



## **LGBT Secondary Analysis Report of the Kidsave-Gallup National Study “Americans’ Views of U.S. Foster Care”**

In collaboration with Gallup, Kidsave’s EMBRACE Project conducted a national study on American’s perspectives of foster care to better understand and find solutions for the overrepresentation of Black children in the foster care system. In 2020, Black children made up 23% of all kids in foster care in the U.S., even though they only represent 14% of the total child population, according to the 2021 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). This secondary analysis report of the national study focuses on LGBT Americans’ perspectives of foster care.

### ***Why Focus on the LGBT Community?***

Like Black and Indigenous youth, LGBTQ+ youth are over-represented in the foster care system. Over 30% of youth in foster care self-identify as a member of the LGBT community. ([Baams et al., 2019](#)).

In Los Angeles, about 20% of youth in foster care ages 12-21 identify as LGBTQ+, which is nearly twice that of LGBTQ+ youth estimated to be living out of foster care. ([Wilson et al., 2014](#))

Data show that LGBTQ+ couples are extremely active in adoption, particularly adoption from foster care. Some studies suggest same-sex couples are 7 times more likely to adopt than heterosexual couples while others suggest the rate may be even higher ([Goldberg & Conron, 2020](#)).

By focusing on this demographic group from our dataset, we can shed light on the pressing issues that both LGBTQ+ youth and adults experience throughout the foster care/adoption processes and identify solutions that will assist them in navigating these processes.

### ***Why do we say LGBT in this sub report and not LGBTQ+?***

The terminology used in this sub report directly reflects the phrasing and terminology used in the original study conducted by Gallup, in which participants were asked, "Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender? Yes or No."

This sub report will be analyzing those who responded "yes" to that question. Therefore, this report will refer to the sample as LGBT adults from this point forward.

### ***Why weren't other identities included in the original question?***

The base demographic questions Gallup uses are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Survey. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender are the only identities currently included in the Census Survey.

The use of LGBT instead of LGBTQ+ in this sub report is not an attempt to exclude any persons but only to stay true to the terminology used in the study.

### **Methodology**

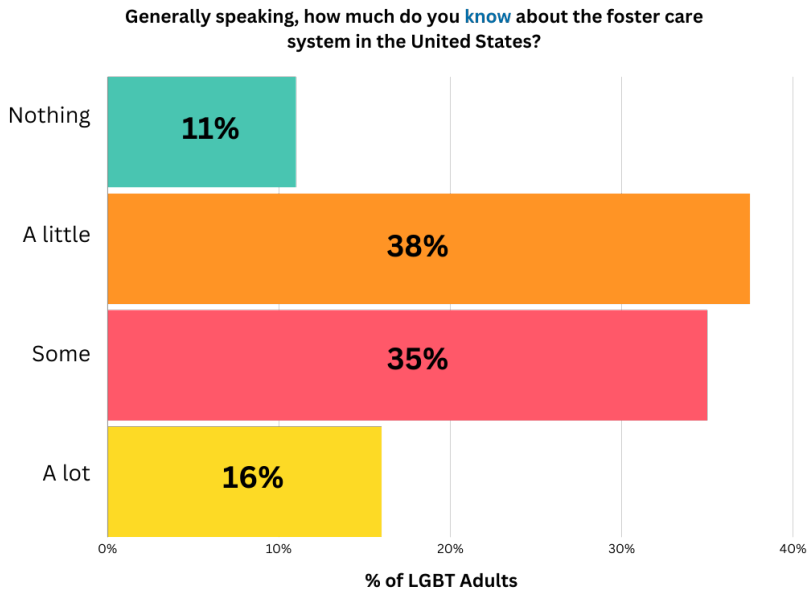
Data for this study were first collected by Gallup as part of the Kidsave-Gallup Study, “Americans’ Views of U.S. Foster Care: Elevating Black Americans’ Perspectives and Experiences” (Gallup). The full methodology for the study can be found in the report on the Kidsave EMBRACE website. This demographic-specific report is a secondary analysis of that data, conducted by Kidsave, analyzing responses from 567 LGBT respondents.

### **Key Findings**

- Most LGBT adults (73%) report knowing “a little” or “some” about the U.S. foster care system.
- The majority of LGBT adults (66%) report feeling “not at all” or “not very” confident that the U.S. foster care system does the right thing for children in need of care.
- Over a third of LGBT adults reported that dealing with discrimination due to gender or sexual identity is a major barrier preventing them from engaging with both the foster care system (35%) and the adoption process (36%). This was a *top* barrier for 12% of LGBT adults.
- 81% of LGBT adults said that having training and support to ensure they know how to help the child they support would make them more likely to consider participating in a program to work with children in foster care.
- 64% of LGBT adults do not know if they are eligible to provide foster care.

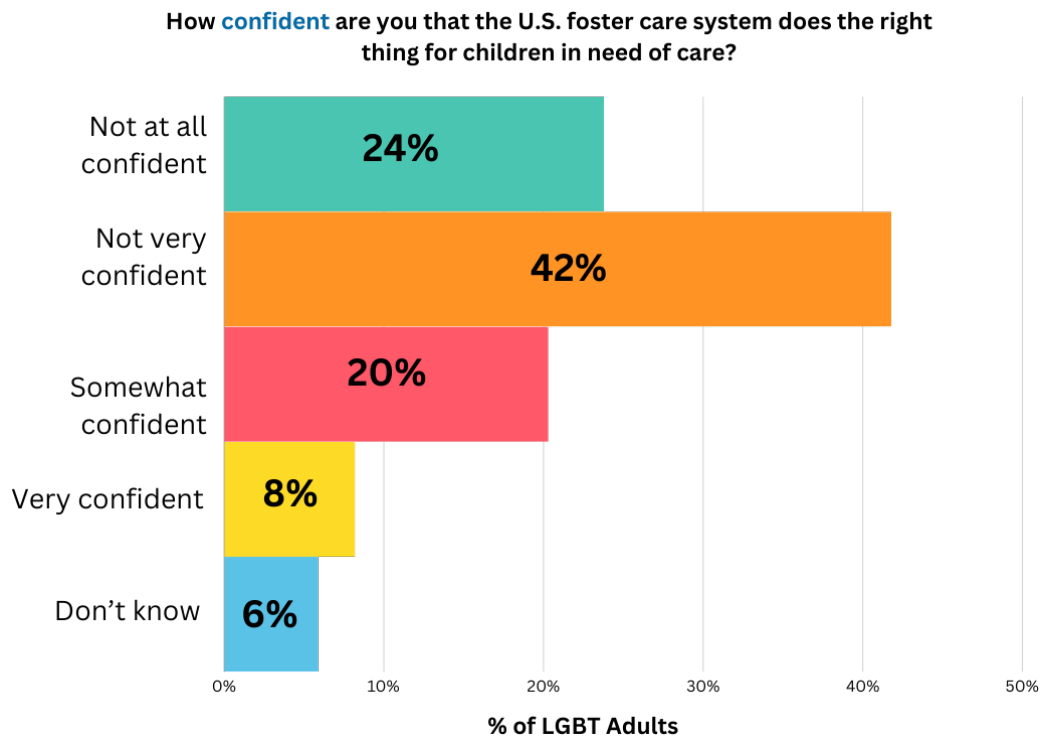
The following are key findings from the LGBT sub report in which 567 LGBT respondents were asked questions regarding their personal perceptions of, confidence levels in, and barriers to engaging with the U.S. foster care and adoption systems.

Figure 1: LGBT adults' knowledge level of the U.S. foster care system



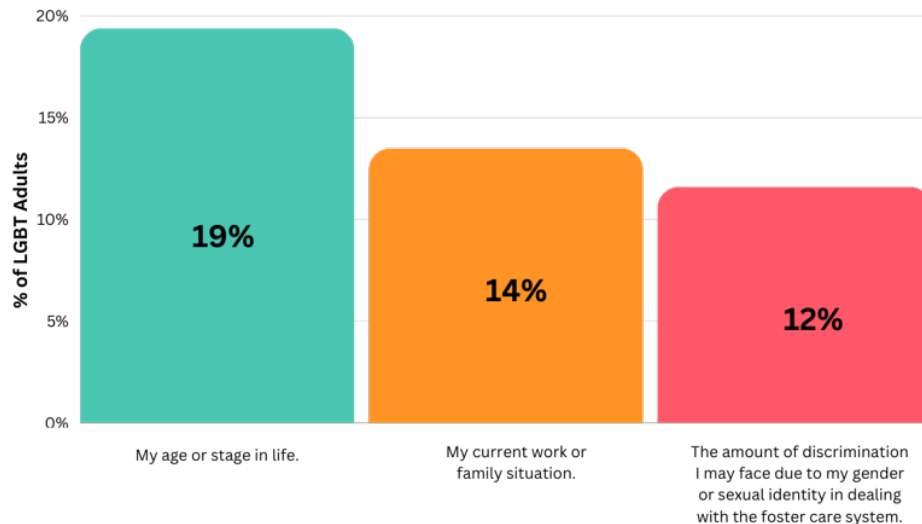
When asked about their knowledge of the foster care system in the United States, 73% of LGBT adults reported knowing “a little” or “some” about the U.S. foster care system.

Figure 2: LGBT adults' confidence level in the U.S. foster care system



When asked about how confident they feel that the U.S. foster care system does the right thing for children in need of care, the majority of LGBT adults (66%) reported feeling “not at all” or “not very” confident.

Figure 3: LGBT adults’ major barrier to providing foster care  
If you had to choose only ONE barrier as the **most important** to you, which of the previous barriers would you choose?



Over a third of LGBT adults reported that dealing with discrimination due to gender or sexual identity is a major barrier in engaging with both the foster care system (35%) and the adoption process (36%). When asked to choose one top barrier, 12% of LGBT adults chose discrimination as the most important barrier preventing them from adopting.

## Conclusion

While interest in adoption and working with youth in foster care is high among LGBT adults, lack of trust and confidence in the foster care system and fear of discrimination could be keeping LGBT adults from positively engaging with the foster care system and adoption. Some recommendations for organizations to achieve greater success recruiting and working with LGBT adults are:

- Equitable representation the LGBT population in their staff,
- Create working partnerships,
- A commitment to meeting the needs of the LGBT community, and
- To gain the trust of the LGBTQ+ community.

Interest in participating in programs to work with youth in foster care outside of formal foster care, such as through mentoring programs is high among LGBT respondents. Respondents indicated that resources, training, and support could further encourage them to participate in these programs, and the Kidsave-Gallup Study, “Americans’ Views of U.S. Foster Care,” shows

that participation in such programs can improve the likelihood of fostering and adopting from foster care.

## Sources

- Administration For Children and Families (AFCARS). (2022, June 28). *The AFCARS Report: California*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-tar-ca-2021.pdf>
- Baams, L., Wilson, B. D. M., & Russell, S. T. (2019, March 1). LGBTQ Youth in Unstable Housing and Foster Care. PubMed Central. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6398424/>
- Gallup, Inc., & Kidsave, (2024, July 8). Americans' Views of U.S. Foster Care: Elevating Black Americans' Perspectives and Experiences. <https://s43633.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Americans-Views-of-U.S.-Foster-Care-Kidsave-Gallup-Report-Web-v2.pdf>
- Goldberg, S., & Conron, K. (2020, July 29). *How Many Same-Sex Couples in the US are Raising Children?*. Williams Institute. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/same-sex-parents-us/>
- Wilson, B. et al. (2014, August). *Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster Care*. The Williams Institute. [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pii\\_rise\\_lafys\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pii_rise_lafys_report.pdf)



# Kidsave-Gallup Study LGBT Secondary Analysis Report

January 2024

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## METHODOLOGY

- Data for this study were first collected by Gallup as part of the Kidsave-Gallup Study, “Americans’ Views of U.S. Foster Care.” The full methodology for the study can be found in the report on the Kidsave EMBRACE website.
- In the original study, data were collected using both mail and web in March through April 2023. Respondents were primarily identified through the Gallup Panel, a probability-based panel. About one-quarter of respondents were identified through a third-party opt-in sample. Gallup conducted weighting to ensure that the national sample matched national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity and education, with cross-classified targets within race.
- This demographic-specific report is a secondary analysis of that data, conducted by Kidsave, using new weighting procedures for state-level estimates.



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# METHODOLOGY

- As part of the current study, Kidsave conducted post-stratification weighting to adjust the national-level weights to state-level or specific demographic targets.
- Demographic weighting targets were based on the March 2023 Current Population Survey estimates for the age 18+ population.
- For the **567** LGBT respondents, the adjusted margin of error was  $\pm 5.9$  percentage points.

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## Why Focus on the LGBTQ+ Community

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Why focus on the LGBTQ+ community?

- Like Black youth, LGBTQ+ youth are over-represented in the foster care system. Over 30% of youth in foster care self-identify as a member of the LGBT community. (Baams, Wilson, & Russell, 2019).
- In Los Angeles, about 20% of youth in foster care ages 12-21 identify as LGBTQ+, which is nearly twice that of LGBT youth estimated to be living out of foster care. ([Wilson et al., 2014](#))
- Data shows that LGBTQ+ couples are extremely active in adoption, particularly adoption from foster care. Some studies suggest same-sex couples are 7 times more likely to adopt than heterosexual couples while others suggest the rate may be even higher ([Goldberg & Conron, 2018](#)).
- By focusing on this demographic group for our dataset, we can shed light on the pressing issues that both LGBTQ+ youth and adults experience throughout the foster care/adoption processes and identify solutions that will assist them in navigating these processes.

## Terminology Used in this Sub Report

### Why LGBT and not LGBTQ+?

- The terminology used in this sub report directly reflects the phrasing and terminology used in the original study conducted by Gallup, in which participants were asked, "Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender? Yes or No."
- This sub report will be analyzing those who responded "yes" to that question. Therefore, this sub-sample will refer to the sample as LGBT adults from here on out.

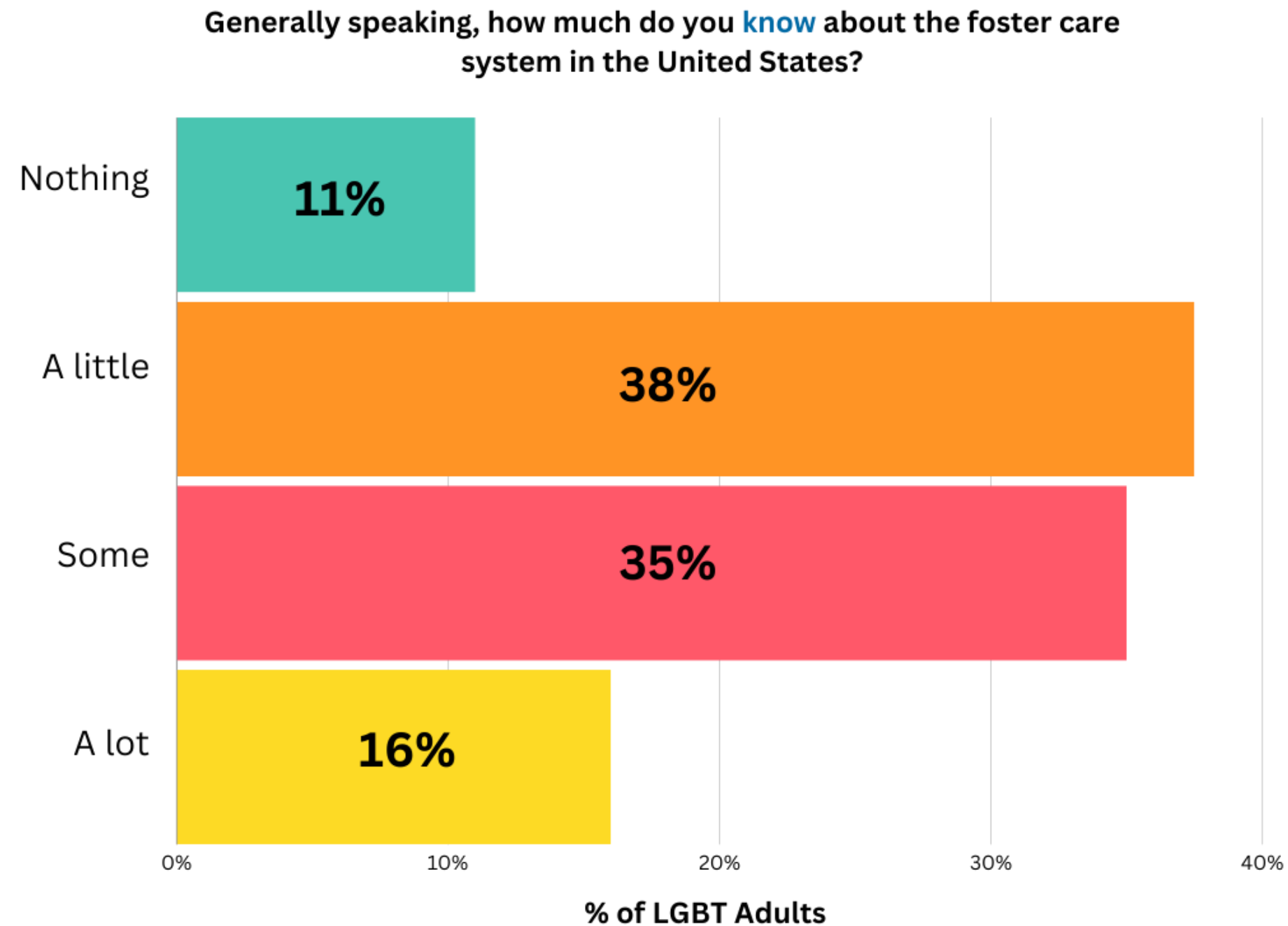
### Why weren't other identities included in the original question?

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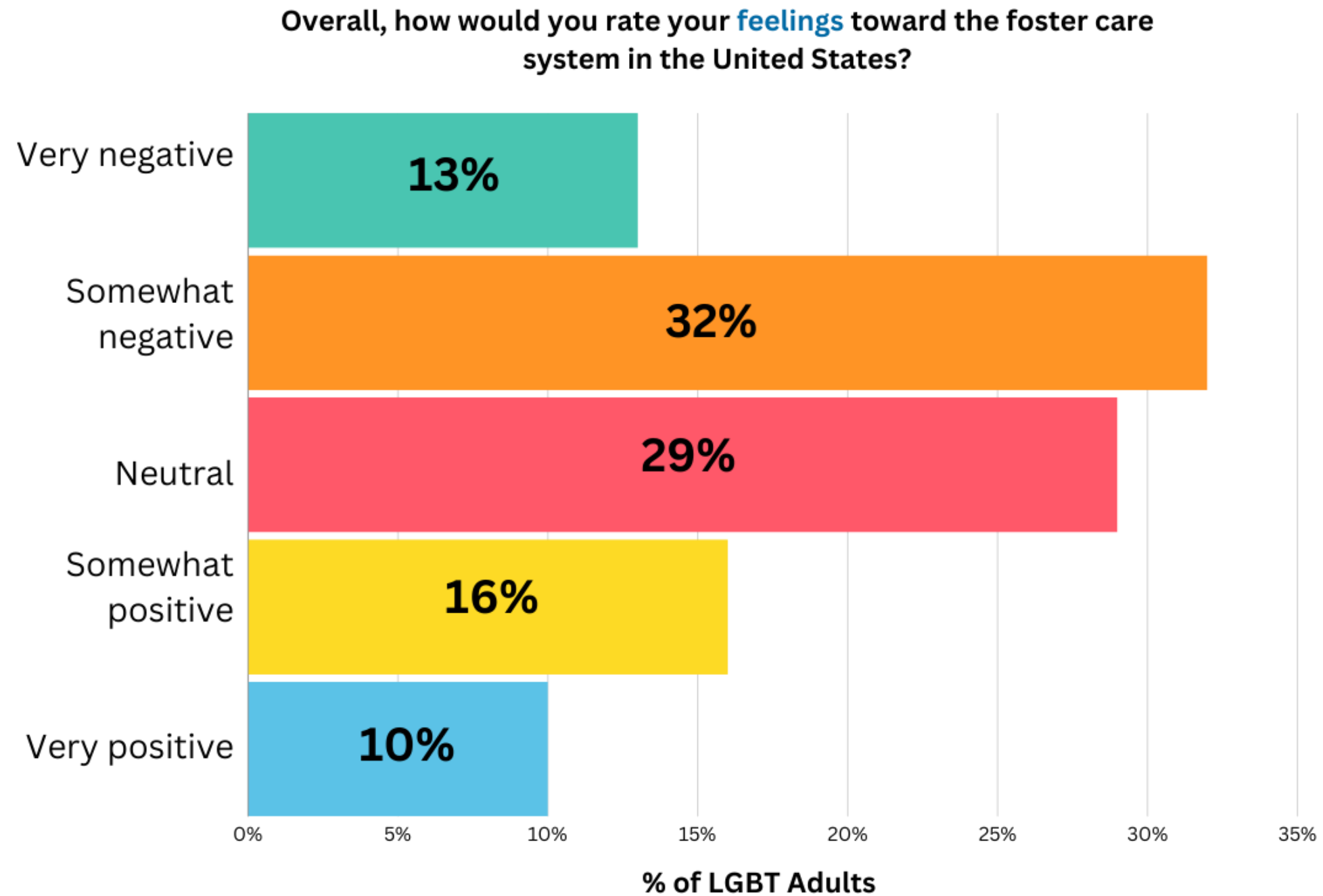
# The foster care system:

Perceptions, barriers, and interest

# LGBT adults know little about the foster care system, but over a third are somewhat knowledgeable

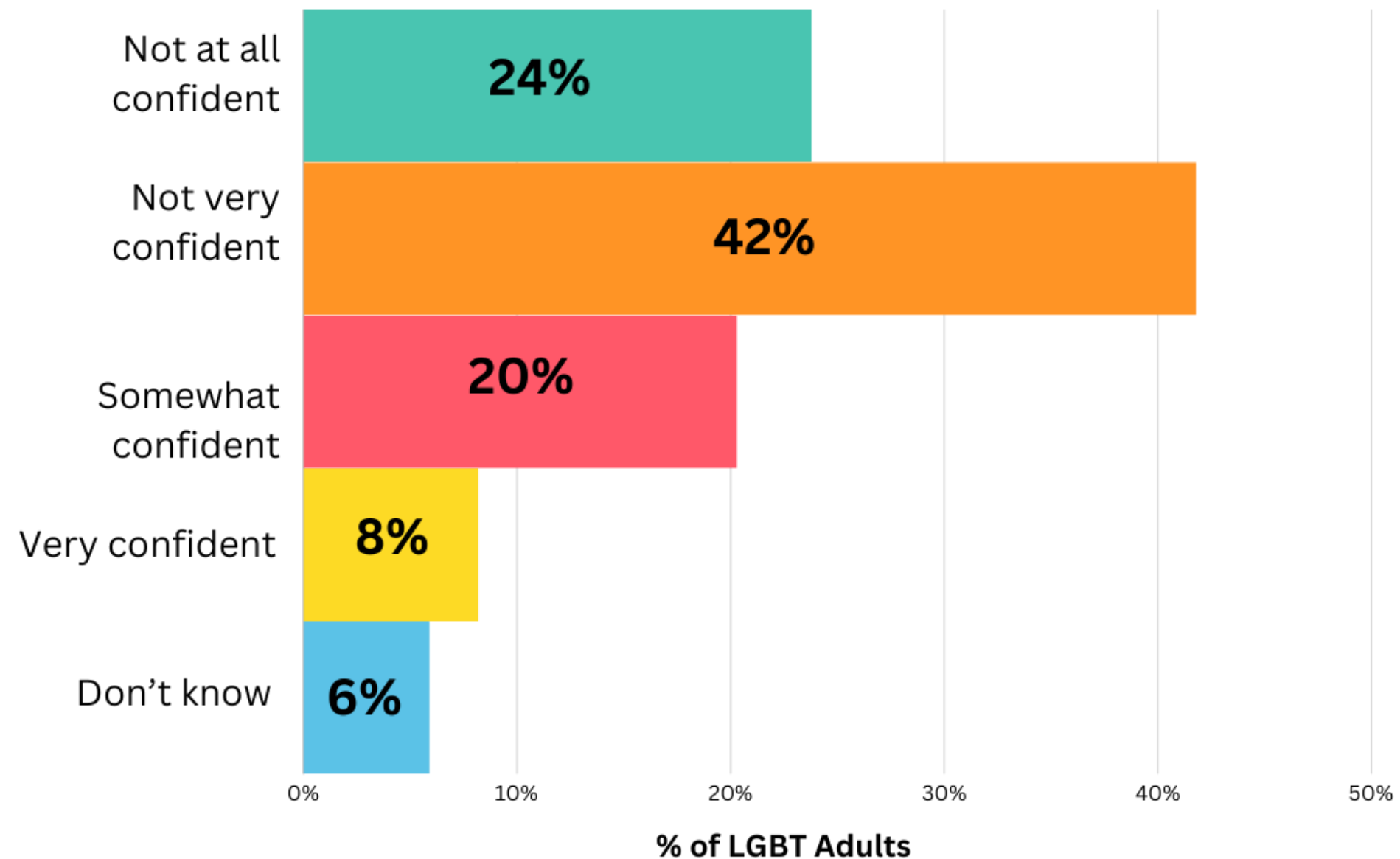


# Just one in four LGBT adults have a positive view of the foster care system

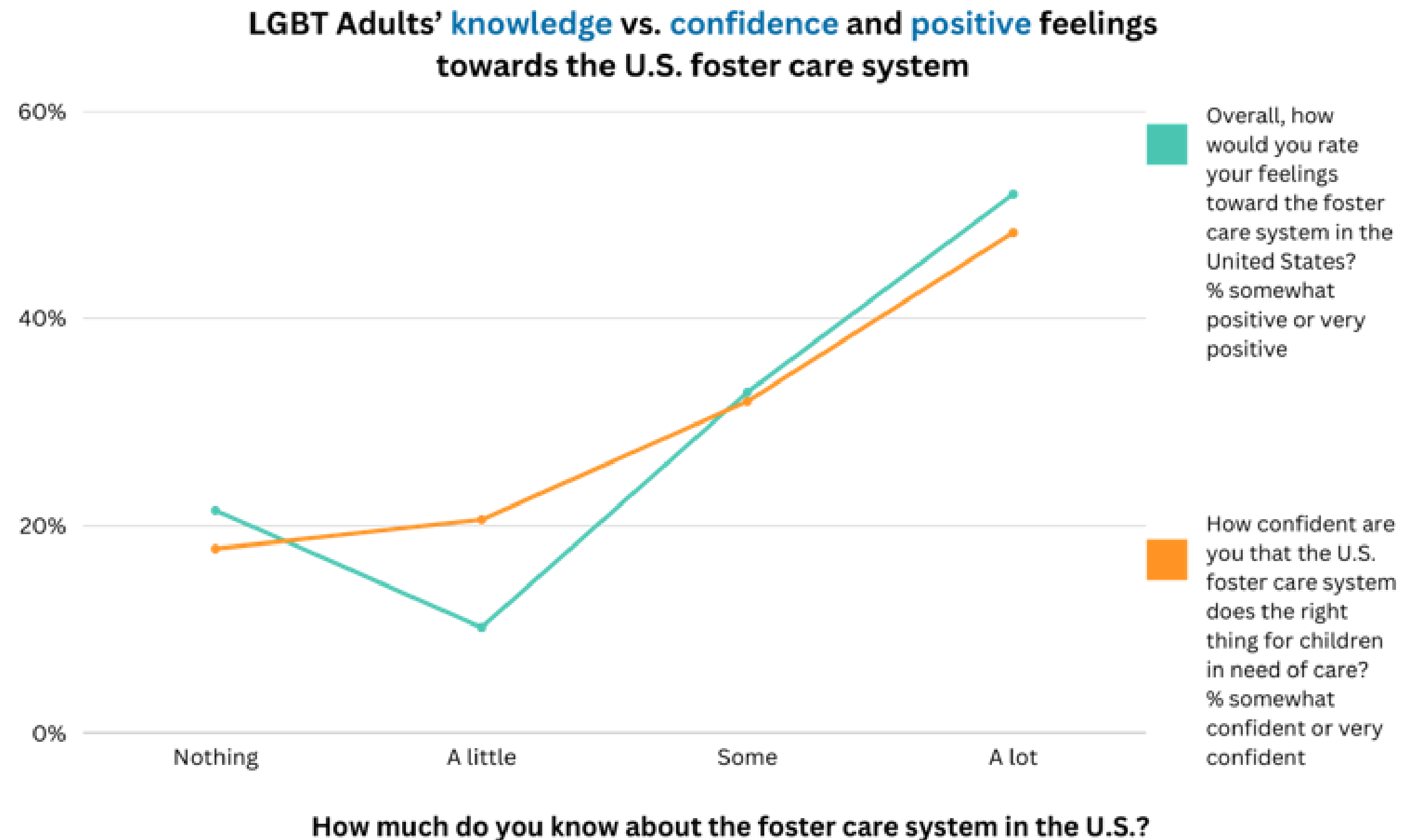


# And over half are not at all confident or not very confident in the system

How confident are you that the U.S. foster care system does the right thing for children in need of care?



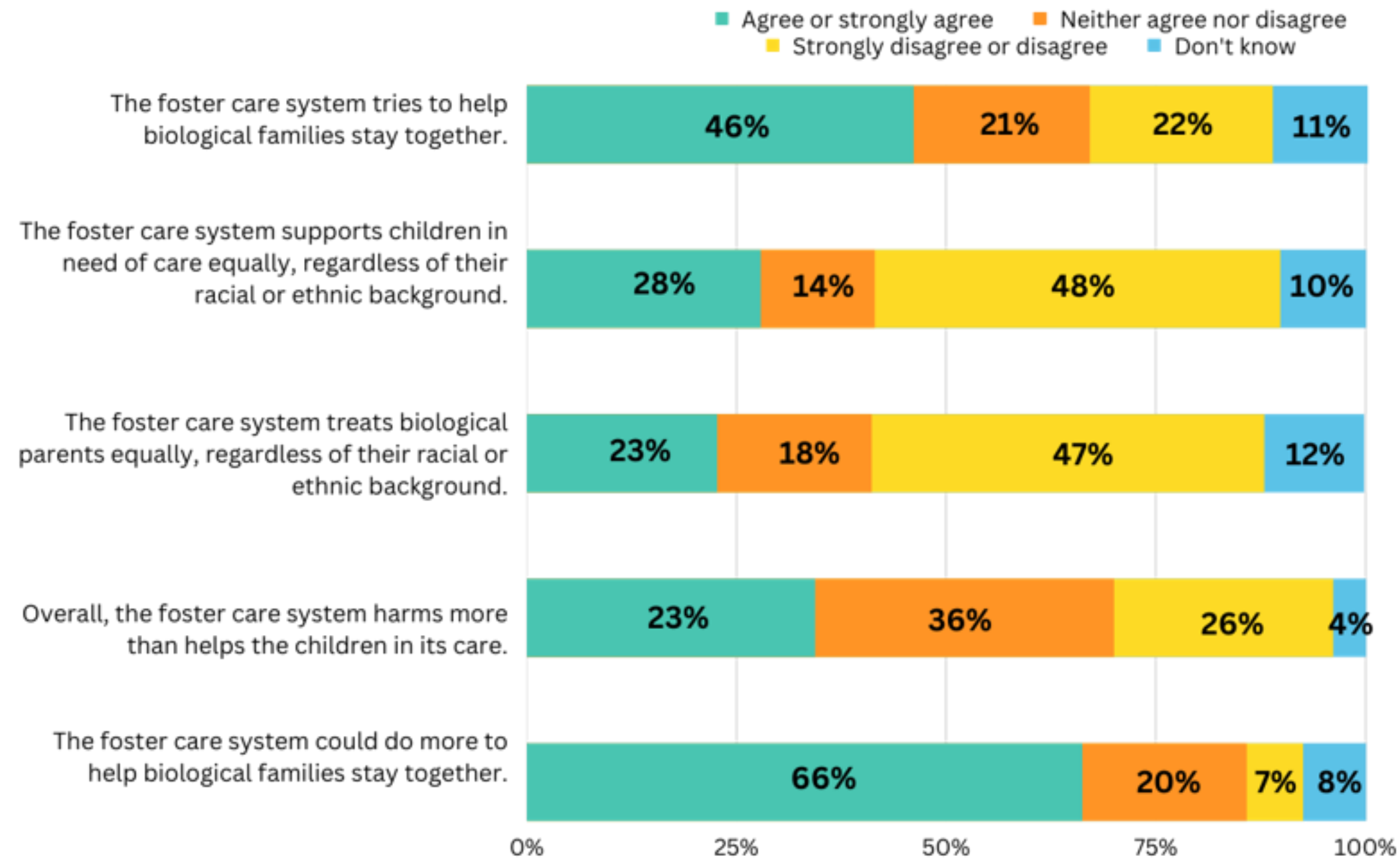
# Generally, more knowledge about the system relates to more positive feelings and confidence in it





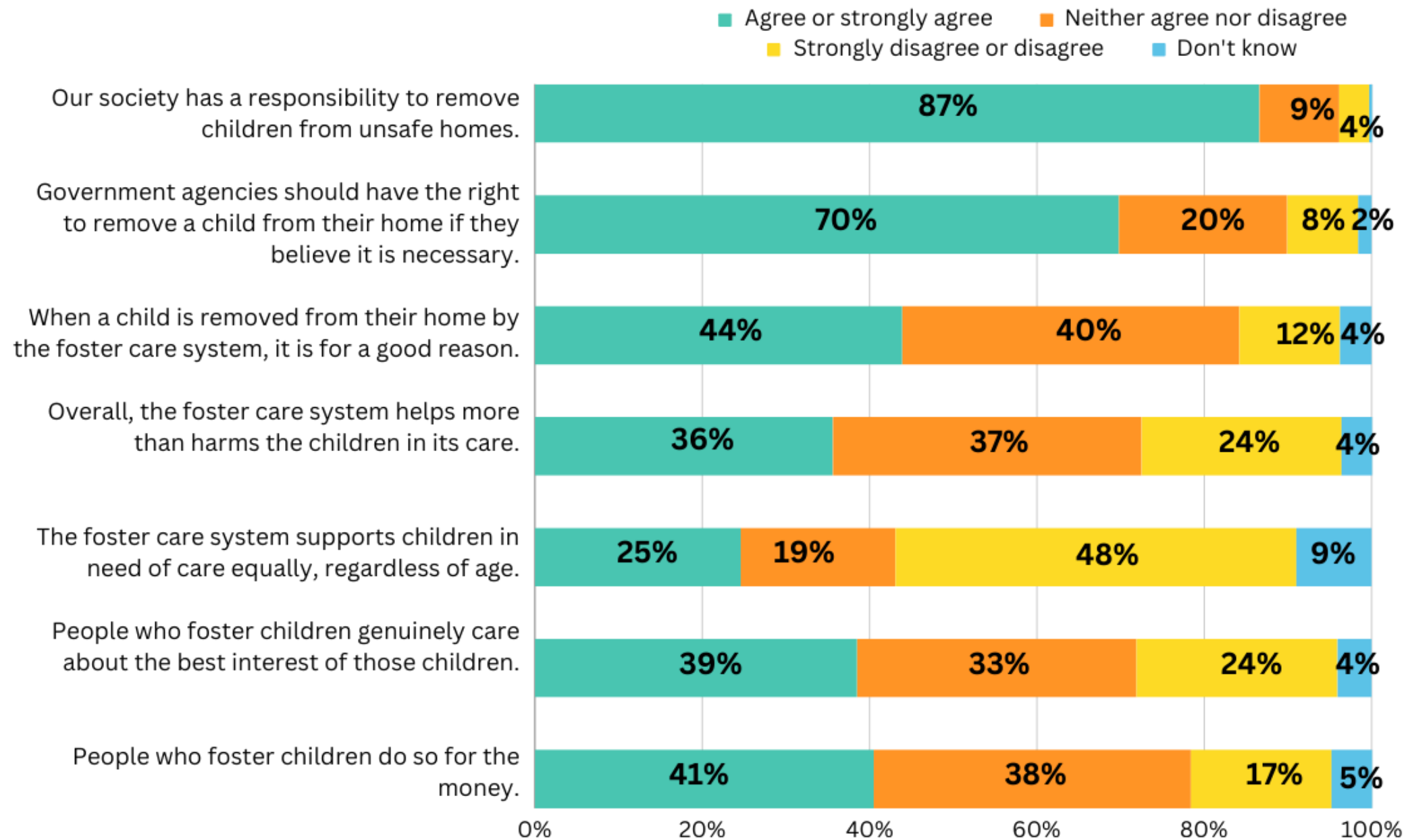
# Most LGBT adults believe the foster care system could do more

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



# Most LGBT adults believe the foster care system has certain responsibilities

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



# Barriers to providing foster care

Top 5 Most Common Barriers to Providing Foster Care Among LGBT adults

*% Major barrier*

1. The amount of money required to provide foster care. **52.3%**
2. The changes I would have to make to my home or living situation in order to foster. **52.0%**
3. Not having enough training and resources to feel prepared to foster. **49.1%**
4. Not having enough access to mental health resources for the child, myself, or my family. **48.8%**
5. My current work or family situation. **46.1%**

# Lack of training and resources are significant barriers to providing foster care

Two of the top five barriers to fostering a child **could be improved with training and supportive resources**, especially those related to child and family mental health.

Not having enough access to mental health resources for the child, myself, or my family.



Not having enough training and resources to feel prepared to foster.



# Facing discrimination is a significant barrier to providing foster care and adopting

The amount of discrimination I may face due to my gender or sexual identity in dealing with the foster care system.

*(% major barrier)*



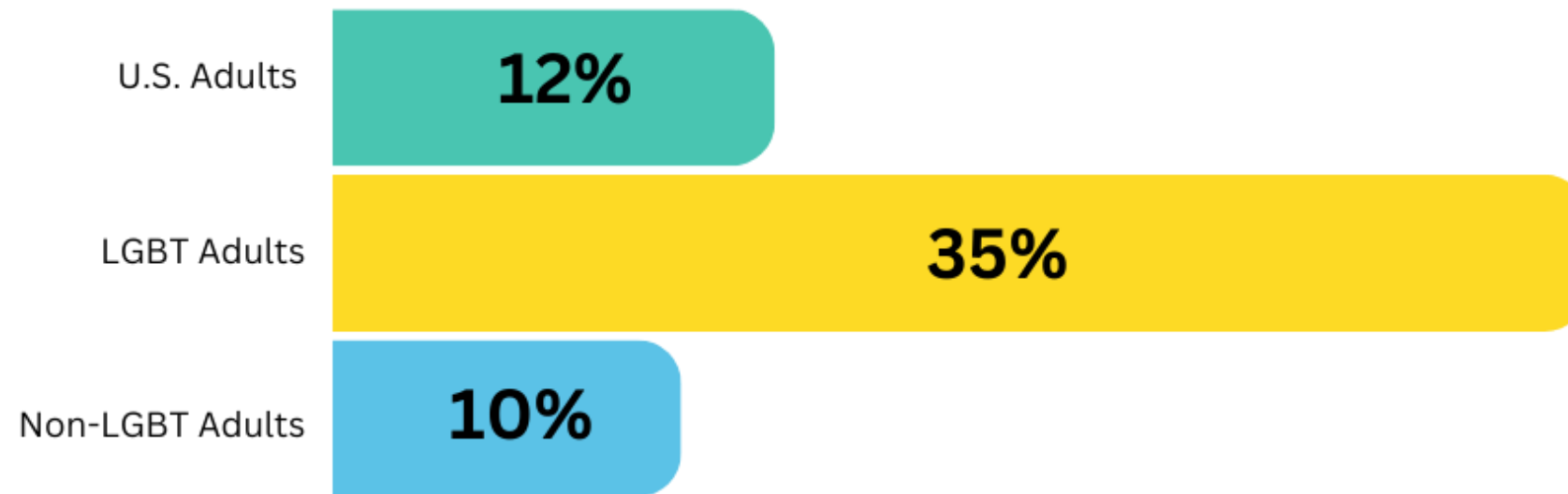
The amount of discrimination I may face due to my gender or sexual identity in the adoption process.

*(% major barrier)*

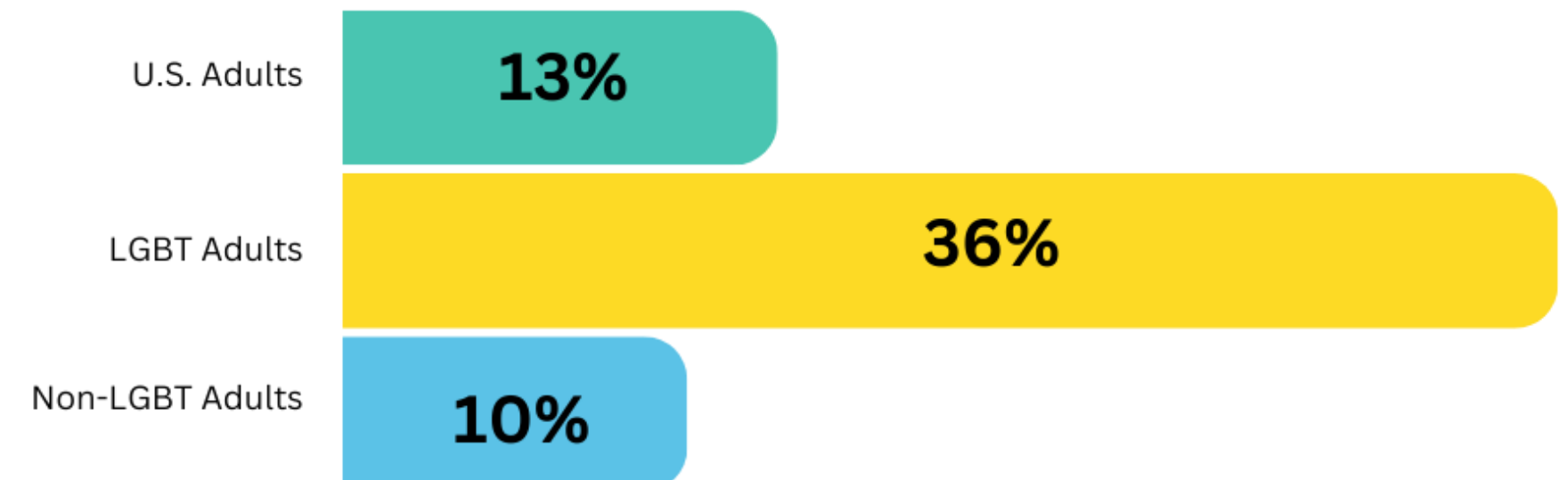


# Facing discrimination is a significant barrier to providing foster care and adopting

The amount of **discrimination** I may face due to my gender or sexual identity in dealing with the **foster care system**  
% major barrier



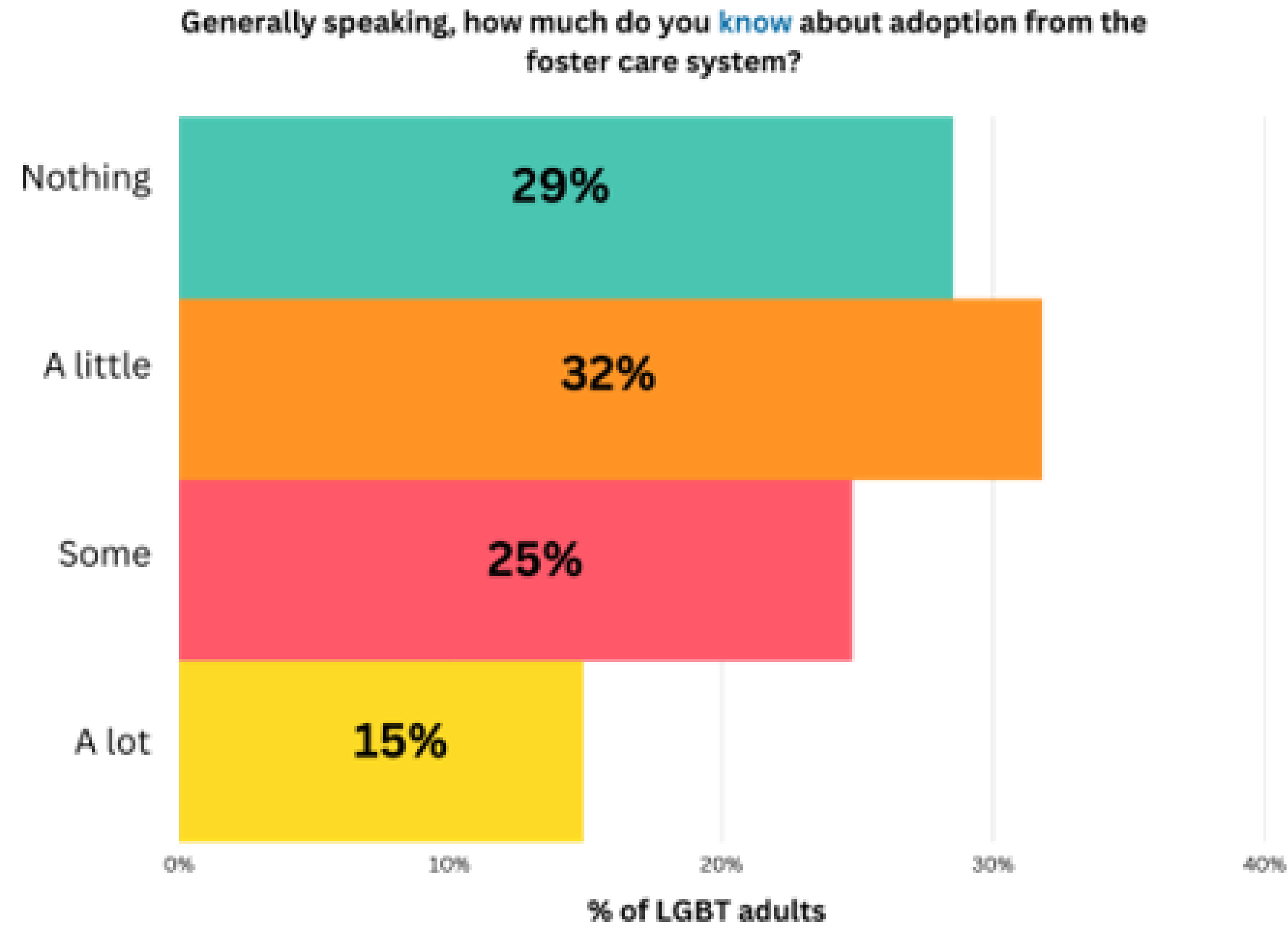
The amount of **discrimination** I may face due to my gender or sexual identity in dealing with **adoption**  
% major barrier



# Adoption from foster care:

Perceptions, barriers, and interest

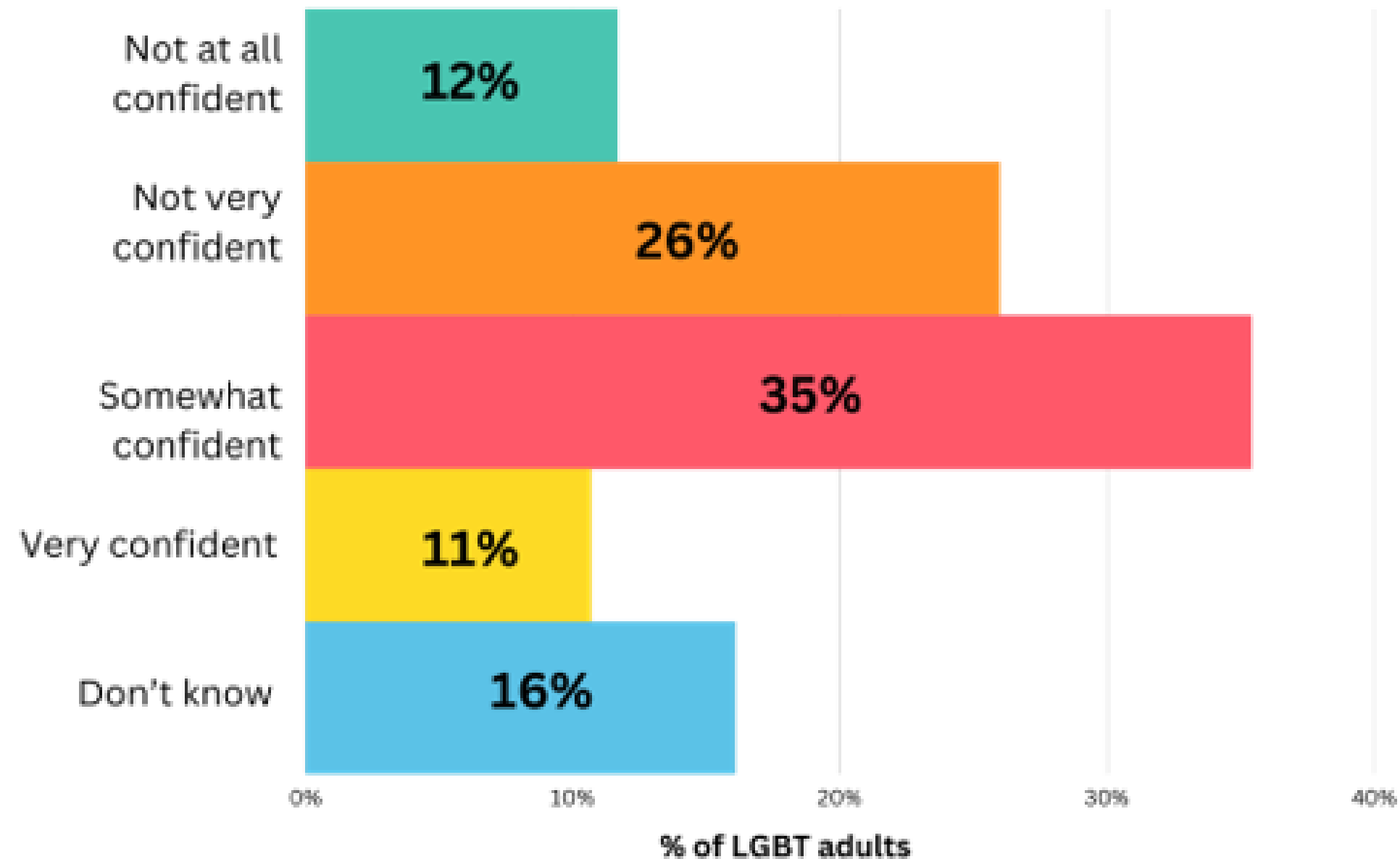
# LGBT adults also know little to nothing about adoption from the foster care system...





# ...and are also **not very confident** in organizations that facilitate adoption

How **confident** are you that organizations that facilitate adoption from foster care do the right thing for children in need of adoption?



# Barriers to adopting from foster care

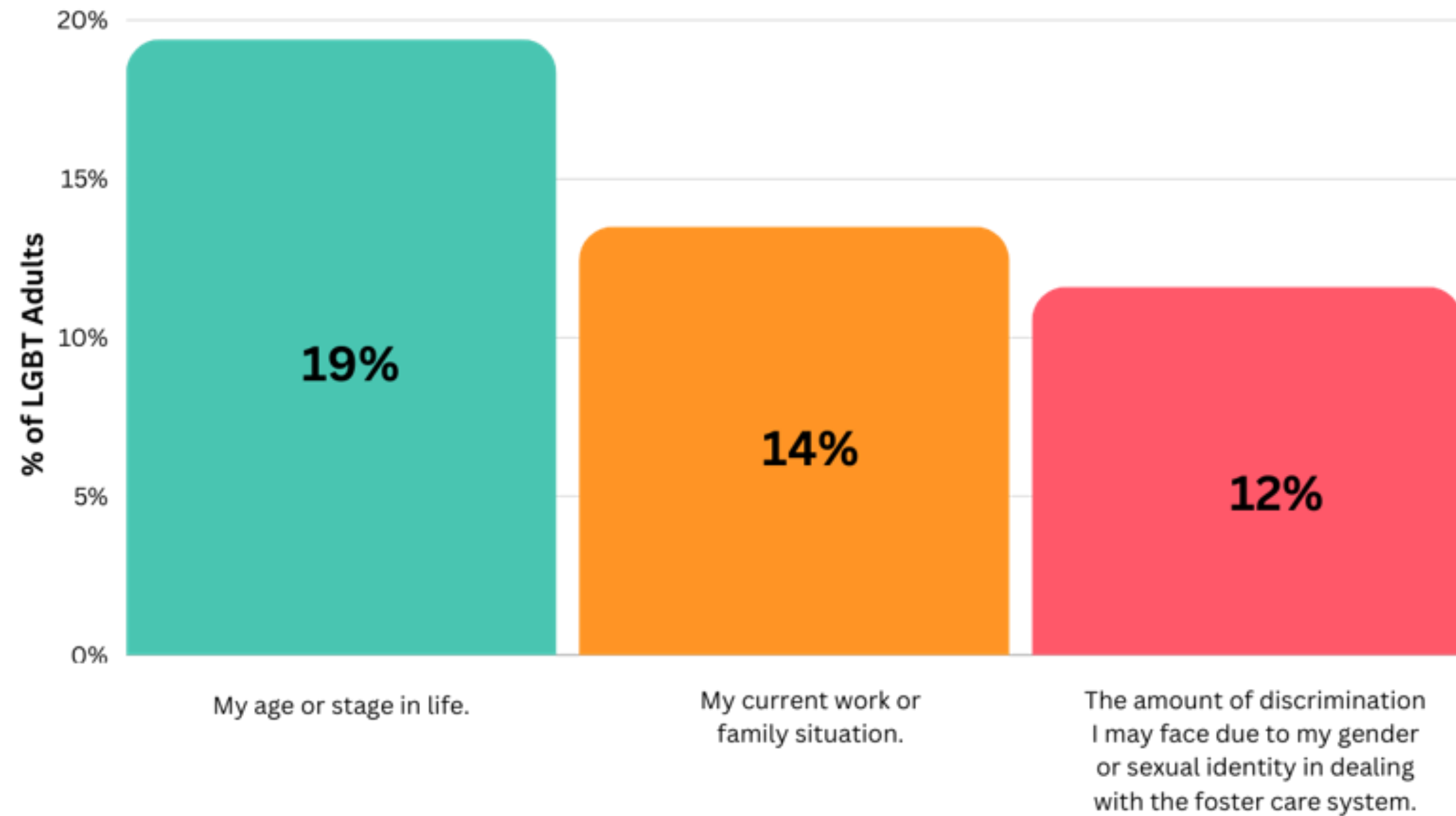
Top 5 Most Common Barriers to Adopting from Foster Care Among LGBT Adults

*% Major barrier*

1. My current work or family situation. **50.6%**
2. My age or stage in life. **50.3%**
3. The changes I would have to make to my home or living situation in order to foster. **45.8%**
4. The possibility the child was removed from their home for the wrong reasons. **42.4%**
5. My desire to add a child or have children (i.e., I do not want a child or more children). **38.7%**

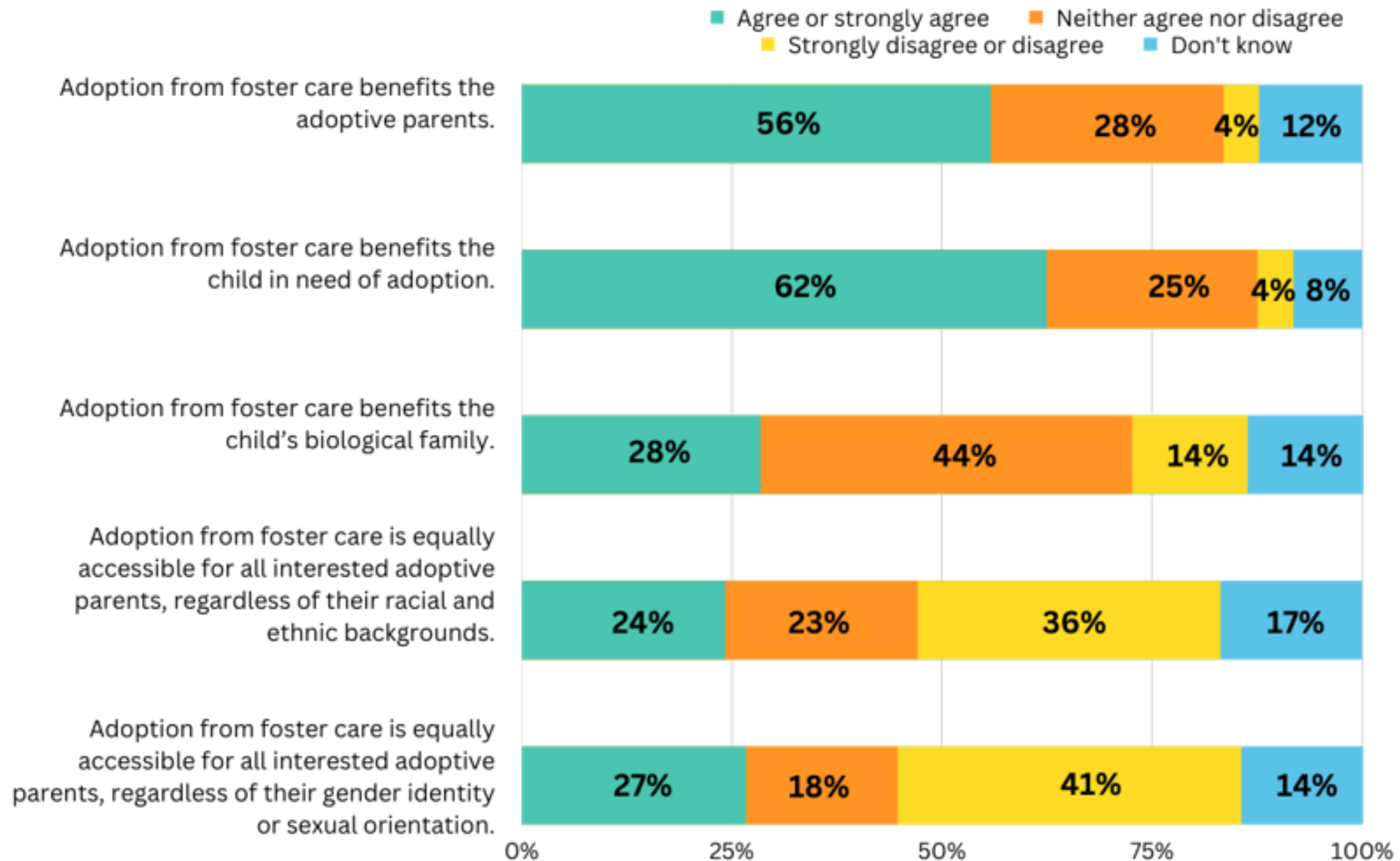
# LGBT adults also cite "age or stage in life" and "work/family situation" as their **top barriers to adopting**

If you had to choose only ONE barrier as the **most important** to you, which of the previous barriers would you choose?



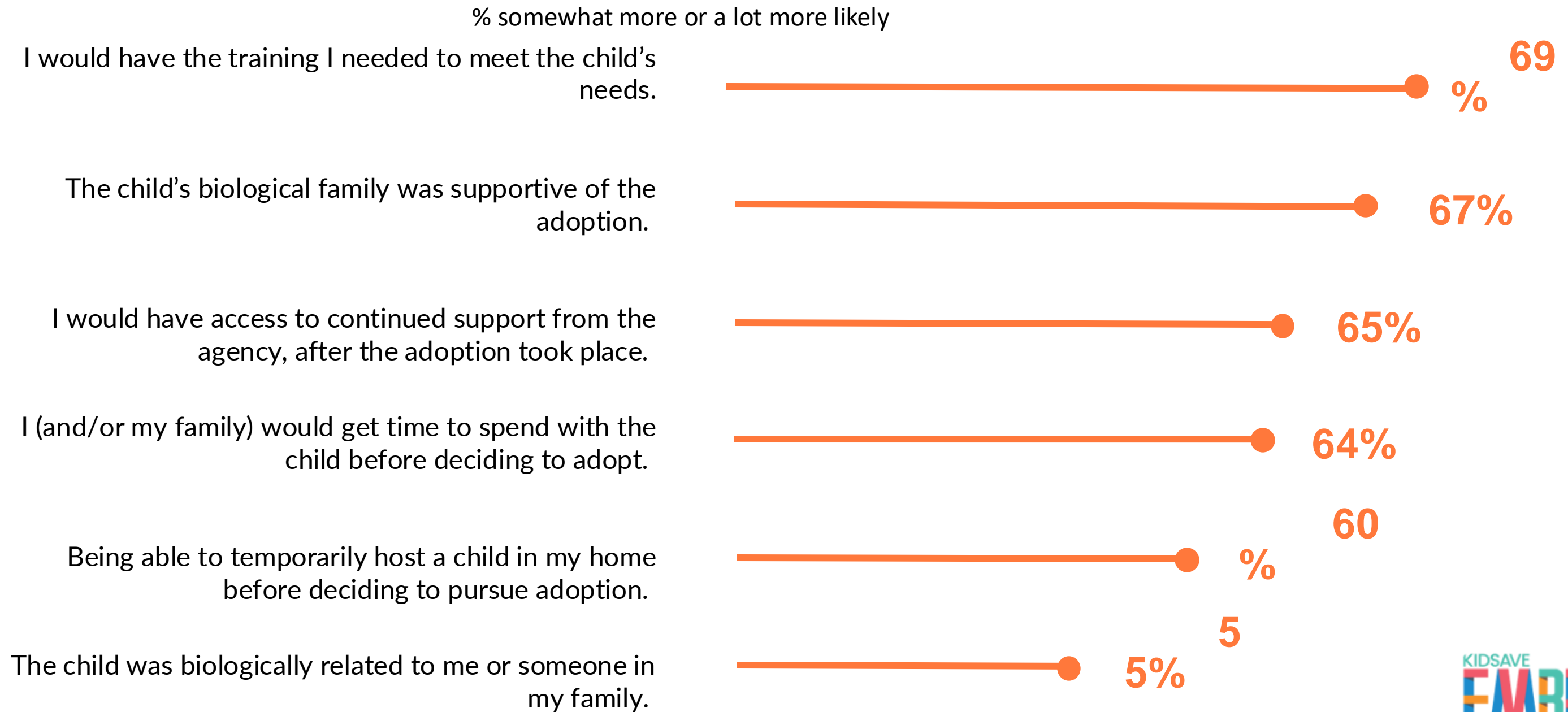
# LGBT adults feel adoption from foster care is not equally accessible or equally beneficial

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



# Interest in adoption from foster care

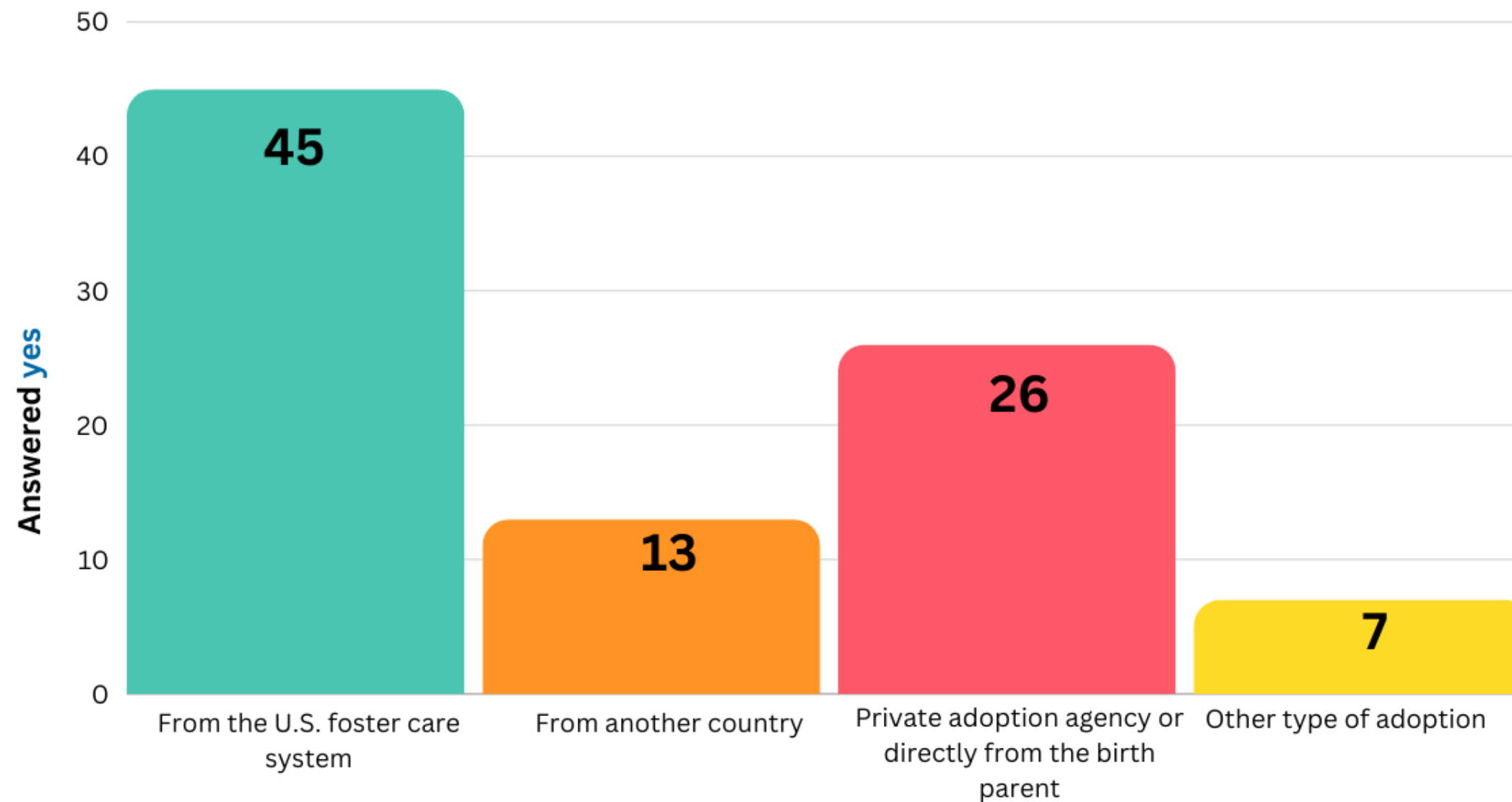
"If the following were true, would it make you more or less likely to consider adoption through foster care in the U.S.? If I knew...."



# Among LGBT respondents who have adopted, the plurality are from U.S. foster care

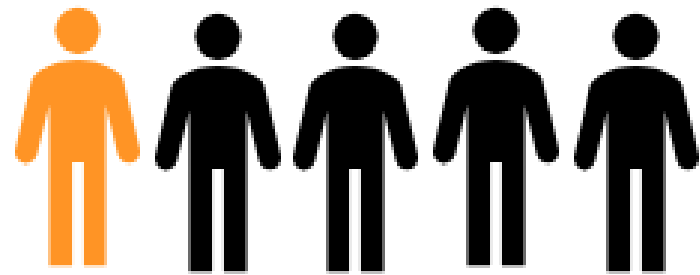
Out of 91 total adoptions

Have you ever adopted a child?



# Mentorship program experience

**1 OUT OF 5 LGBT Adults**



have participated in a program to work with children in foster care



44% of LGBT adults have ever considered or thought a lot about participating in a program to work with children in foster care.



53% were not aware that these types of volunteer programs (outside of foster parenting) existed.

# Mentorship program experience

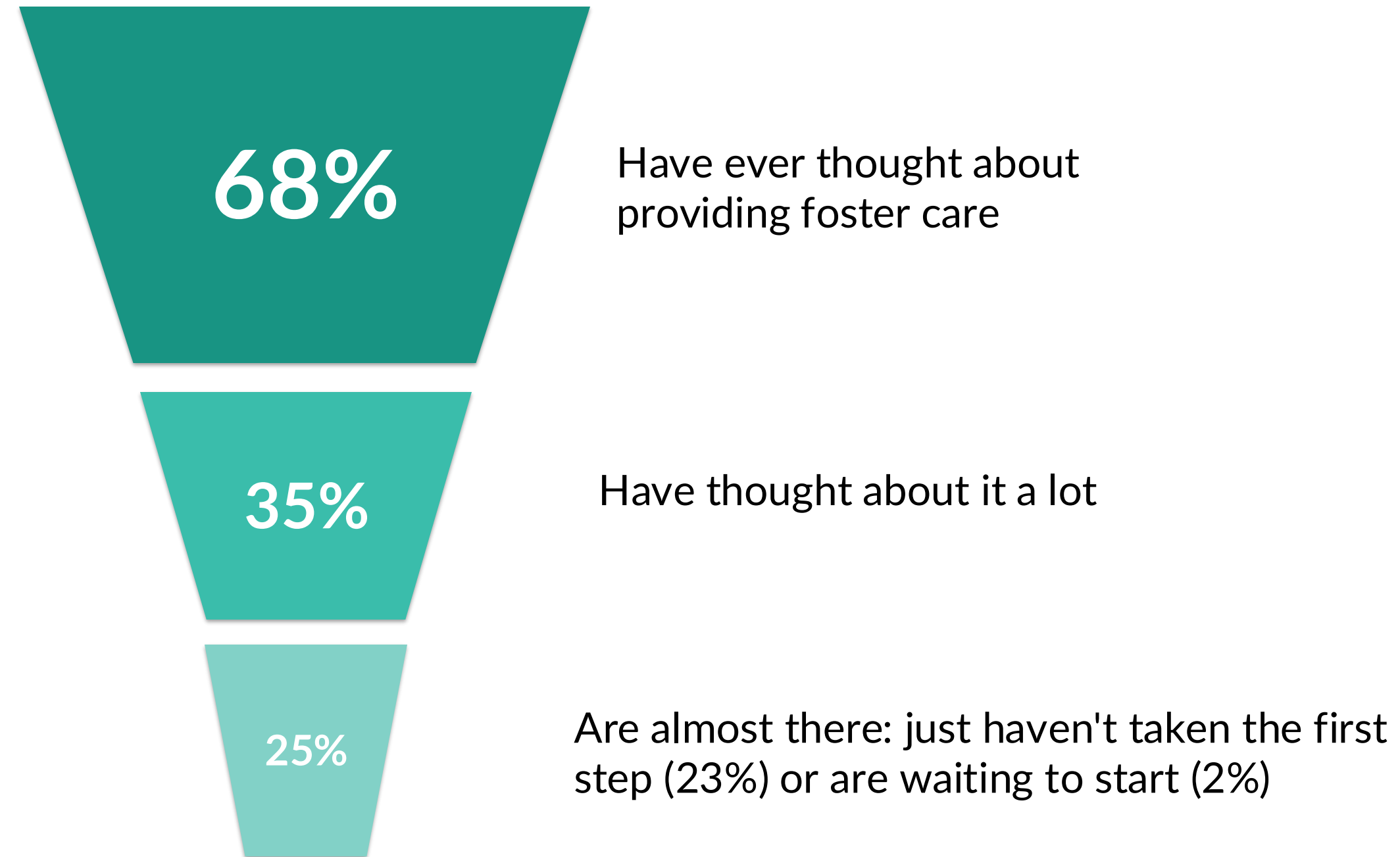
Most LGBT adults say **training and the opportunity to form a meaningful relationship** could make them more likely to participate in a program working with a child in foster care.

% who say the following would make them more or much more likely to consider participating:

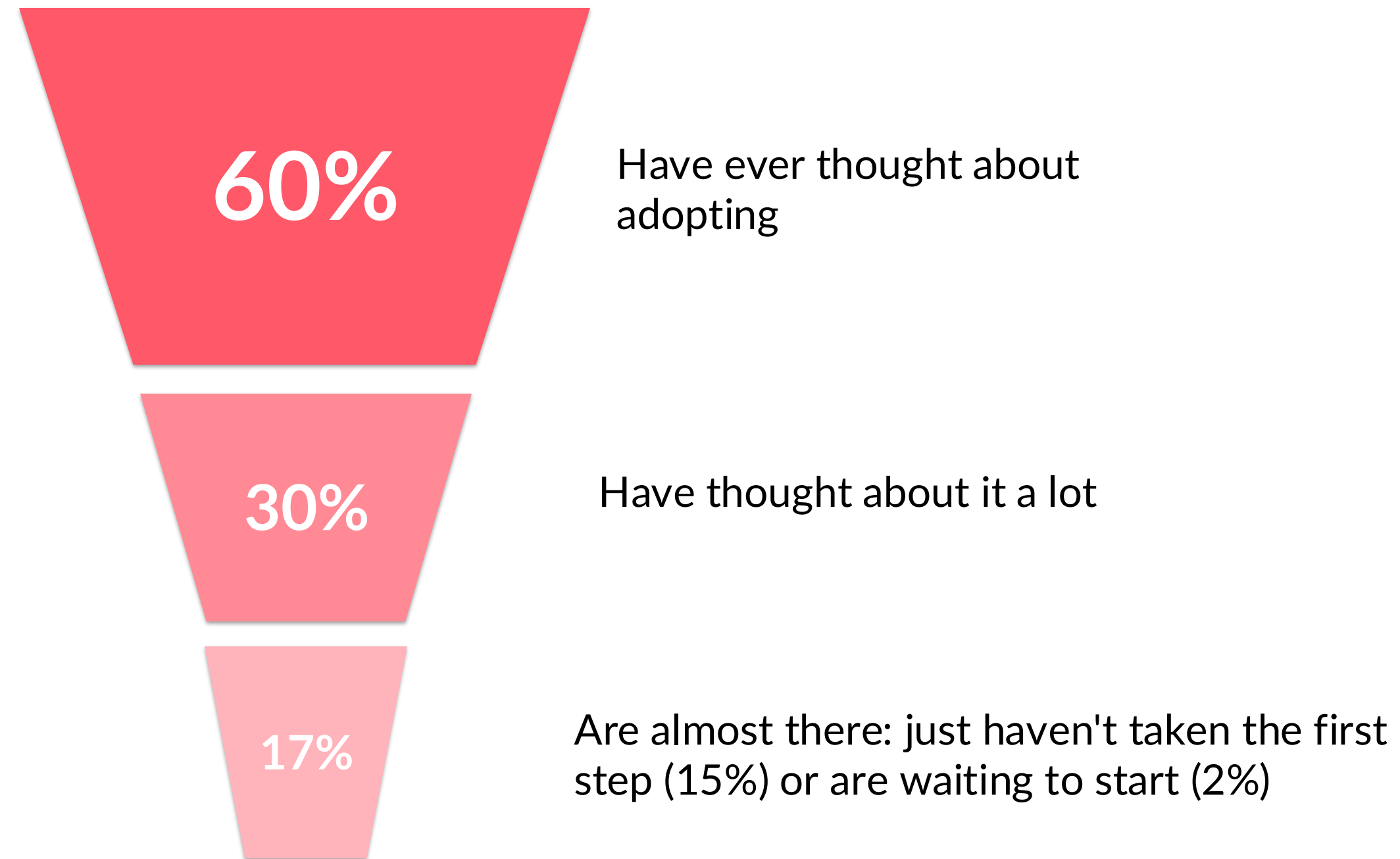
- **81%** Having training and support to ensure I know how to help the child I support.
- **78%** Knowing the child has a say in whether they spend time with me.
- **74%** Having training and support to ensure I felt safe at all times.
- **71%** Getting to meet and spend time with the child before making a commitment.



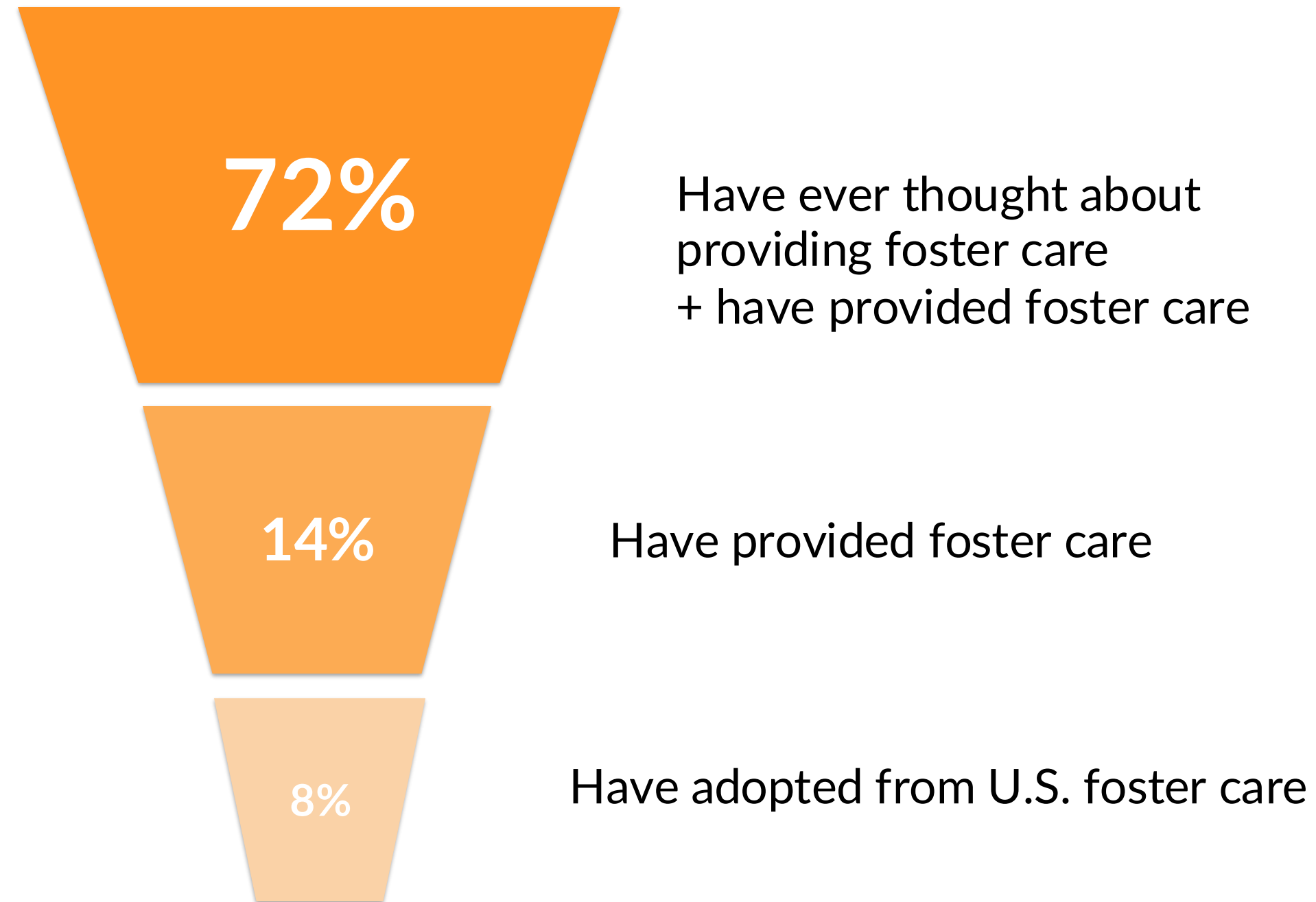
# Most LGBT adults have thought about providing foster care



# Most LGBT adults have thought about adopting from foster care

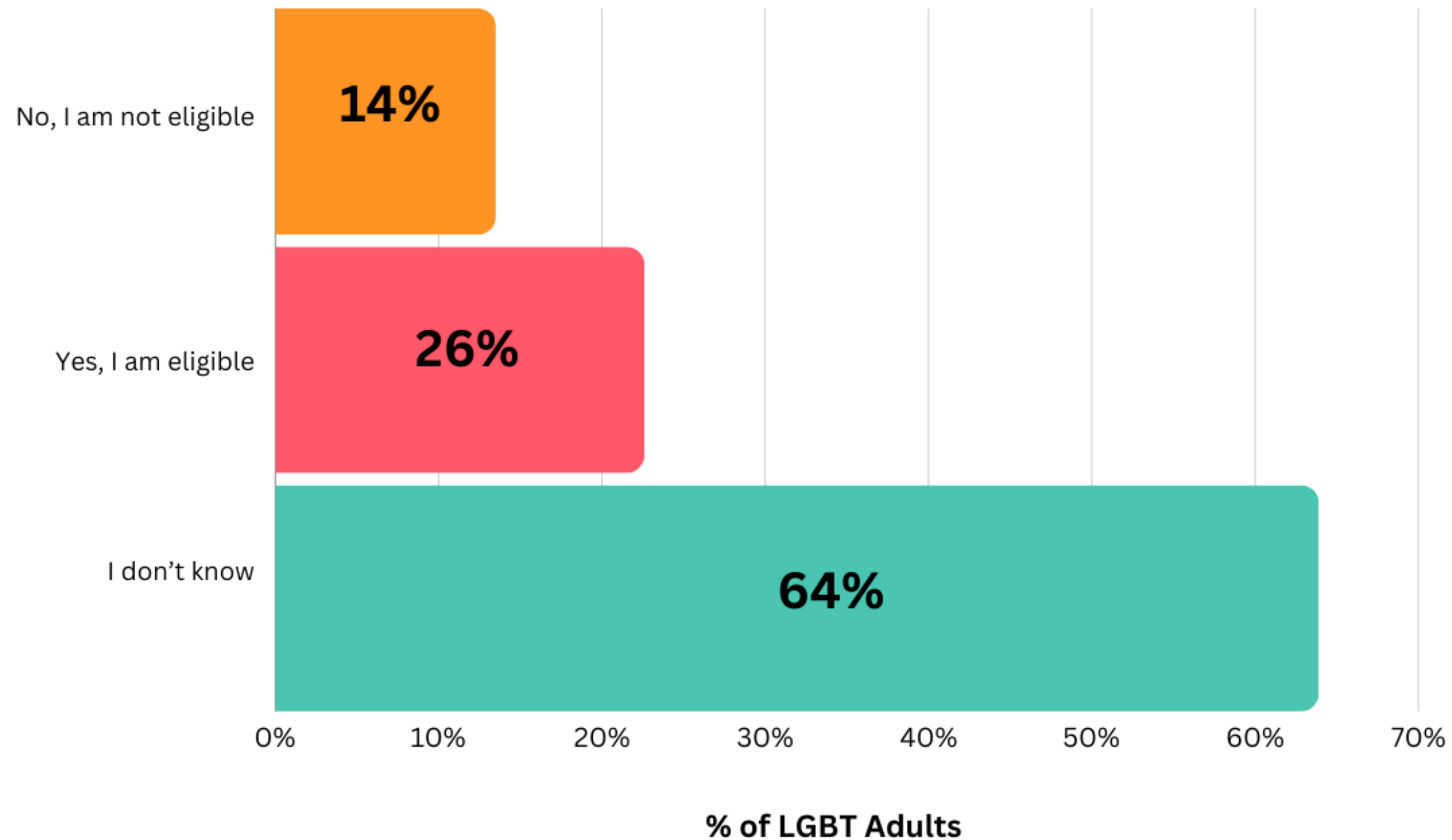


# Fostering to adoption gateway



# However, most LGBT adults **don't know** if they're eligible to provide foster care

Do you know if you are legally **eligible** to provide foster care?



## Key Findings from the Data

- Discrimination due to gender or sexuality in dealing with the foster care system is a major barrier to both fostering (35%) and adopting (36%) for LGBT adults. (12% chose it as their most important barrier to adopting).
- 89% of LGBT adults report knowing at least a little about the foster care system, but only 1 in 4 have a positive view of it.
- Most LGBT adults believe the foster care system could do more to be more supportive.
- Many of LGBT adults have low trust in the system. Only around a quarter see adoption from foster care as an equally accessible process for all adoptive parents.
- Over two-thirds of LGBT adults have considered providing foster care, and a fifth of LGBT adults are almost there (23% haven't taken the first step).
- One fifth of LGBT adults have participated in a mentorship program, and almost half ever considered doing so.

# Recommendations from the data

- Training and support could encourage most (81%) LGBT adults to participate in programs with foster care children.
- 67% of LGBT adults would consider adoption if they had support from the biological family.
- Training to meet children's needs could encourage most (69%) LGBT adults to consider adoption.
- More awareness and education would be helpful for LGBT adults to be more involved in these processes, as 64% don't even know they are eligible.

# Thank You!

To learn more about our ongoing research and how we are using the knowledge we've gained to reduce barriers preventing families from mentoring, fostering, and adopting, visit [embrace.kidsave.org](https://embrace.kidsave.org).

Interested in partnering with us? Contact Shantay Armstrong at [shantay@kidsave.org](mailto:shantay@kidsave.org).

*Thank you to our amazing partners!*



**Leslie Alexander  
Foundation**