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# Informing Youth Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion through Secondary Analysis of the Planet Youth datasets – *Inform-YSP*

*Dr Bernadine Brady*  
*HRB SDAP seminar*  
*March 26<sup>th</sup> 2025*



University  
ofGalway.ie



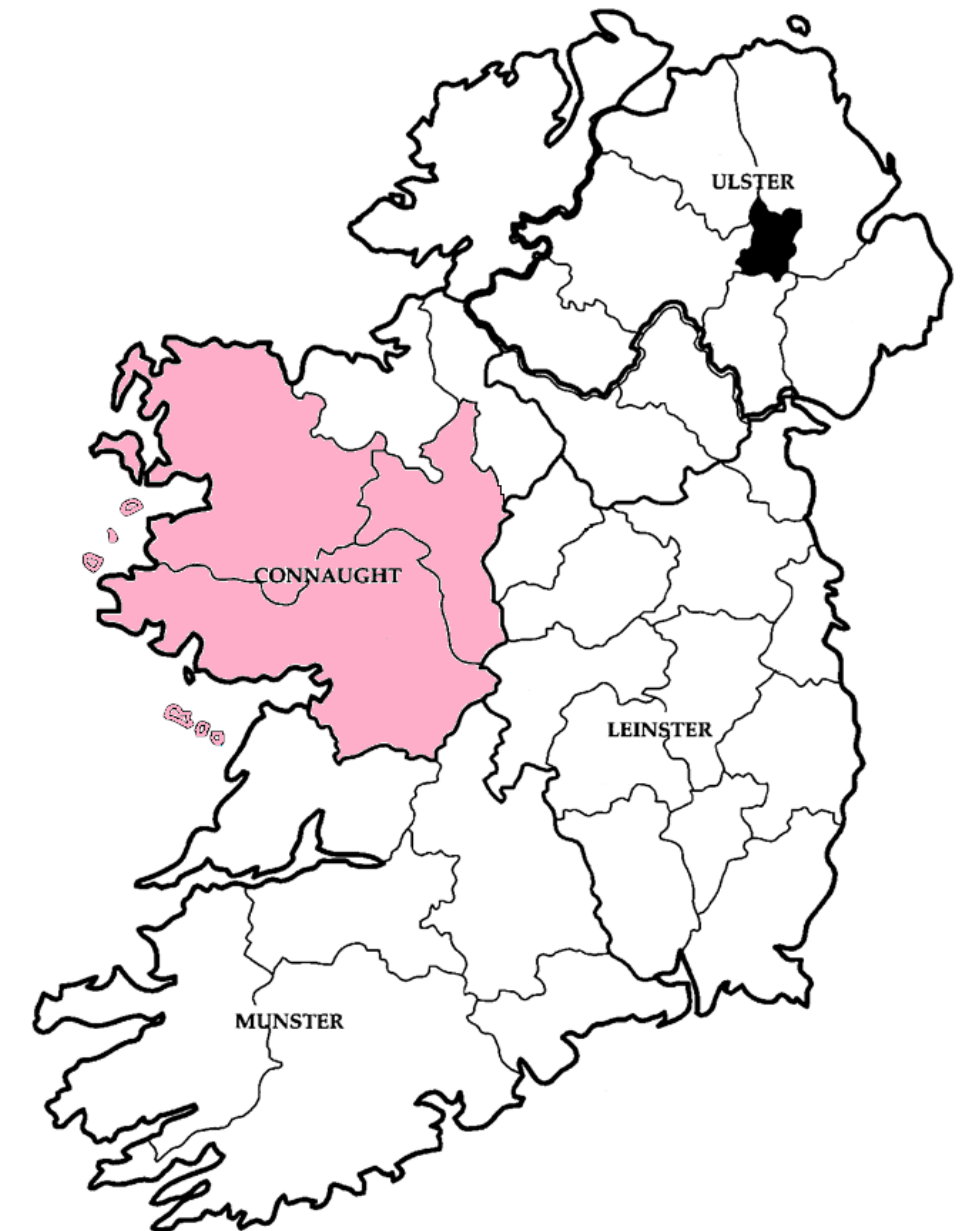
# Our Dataset



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**Planet Youth conducts in-depth surveys with young people to understand risk & protective factors and inform preventative interventions**

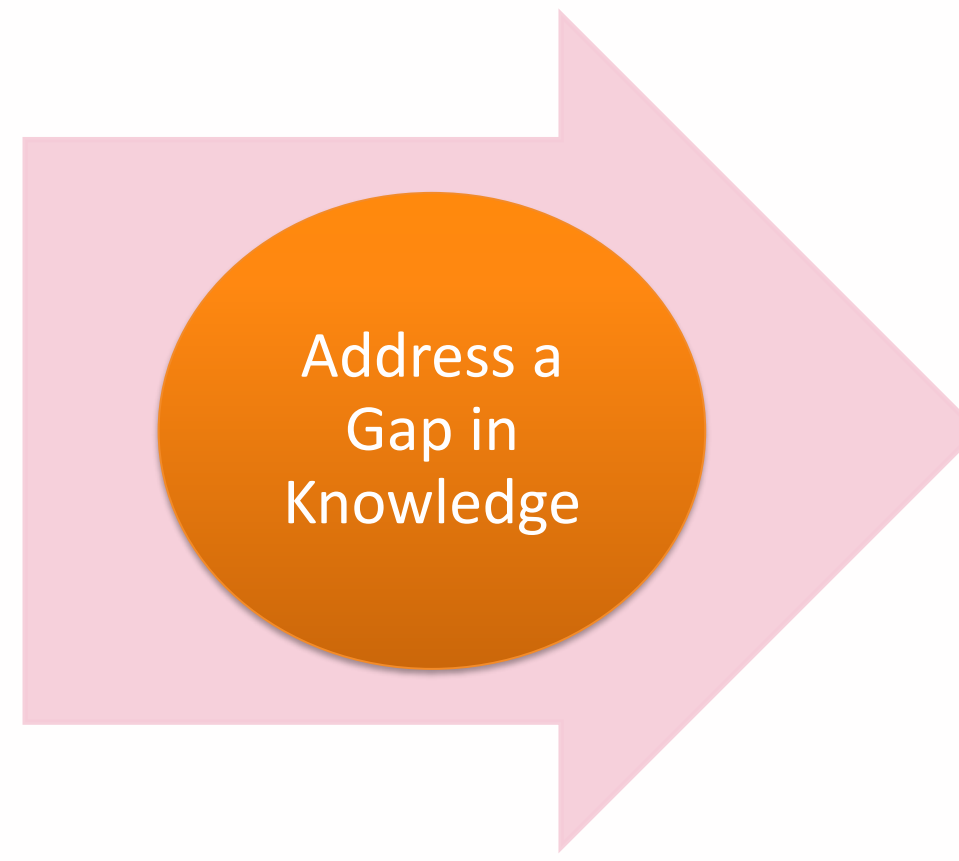
- ❑ *Non-clinical sample of adolescents*
- ❑ *Bi-annual surveys: 2018, 2020 and 2022 (and now 2024)*
- ❑ *Measures – demographics, wellbeing, behaviour, experiences, adversity*
- ❑ *100% response rate from schools*
- ❑ *15,129 secondary school students completed the 2018, 2020 or 2022 Planet Youth surveys*





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# HRB SDAP 2021 requirements



# Research Focus: Youth Mental Health & Self-harm



Policy Need: Identifying youth most at-risk of experiencing suicidality and self-harm is a key policy objective (World Health Organisation, 2021).

HSE/NOSP *Connecting For Life* national strategy:

- To design effective supports, high quality research is needed to better understand suicidal behaviour, mental wellbeing, and associated risk and protective factors in Ireland.
- Youth a priority group.



Connecting for Life

## Research Gaps:

How do patterns of adversity impact youth self-harm and suicidality?  
(Gobel & Cohdres, 2021).

Need for evidence of wellbeing trends before, during and after Covid-19 pandemic.

Ireland's National Strategy  
to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020



National Office for  
Suicide Prevention



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# Project Partners



National Office for  
Suicide Prevention  
(NOSP)



HSE CHO Area 2



# Project Structure

**PI's:** Dr Bernadine Brady, Dr Caroline Heary

**Post-Doctoral Researcher:** Dr Charlotte Silke

**Project Steering Group:** All partners – met quarterly

- Knowledge translation sub-group
- Research sub-group

**Youth Advisory Panel:** 8 members, 6 meetings over two years



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# Research Aims



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## 1. Prevalence Rates

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Examine youth self-harm & mental health



## 2. Trends & Demographics

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Identify trends over time and across key demographics



## 3. Adversity Related Risk

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Understand the link between youth adversity & mental health



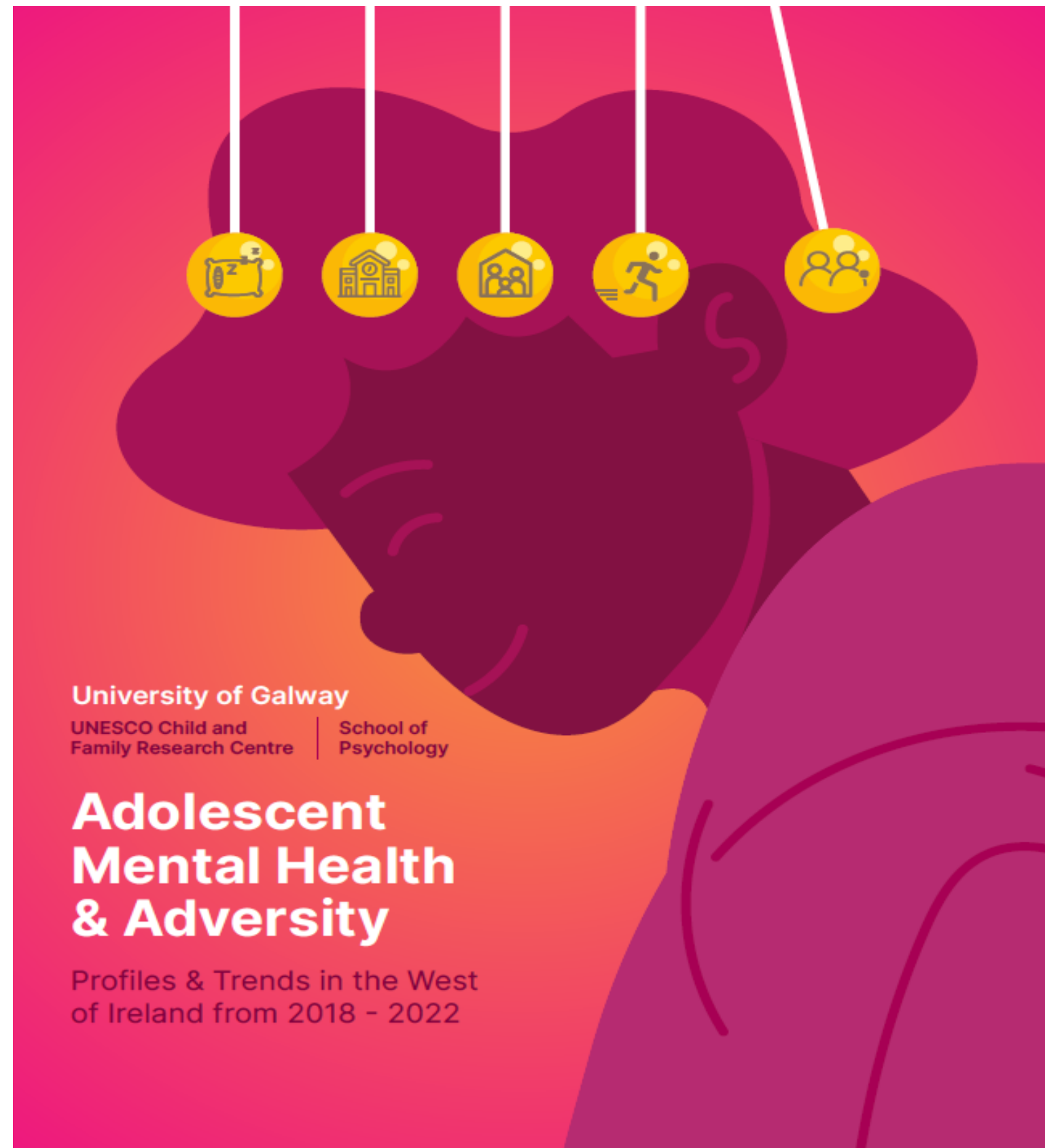
## 4. Protective Factors

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Determine whether social supports & health behaviours act as protective factors



# Key Findings



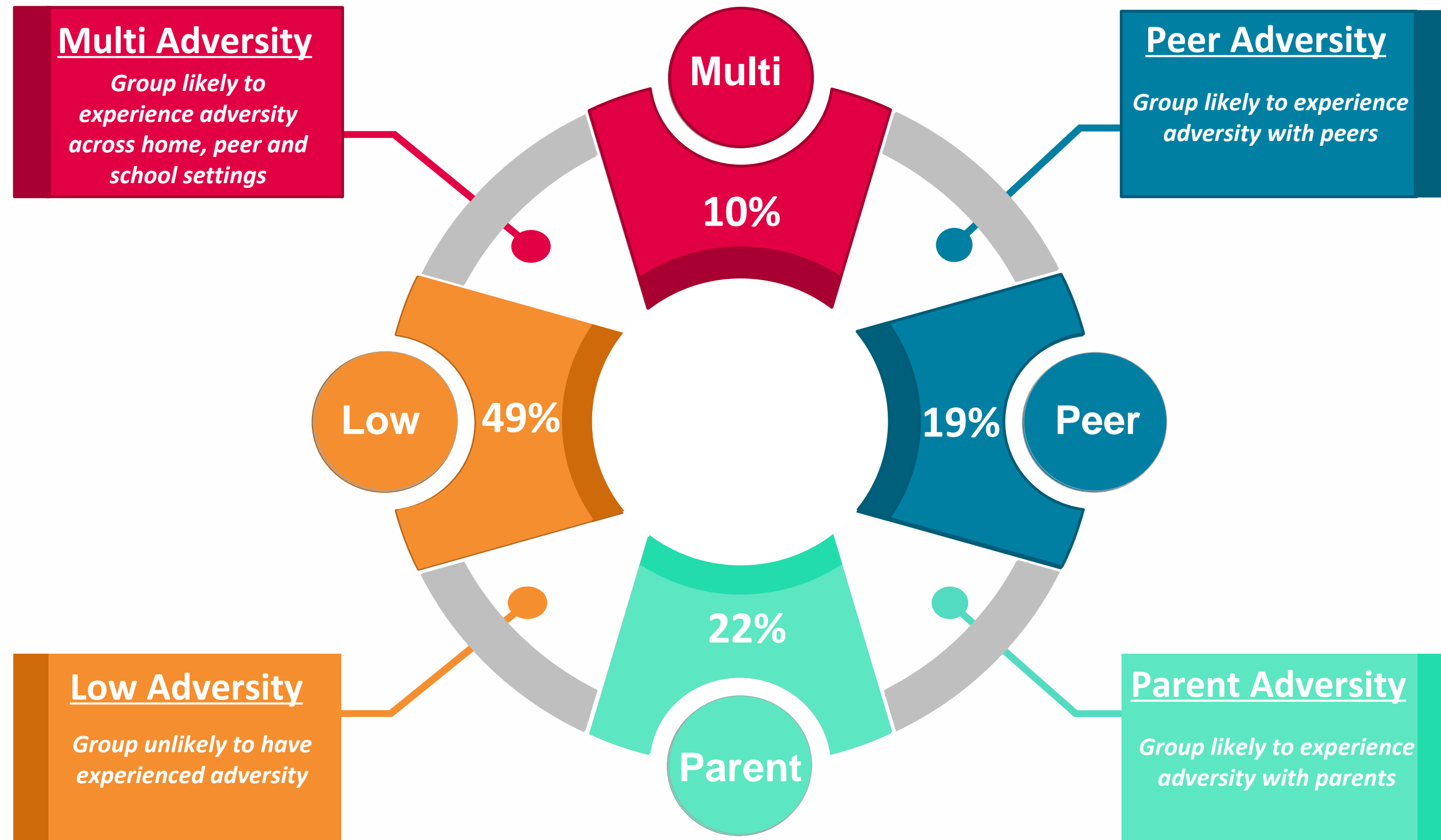
- Declines in youth mental health outcomes over time were evident.
- Four dominant patterns of adversity were identified.
- Youth who experience adversity are at greater risk of experiencing poor outcomes.
- Protective factors operate at both the community and individual level.



# Patterns of Adversity



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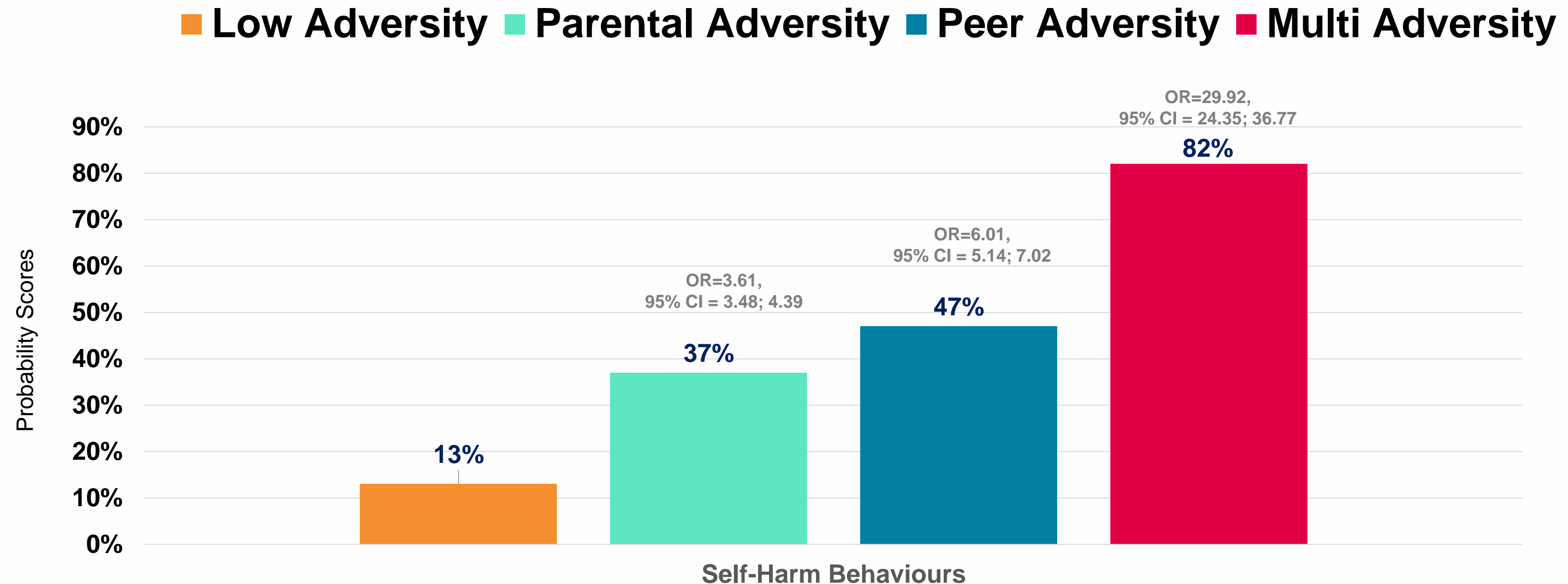


Clustered, multi-group LCA with BCH training weights, identified a 4-class solution as the best fitting model. Average latent class probabilities ranged from .76-.90

# Adversity groups and self-harm



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There were significant differences in self-harm behaviours between the four adversity groups.

# Outputs & dissemination



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Academic: 4 peer reviewed journal articles (2 published, 2 under review)  
5 academic conference presentations

Summary Report and Infographic

One day seminar entitled *'Broadening the Debate: Understanding the Social Context of Youth Mental Health'* – attended by 150 people

Local & national media coverage

Presented findings to more than 100 policy / practice / research stakeholders via:

- HSE Connecting for Life (CFL) NGO partners & Expert Advisory Group
- NSRF/ NOSP staff meeting

# Academic & policy impact of the project

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Addressed the need for **timely research** examining mental health functioning and behaviours among community-based samples of adolescents over time.

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Provided new insights about the patterns of adversity youth experience across various social contexts (e.g., at home or with peers) and about the **relationship between adversity and youth mental health** in an Irish context.

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Helped to advance understanding of **how adversity is defined and measured**, broadening the focus from individual contexts to include family, community and school influences.

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Identified **personal health behaviours and community/relational supports** that are linked to lower risk of self-harm and better mental health functioning.





# What worked well...

- Dedicated funding for full-time excellent Researcher
- Youth Advisory Panel – brought valuable insights and energy, contributed to KT activities
- Having policy partners, data controllers, academic disciplines as part of steering group
- HRB reporting requirements were not burdensome
- Institutional support – with data management plan, funding, event management, etc.



# Key challenges

## Secondary data:

- Coverage of measures
- Publishing cross-sectional data in higher ranking journals

## Knowledge translation:

- Timing and format of outputs
- Personnel changes among partners

## Impact:

- Balancing academic rigour with policy needs / real world impact
- Maintaining momentum after project ends





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National Office for  
Suicide Prevention



National Suicide  
Research Foundation





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Further Information:

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/cfrc/projects/currentprojects/inform-ysp/>

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