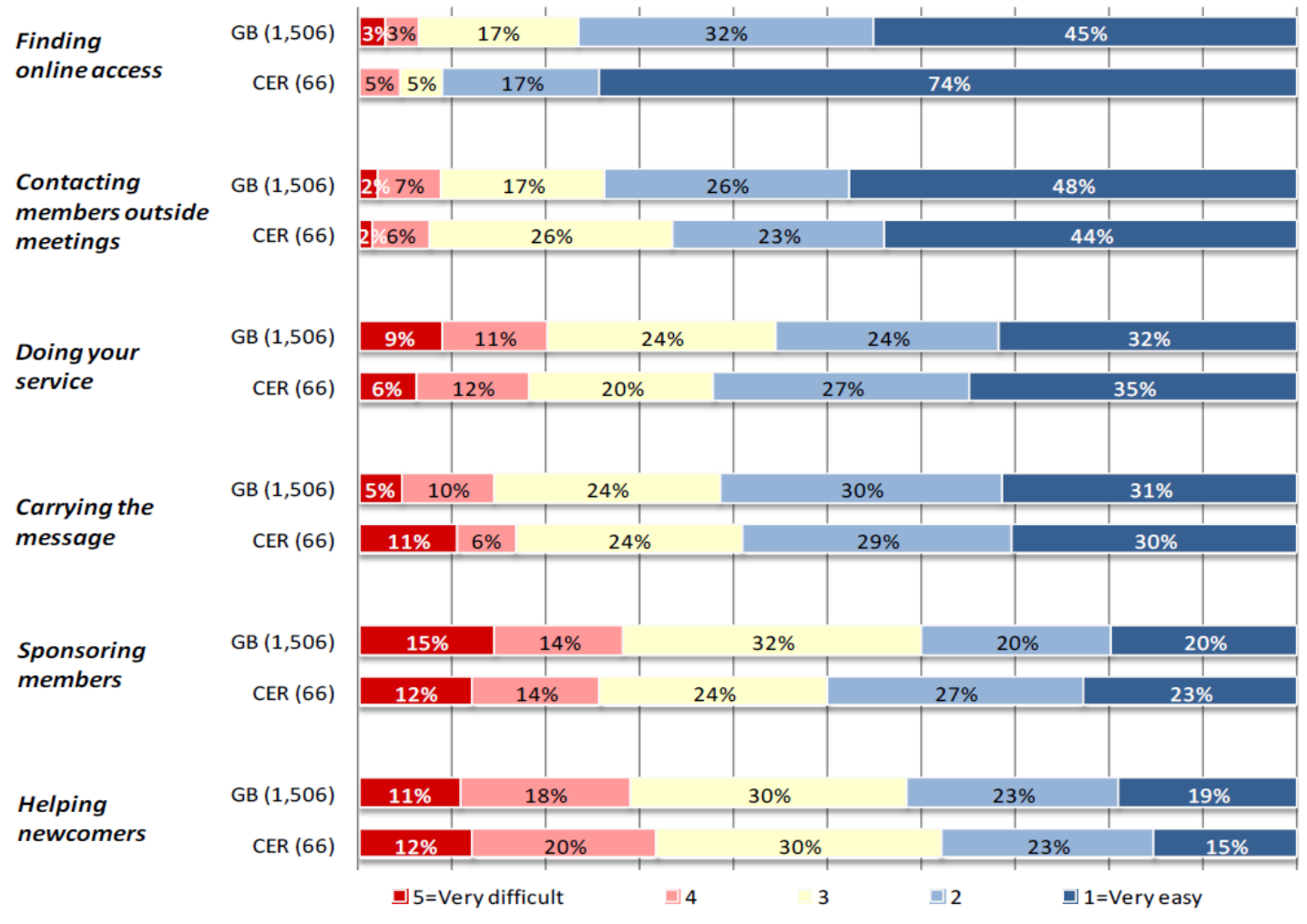
Q13d How does your group help people find a sponsor in the absence of face to face meetings?



Base: All groups

2020 SURVEY: SERVICE IN AA

Q6c How easy or difficult did you find it to adapt to the changes of online meeting formats?



GOING FORWARD

What else should we be asking members?

Should USA/Canada ask about “**spirituality**”
and “**higher power**”?

How can we alter or improve how we do AA?

“When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.”

ON OUR MINDS IN 2017 THAT'S SO FIVE YEARS AGO ???

2017 67th GSC Final Report

2017 Membership Survey—In July [2016] a subcommittee was appointed to review the timing and process of conducting the AA Membership survey and to review the Membership Survey Questionnaire and discussed three request to add to the survey:

- ⇒ A suggestion to add a question(s) regarding the belief or non-belief of the member in a “Higher Power.”
- ⇒ A suggestion to add a question(s) to determine the member’s participation in ‘service beyond the home group.’
- ⇒ A suggestion from the trustees’ 2014 Membership Survey subcommittee to consider asking the primary language of the members filling out the questionnaire.

After extensive discussion, the committee took no action on these requests, noting the subjective nature of the ‘Higher Power’ and service beyond the home group’ questions and determining that requesting ‘primary language’ information was beyond the historical scope of the Survey. The committee also agreed to table to a subsequent meeting a request from Area 79, British Columbia/Yukon, to consider changing the gender question on the AA Membership survey to allow for a better reflection of the diversity of our membership.

The committee agreed to forward the final report to the 2017 Conference Public Information committee, who took no action on the subcommittee’s recommendation that an AA Membership Survey be conducted in 2017.”

Sources, notes and resources (AA only)

Mani Mehdikhani 2020 Membership Survey presentation to GB GSO 2021 <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/2020-Survey>

72nd General Service Conference Final Report <https://www.aa87.org/en/general-service-conference-of-alcoholics-anonymous-final-report/>

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Recovery Outcome Rates: Contemporary Myths and Misinterpretation,
Arthur S, Tom E, Glenn C

AA Membership Survey (2014) <https://www.aa.org/alcoholics-anonymous-2014-membership-survey>

2020 Membership Survey Report by Marketing Means March 2021 v1.0

Box 4-5-9 GSO News and Notes: <https://www.aa.org/box-459>

One on one with non-alcoholic trustee Mani Mendikhani Great Britain General Service Board on Rebellion Dogs Radio Episode 70 <https://rebelliondogspublishing.com/rebellious-radio>



THANK YOU

Joe C

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