

**A needs assessment  
to inform the development of  
a behavioral health careers program  
for minority high school students**

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SUNY Downstate Medical Center  
American Public Health Association Meeting  
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# Learning Objectives

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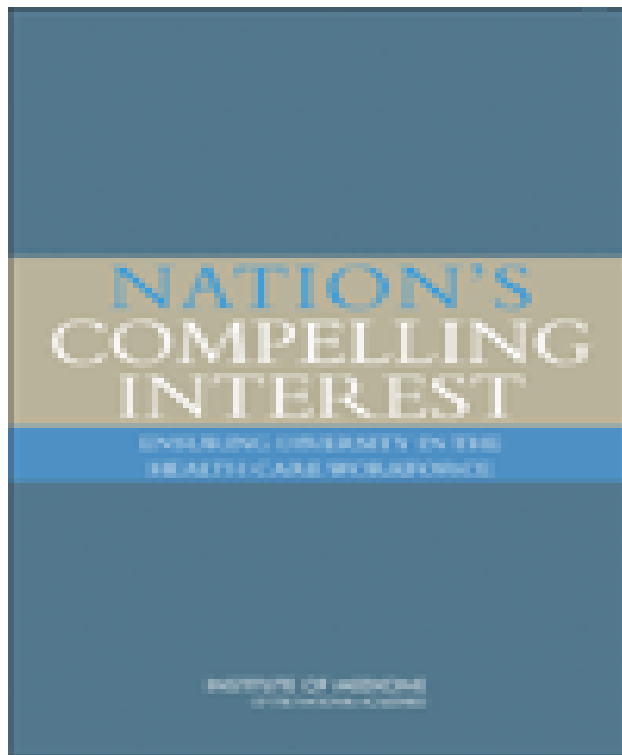
- Participants attending this presentation will:
  - Gain knowledge about current efforts implemented to address the shortage of ethnic minorities in the public health workforce.
  - Learn about factors that are important for assisting ethnic minority youth in pursuing behavioral health research careers.

# Health Disparities

## *Communities of Color are Disproportionately Affected*



# Culturally Competent Health Researchers



- **Racial and ethnic minority health researchers are more likely to conduct studies with minority communities,**
- **Racial and ethnic minority health researchers can help identify cultural factors associated with health disparities**

# Racial and Ethnic Minority Population

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<b>US Population</b>	<b>25.3%</b>
Nursing	7.4%
Medicine	6.1%
Dentistry	6.8%
Psychology	6.9%

□ IOM, 2004

# Understanding Behavior is Important

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**In 2000, six of the ten leading causes of death for all age groups in this country were behaviorally based:**

- Cardiovascular Disease
- HIV/AIDS
- Substance Abuse
- Obesity
- Violence
- Tobacco Use

# Pipeline Programs for Minority Students

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- Successful pipeline programs across the country
  - STEP initiative (Science & Technology Entry Prep)
  - NIH diversity supplement program
- Majority focus on basic science and biomedical careers

# Project SMART

(Supporting Minority Adolescent Research Training)

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## ■ OBJECTIVE

- To conduct a needs assessment to determine interest in behavioral health research careers and identify curriculum ideas for a program designed to expose racial and ethnic minority high school students to careers in behavioral health research.



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## ■ Phase One:

Interviewed health careers pipeline programs targeting high school students

- Identified program goals
- Examined program content
- Explored lessons learned

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- Phase Two:

Conducted survey of high school students attending a health careers pipeline program

- Identified career exposure experiences
- Examined knowledge about behavioral health research careers
- Determined interest in a curriculum focused on behavioral health research careers

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- Phase One
  - Interviews with current pipeline programs
    - N=10
    - Target Population
      - Ages 14-18 years
      - High school sophomores and above
      - Low income and/or minority students
    - Application Process
      - Students complete an application package
      - Academic records
      - Recommendations
      - Interviews with applicants (phone or in person)
    - Goal of programs
      - Prepare students to matriculate and succeed in college
      - Encourage students to pursue health careers (biomedical focus)

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## ■ Phase One

Interviews with current pipeline programs

### ■ Topics covered

- Anatomy
- Physiology
- Chemistry
- Life Science
- Writing
- SAT prep
- Oral Communication skills

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- Phase One

Interviews with current pipeline programs

- **Current programs do not focus on behavioral health research careers**

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- Phase Two

- Survey with current pipeline students

- New student orientation at a pipeline program for ethnic minority and low income high schools students

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## ■ Phase Two

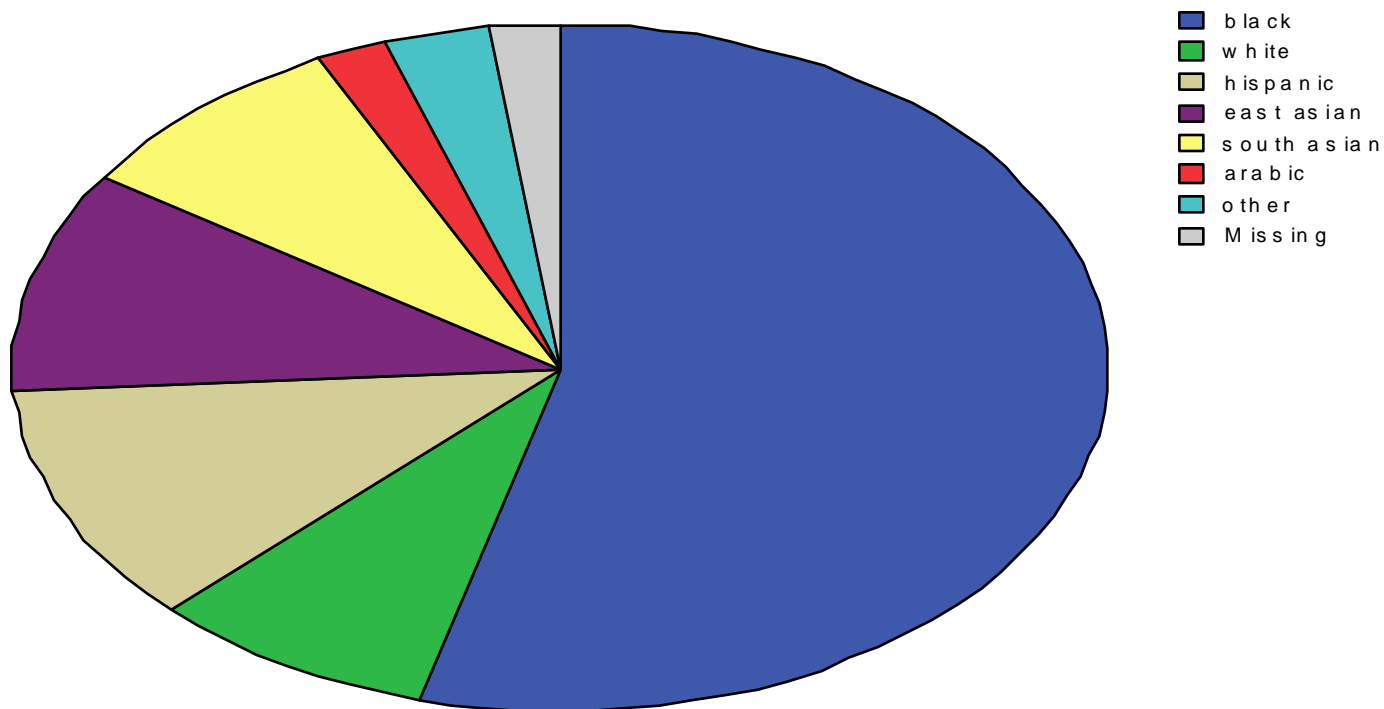
### Survey with current pipeline students

- N=96
- 81% female
- 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Ages 13-18 years (Mean 15.6 years, SD=.97)

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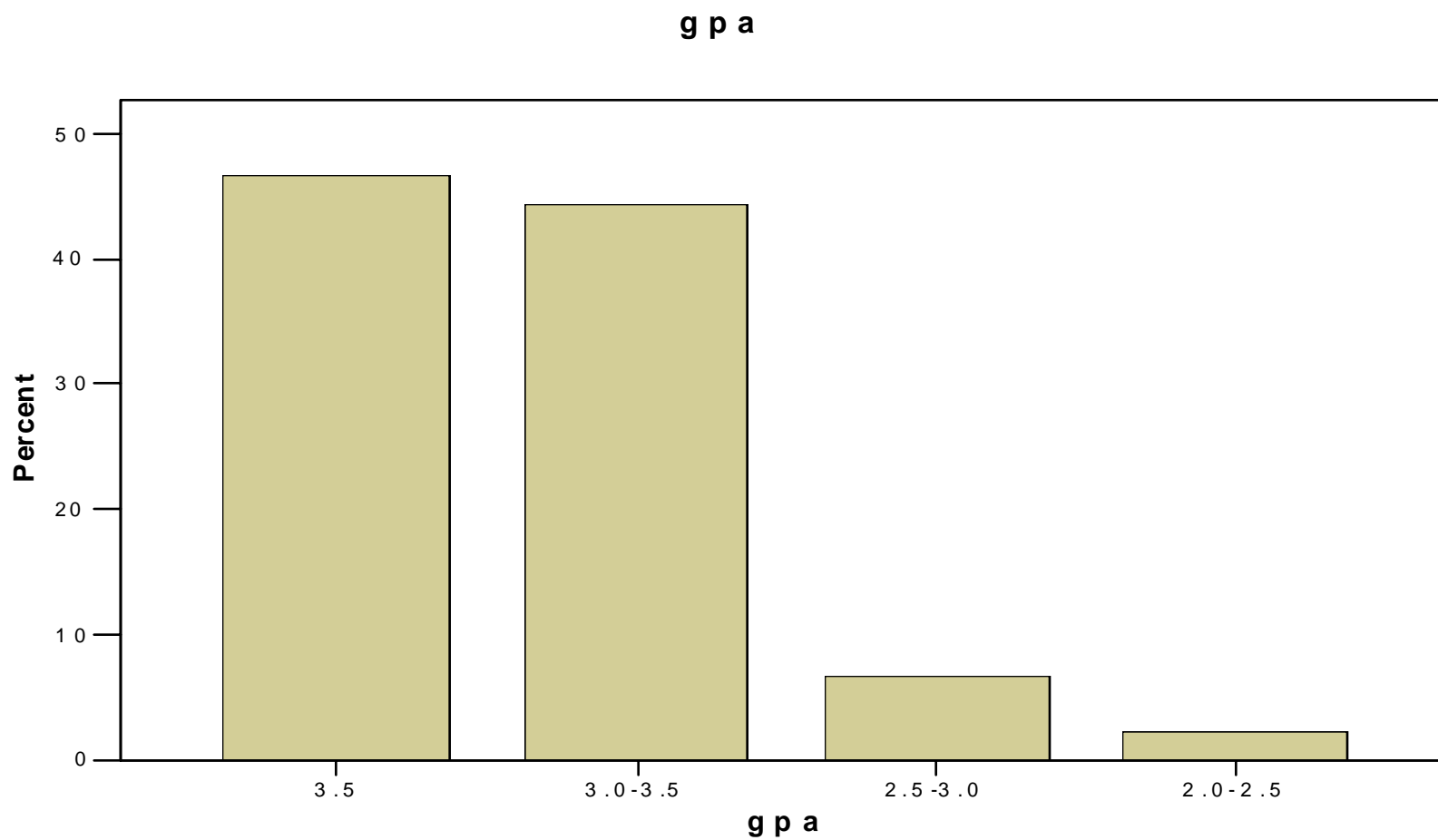
race





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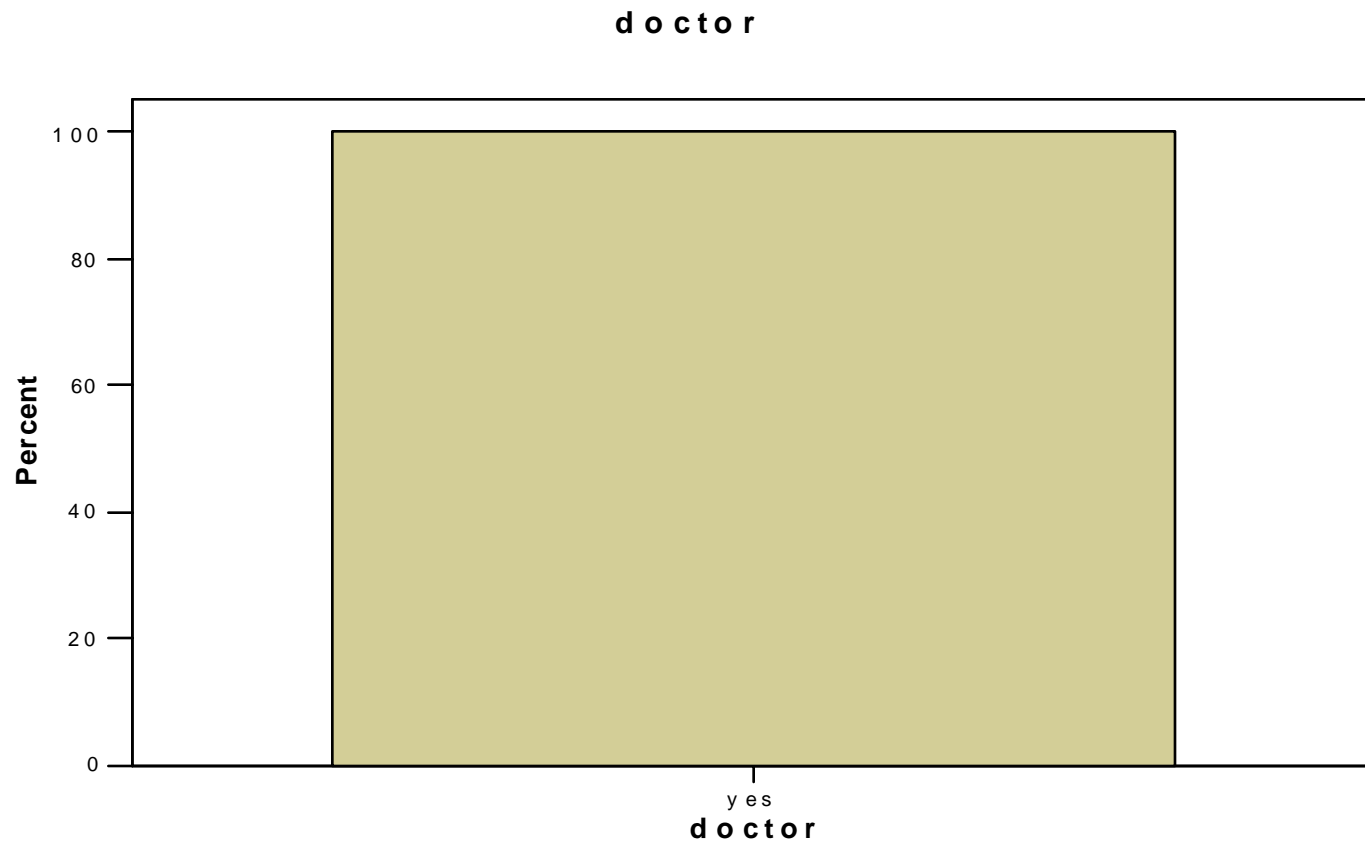
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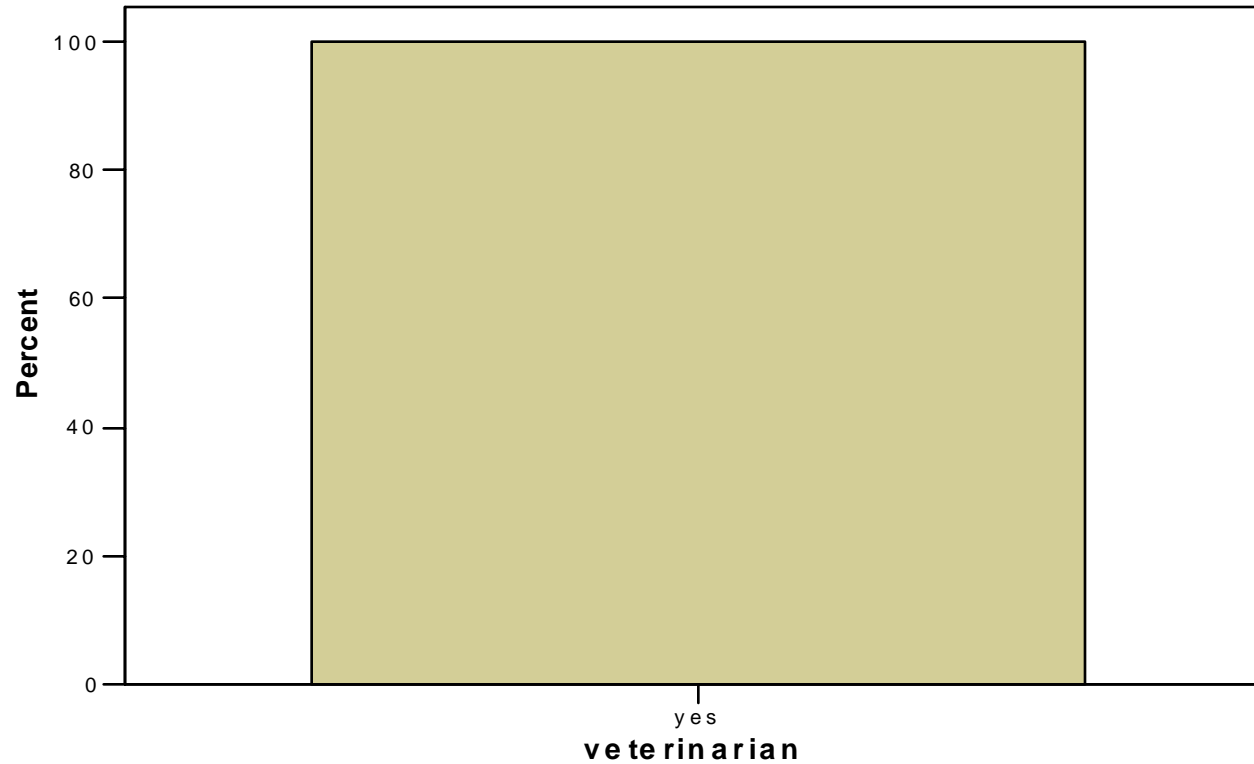
- Top Career Choices
  - Pediatrician (17)
  - Doctor (11)
  - Surgeon (10)
  - OB/GYN (10)
  - **Psychologist (6)**
  - Forensic Scientist (6)
  - Neurologist (5)

# Have you ever heard about the following career?



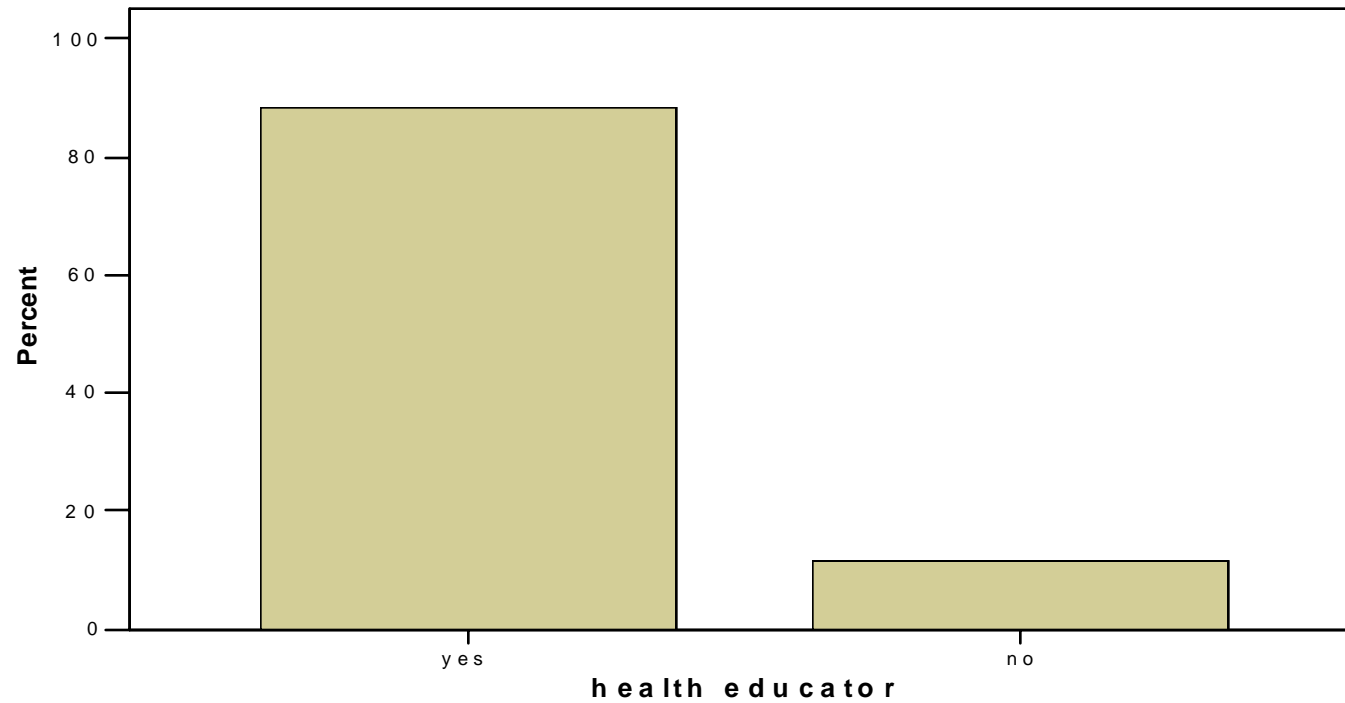
# Have you ever heard about the following career?

veterinarian



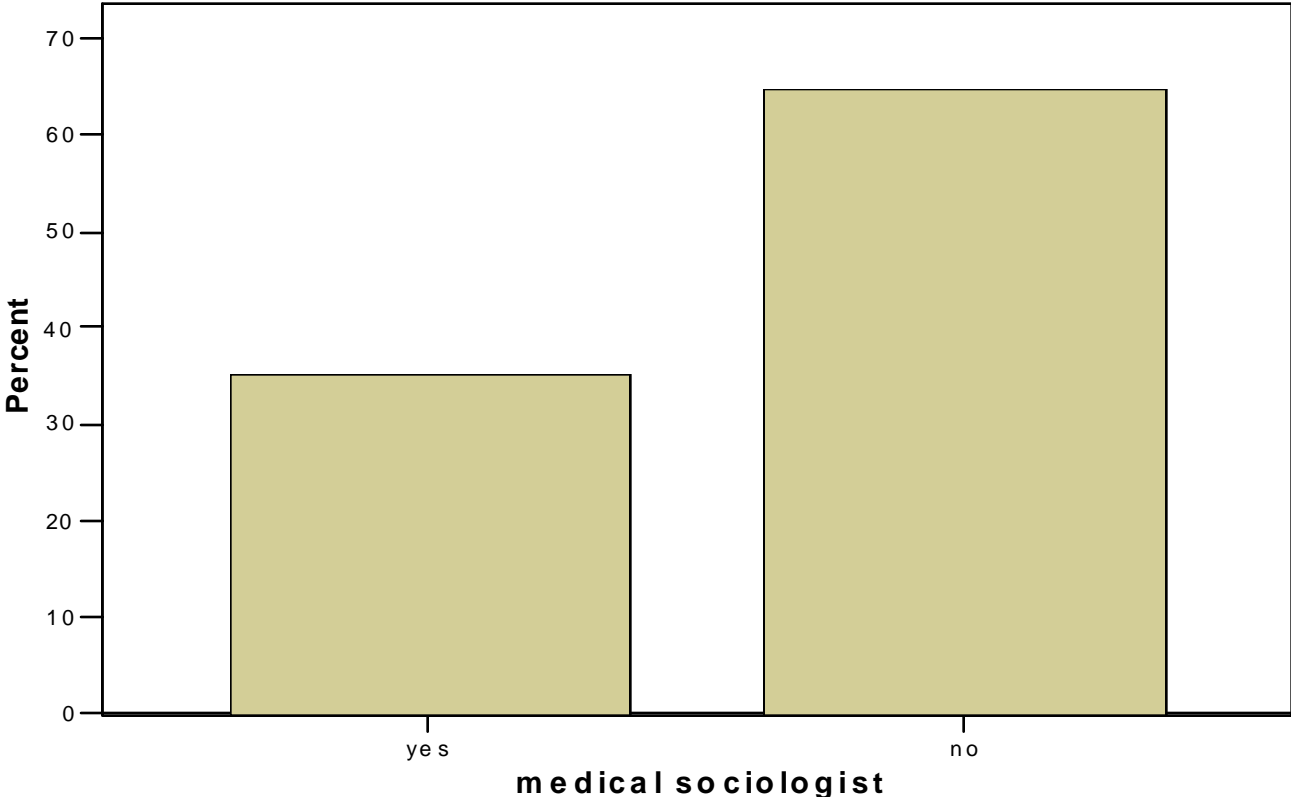
# Have you ever heard about the following career?

health educator



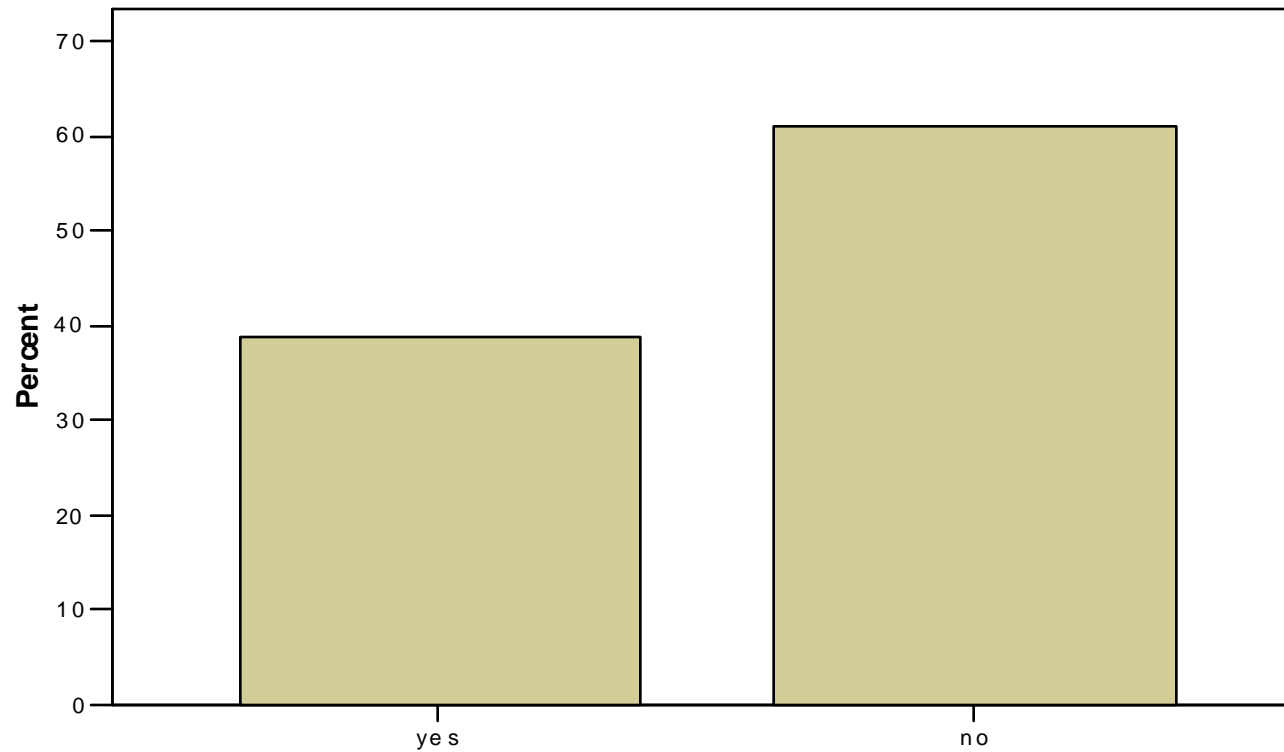
# Have you ever heard about the following career?

medical sociologist

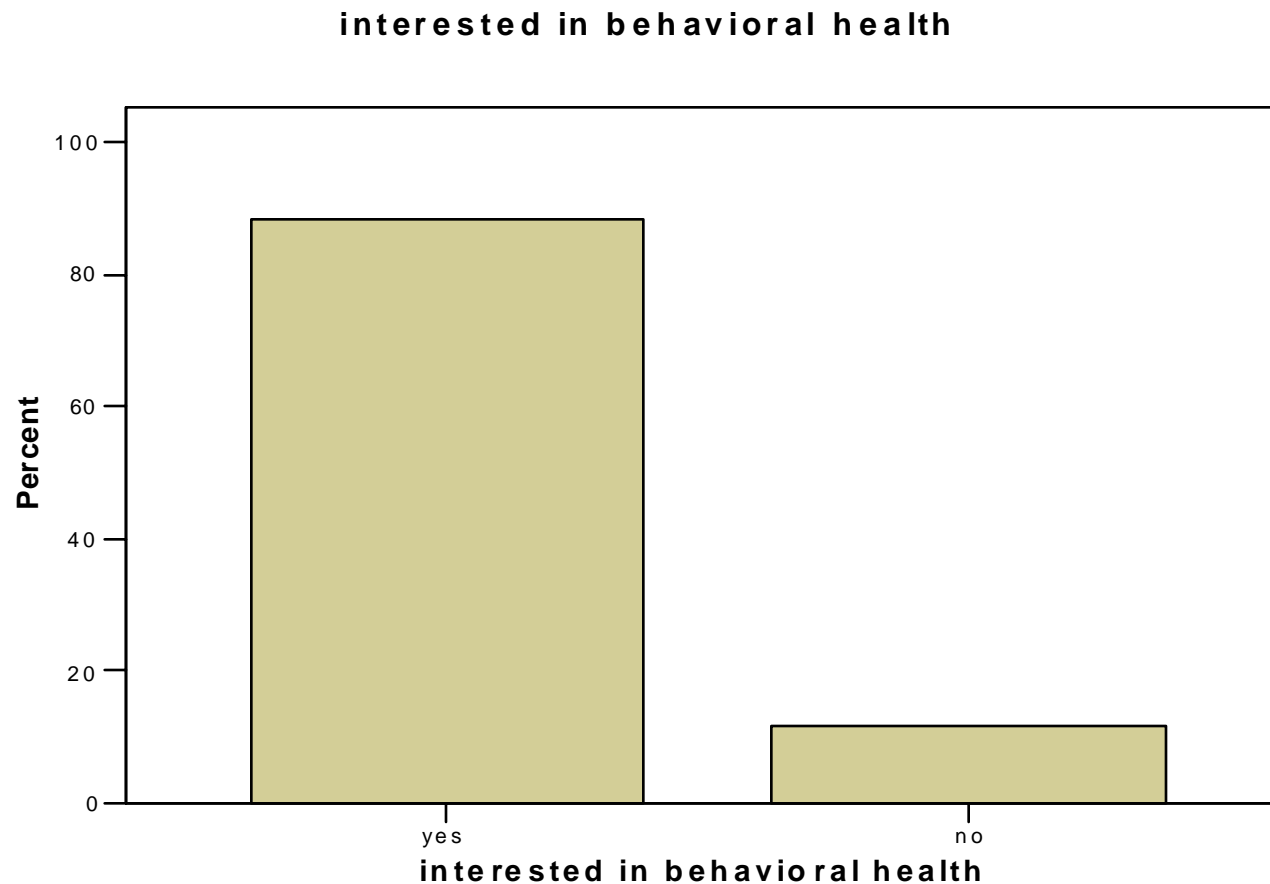


# Have you ever heard about the following career?

medical anthropologist

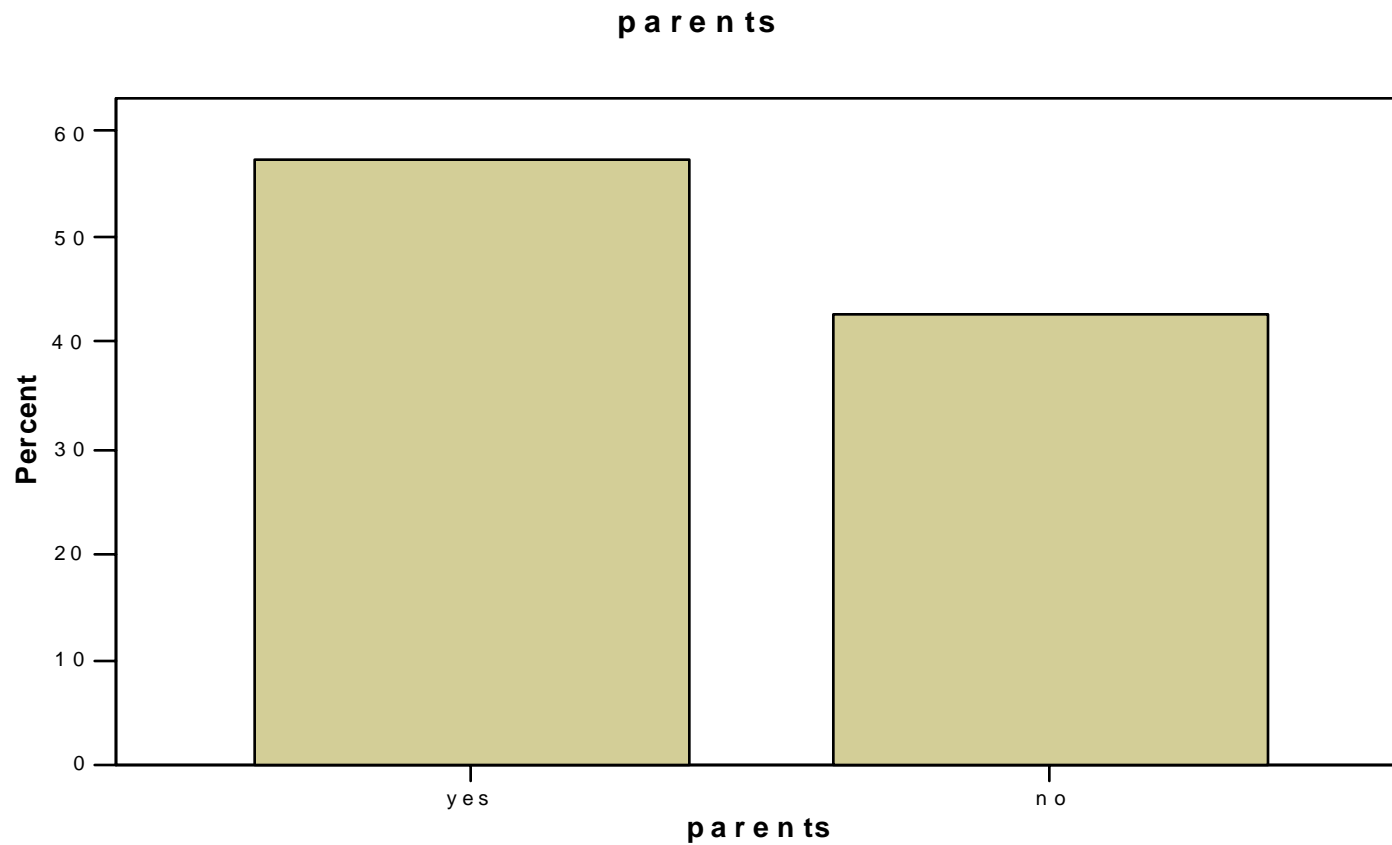


# Interested in learning more about behavioral health careers

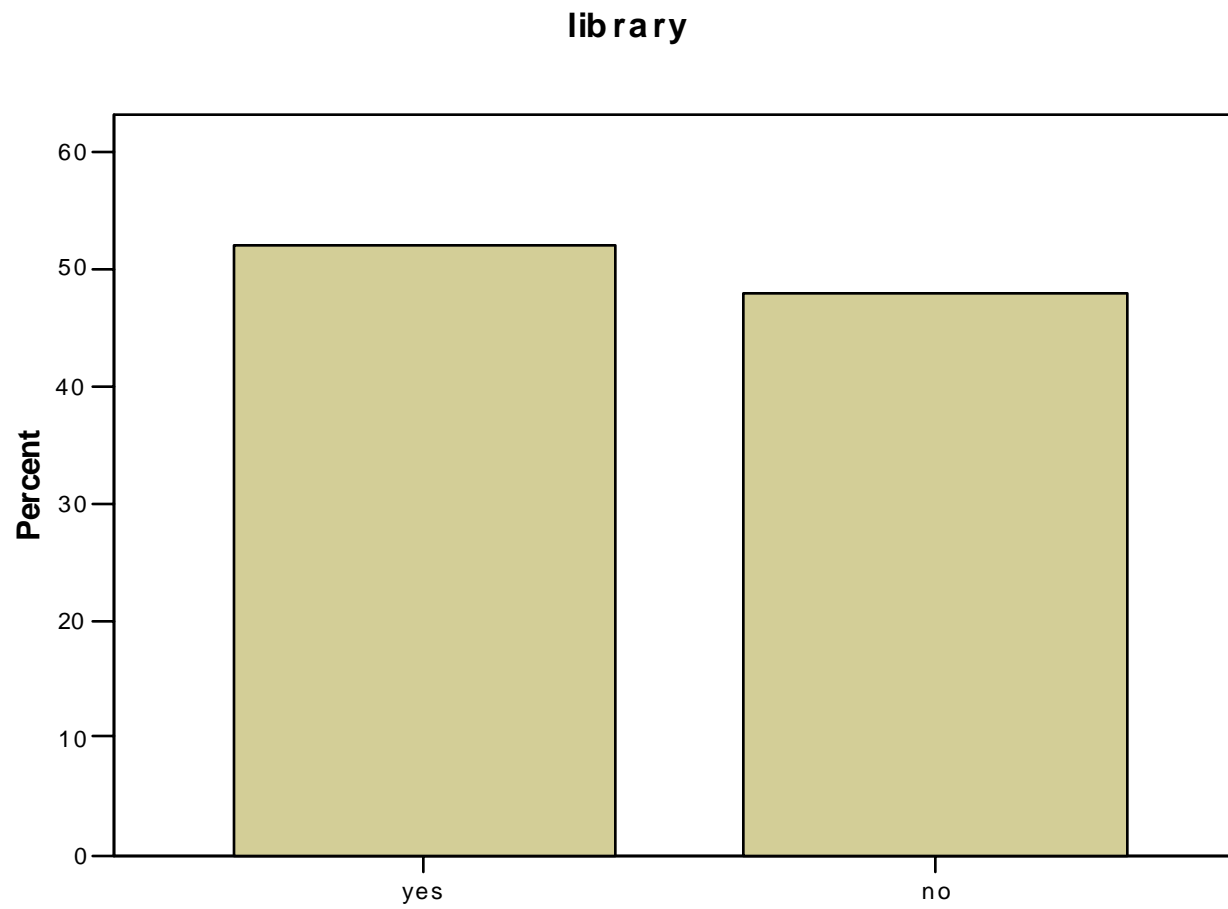




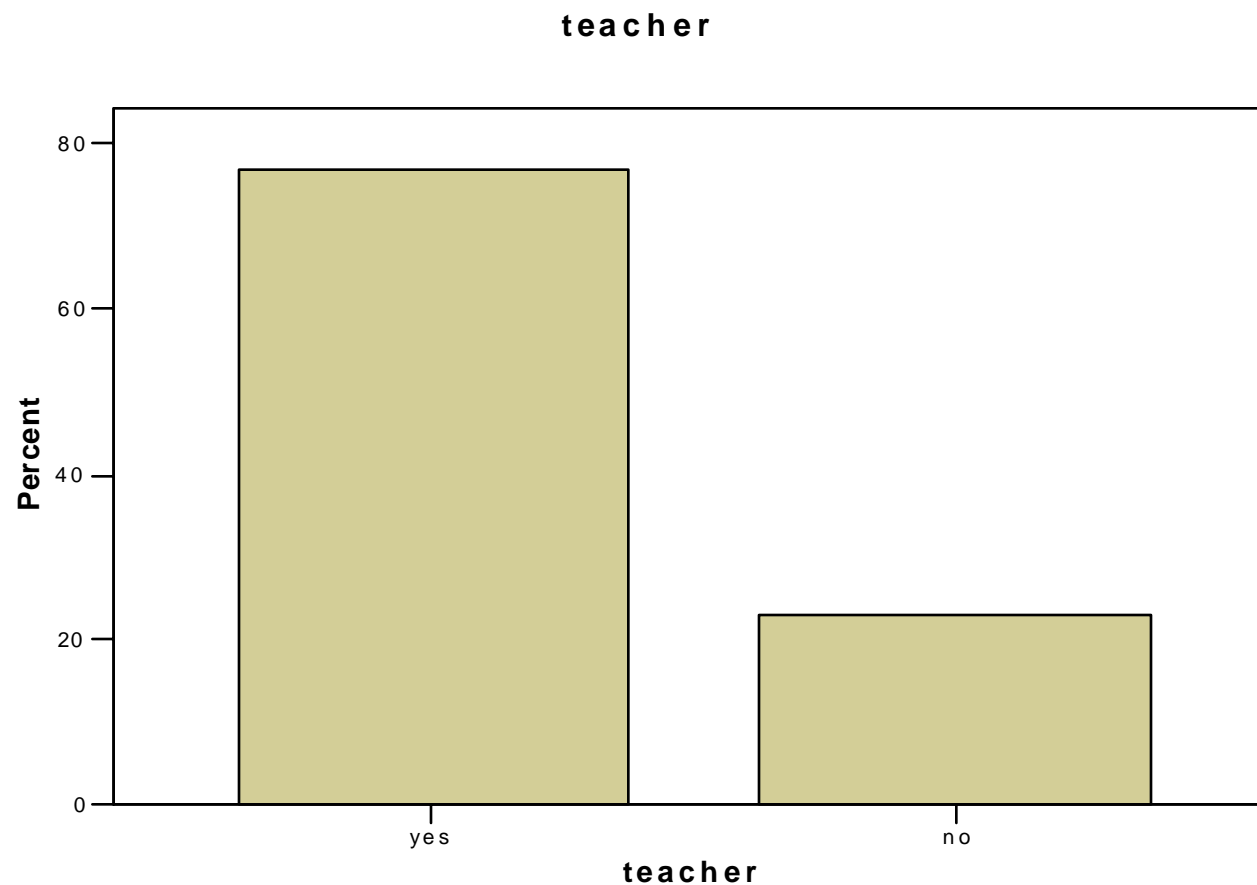
# Where do you go to learn about your career interests?



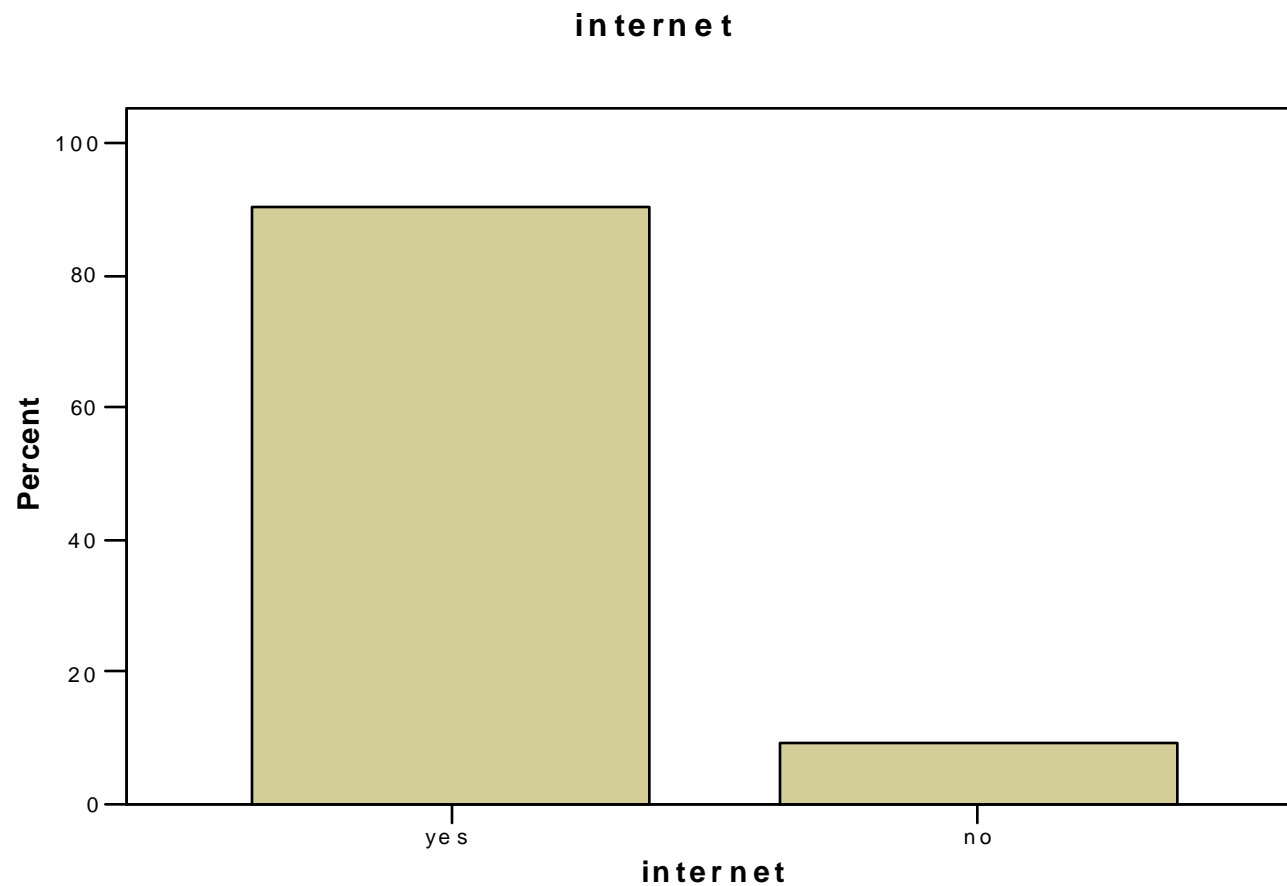
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# Top Five Topics/Content Areas

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- Hands on experiments
- Visiting job sites
- Professional mentors
- College & SAT prep

# Career Prep Information Needed

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- Appropriate courses to take
- Amount of schooling necessary
- Scholarship information
- More knowledge about the field
  - how in-demand the field is
  - what the requirements are

# Career Prep

## Information Needed

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- “Hands on experience” in the field
  - Places to volunteer & build experience
- Mentors who are currently in the field
  - Speak about the field, what it entails, personal experience, and offer advice
  - Hands-on experience, shadowing
- More insight on alternative work settings

# Other Program Services

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- Social activities
- Field trips
  - College Tours
- Community Involvement/Service opportunities



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- Phase Two

Survey with current pipeline students

- **Youth are interested in learning more about behavioral health research careers**
- **Teachers & the internet are where youth go for career information**
- **Youth want a holistic program**
  - **Career information**
  - **Mentoring**
  - **College/SAT prep**

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## ■ Next Steps

### ■ Short term goals

- Identifying community partners
- Develop an all day conference to expose ethnic minority high school students to careers in behavioral health research

### ■ Long term goals

- Obtain funding to develop a behavioral health research careers toolkit
  - Interactive Website
  - Curriculum manual for teachers and schools

# Acknowledgements

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