



Patterns of Intermittent and Ongoing Disconnection Among Youth of Color

Results from an analysis of the 2014 Survey of Income and
Program Participation

Disconnection is closely tied to racial inequality

What is “disconnection”?

People who are experiencing disconnection are those who are not working and not enrolled in school. It may be an involuntary state, and is tied to short- and long-term economic hardship.

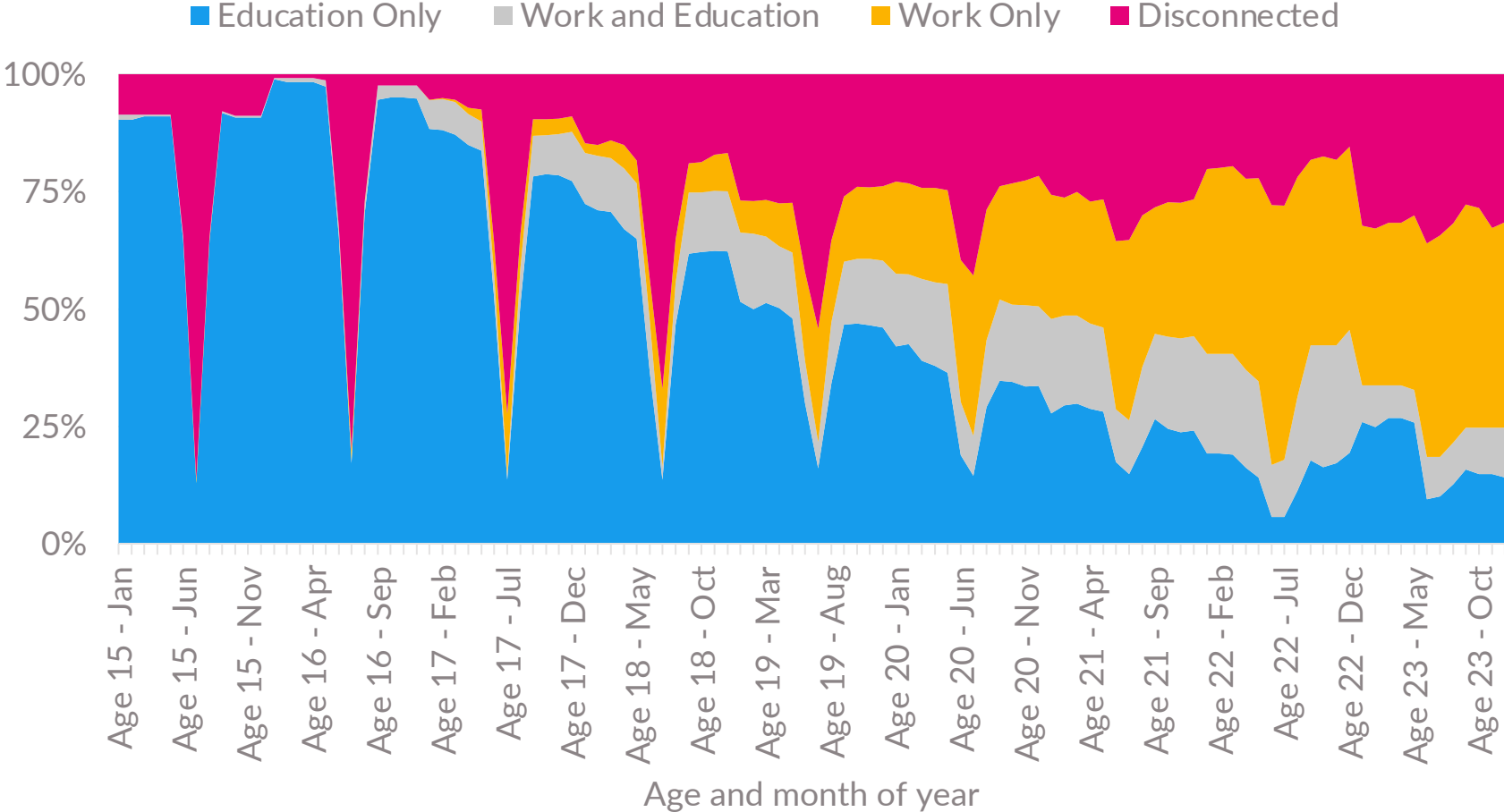
Black youths are especially vulnerable to experiencing disconnection

Due to oppression and systemic racism, Black Americans are more likely to experience disconnection and are more susceptible to the associated negative outcomes. Covid-19 has only made this worse.

Disconnection can be ongoing or intermittent

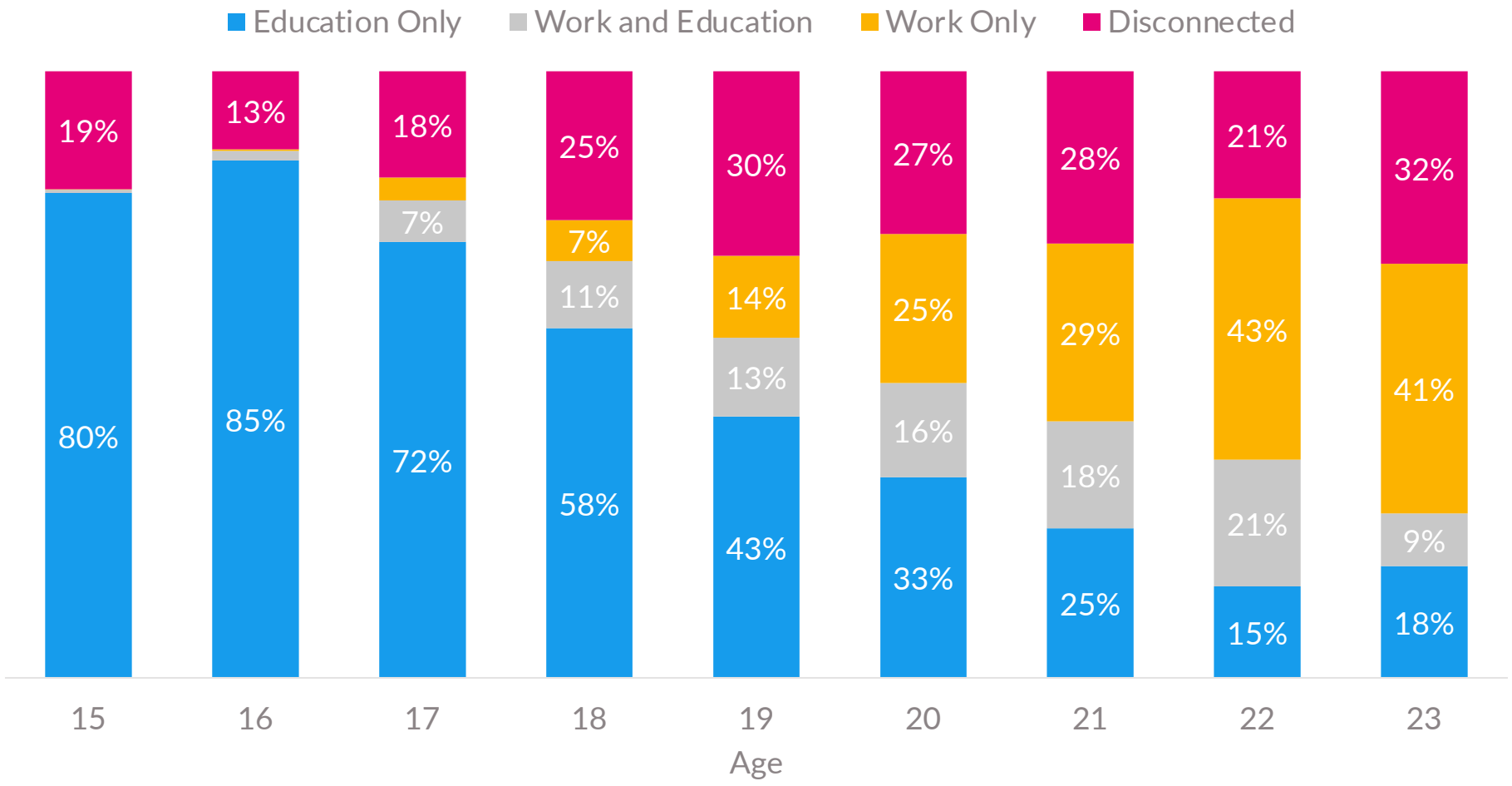
Cumulative disconnection over time is associated with negative outcomes. Disconnection does not only come in prolonged periods.

Among Black youth (age 15 to 23), disconnection generally increases over time. Youth spend about **one-third** of their time disconnected from age 19 to 23.



Source: Author's calculations from the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).

Disconnection **increases sharply** from age 17 to 19, and again at age 23 when work and education decrease.



Males, individuals living in non-metropolitan areas, and individuals from low-income households all experience more cumulative disconnection and persistent disconnection

Sample	Percentage of time disconnected	Percentage with persistent disconnection
Gender		
Male	26	37
Female	25	33
Metropolitan living status		
Metropolitan	24	33
Non-Metropolitan	32	44
Household income to poverty ratio		
Not low-income	20	29
Low-income	29	40

Disconnection is a symptom of deeply rooted problems, but targeted policies can help:

- **Summer youth employment** programs can tackle disparities in summer work experience that are observed as early as age 16.
- Investments in **early childhood education** and later efforts to improve employment connections, such as **career academy programs**.
- Funding for **flexible, affordable post-secondary education** with “**non-traditional**” students in mind.

There are many other factors to examine with regards to disconnection: such as program participation, education and the associated costs, healthcare, debt, region, incarceration, and more.