

EXAMINING THE UTILIZATION AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF AN ONLINE HARM REDUCTION, ABSTINENCE, AND MODERATION FOCUSED SUPPORT GROUP FOR ALCOHOL

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& ADDICTIONS

INTRODUCTION

- Online support groups for substance use disorders are commonly used yet little is known about user engagement and utilization (Schwebel & Orban, 2022)
- Preliminary research has examined the utilization and perceived benefits of an abstinence-focused online social network (Bergman et al., 2017)
- HAMS (Harm reduction, Abstinence, and Moderation Support for alcohol) is an online support group for individuals with broad personal alcohol use goals (e.g., harm reduction, abstinence, or moderation)
- This study sought to examine participant characteristics, engagement, and perceived benefits of HAMS

METHODS/DATA

- HAMS members ($N = 343$) were invited to complete an online survey about their HAMS engagement and utilization
- Recruitment posts were made on the HAMS forum, email listserv, and HAMS Facebook groups
- This study examined the results from individuals who reported alcohol as their primary substance used ($n = 315$)
- **HAMS participation** and **engagement** were assessed using modified versions of ordinal scales created by Bergman (2017) to assess the frequency of HAMS visits, daily time spent on HAMS, and engagement with HAMS support tools from a list
- Four items assessing **perceived benefits** of HAMS on changing substance use, craving, substance use behavior change self-efficacy, and motivation to change were also assessed (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*)

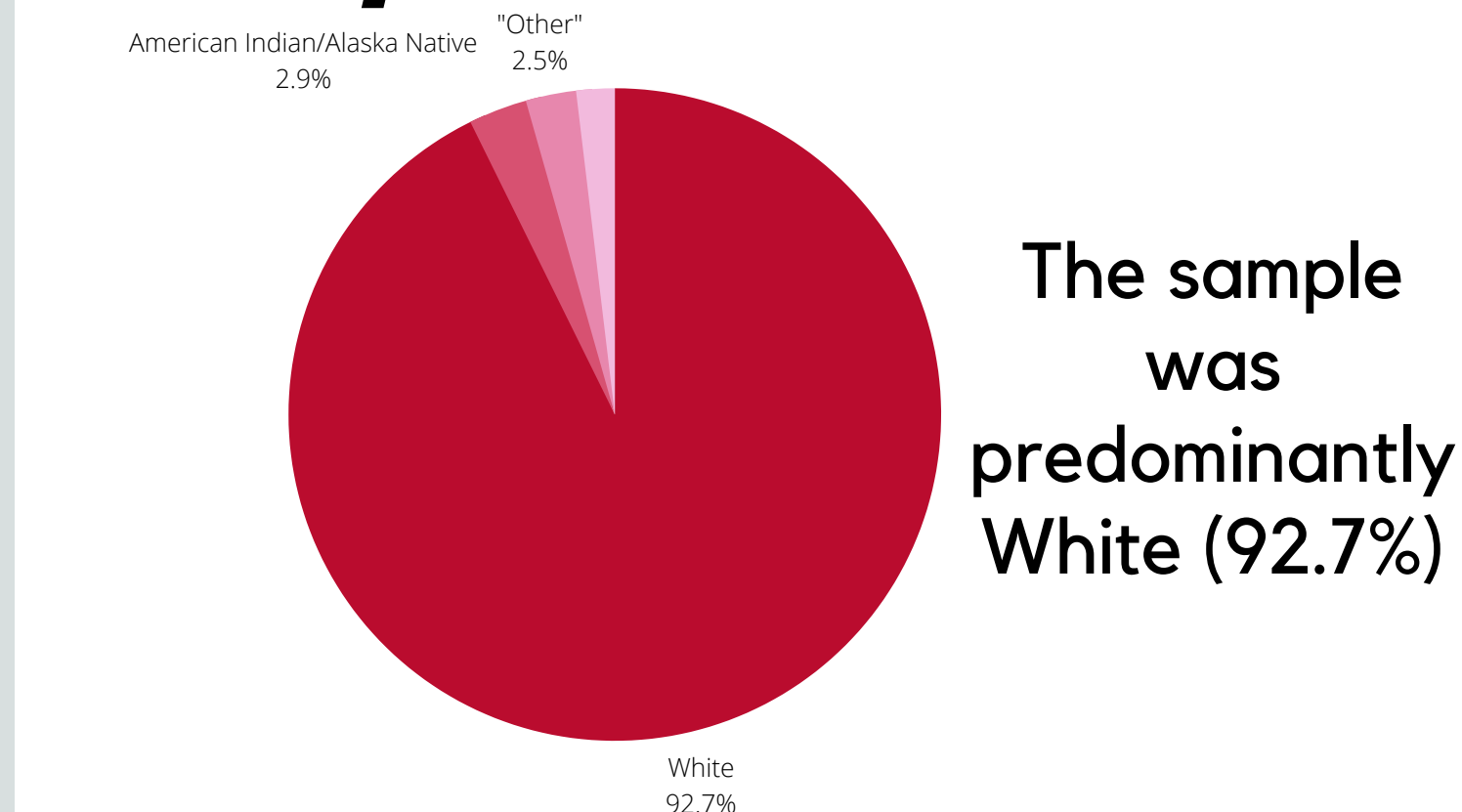
RESULTS

AVERAGE AGE
41.70 (SD = 12.6)

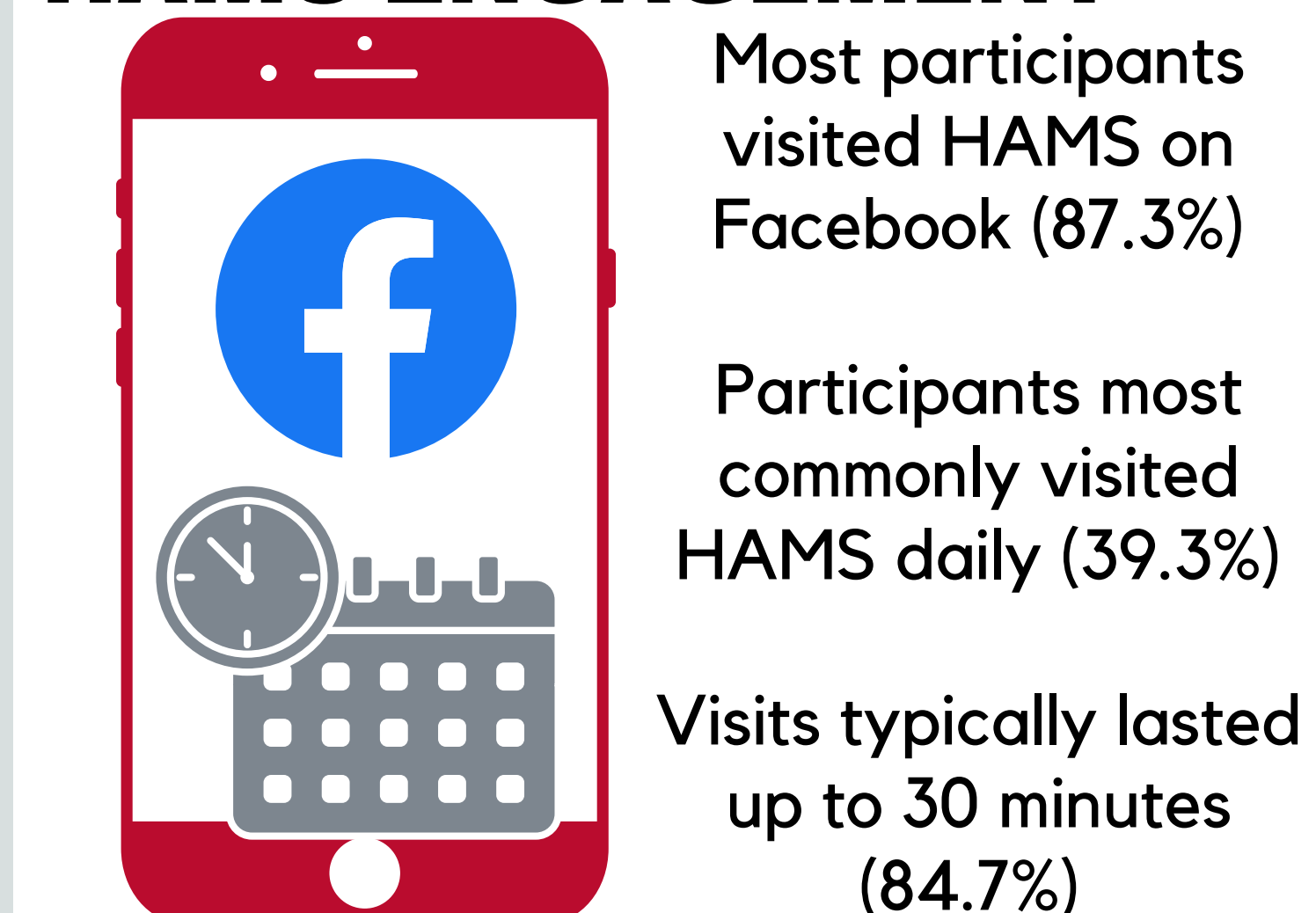
SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH



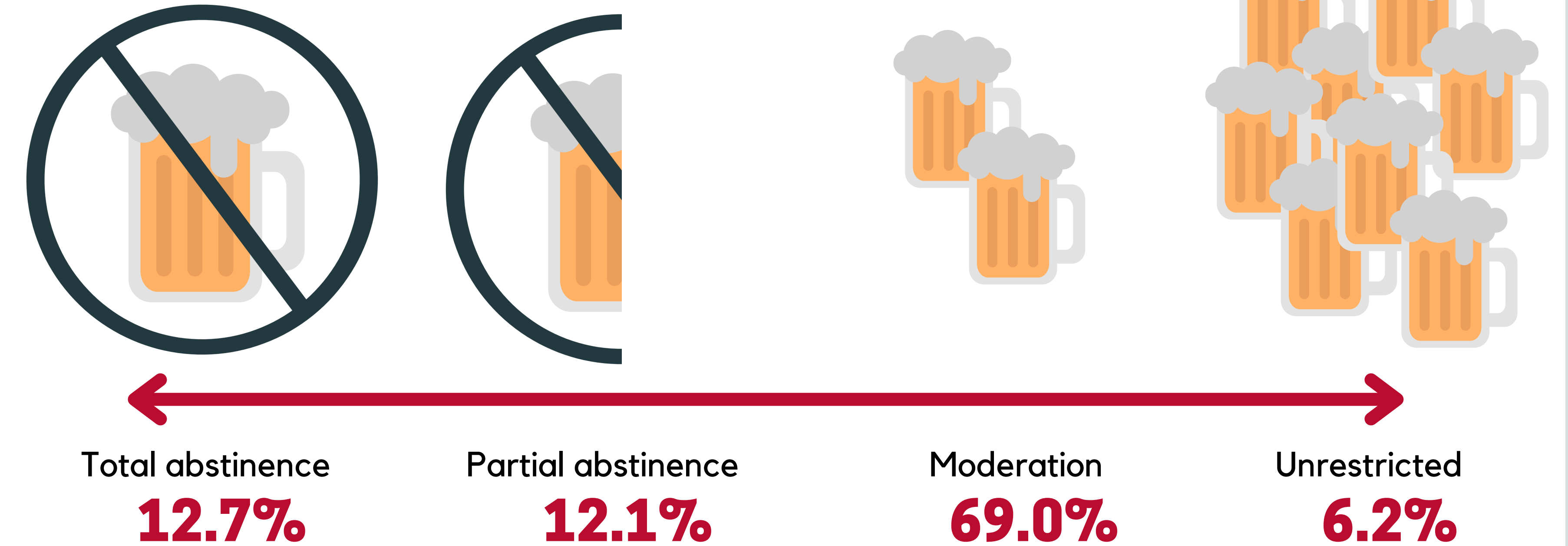
RACE/ETHNICITY



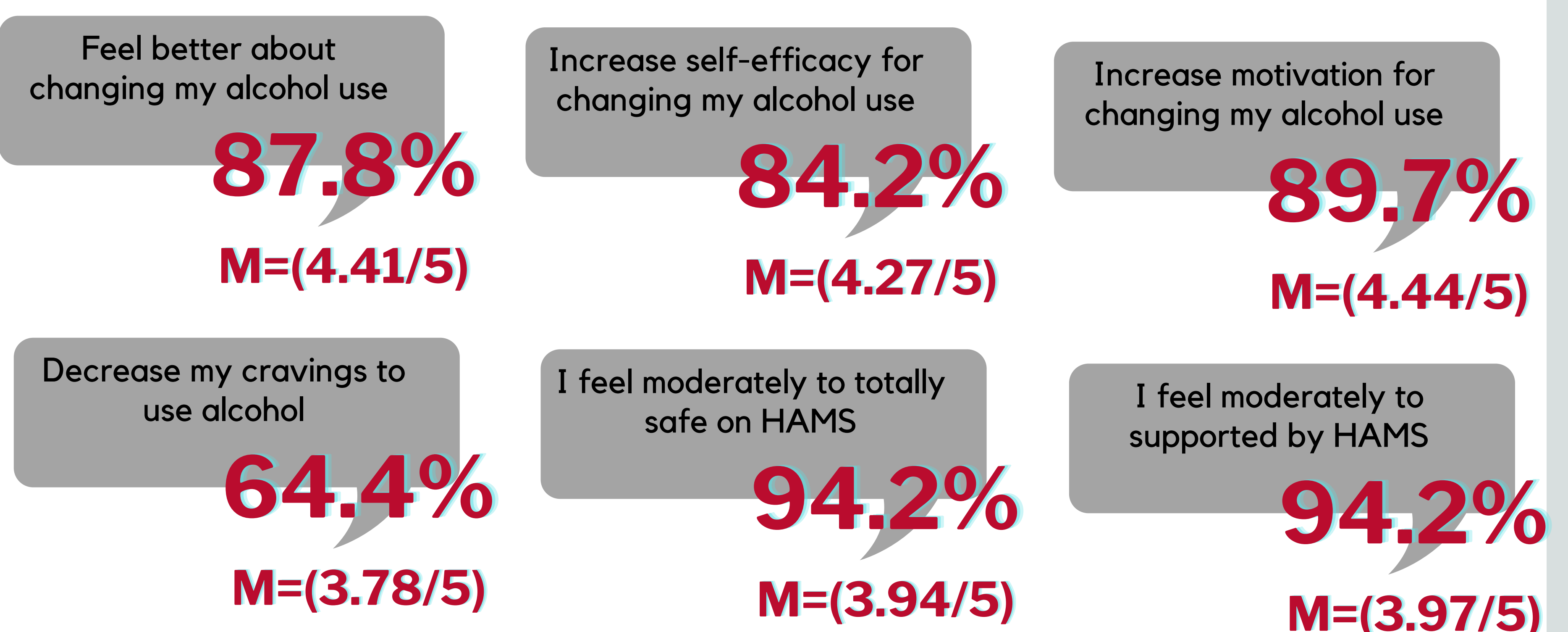
HAMS ENGAGEMENT



TREATMENT GOALS



HAMS HELPS ME...



CONCLUSIONS

- Participants engaged frequently with HAMS and most participants felt HAMS was a safe and supportive space to obtain support
- HAMS appeared to help individuals feel better about changing their alcohol use and increase their motivation and self-efficacy to do so
- However, HAMS did not appear to help participants deal with cravings
- Most participants were female, this may suggest online treatment/support is more accessible for women who typically have greater limitations on their free time (e.g., working the "second shift")
- HAMS might be an effective tool for individuals with broad alcohol use goals and for individuals with limited access to care or facing a long waitlist

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