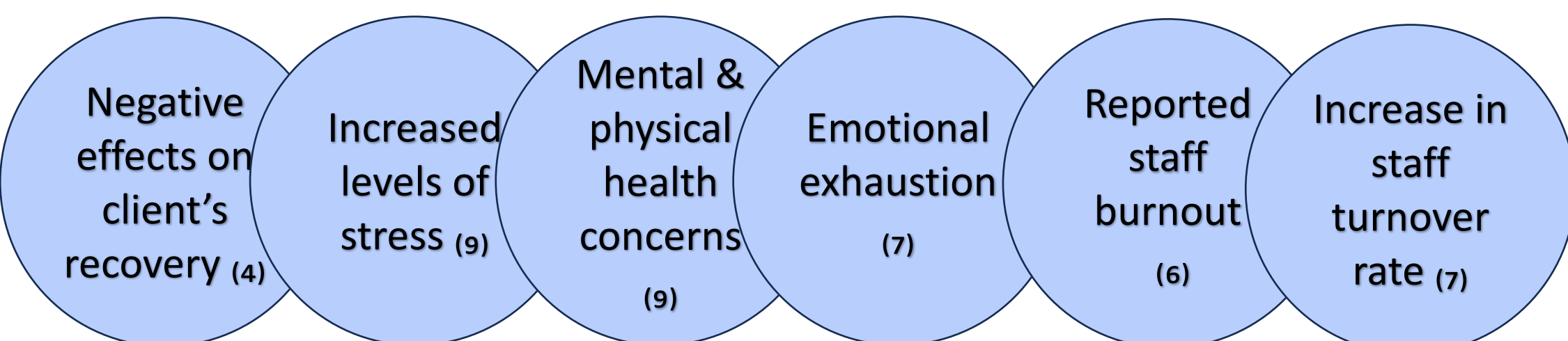


INTRODUCTION

Benefits of group therapy for clients with substance use disorder (SUD) include: ↑ treatment engagement/adherence⁽¹²⁾, ↓ in return to homelessness⁽¹²⁾, ↓ social isolation/depressive symptoms⁽⁴⁾

Effective groups, however, require a leader with training on group facilitation & dynamics⁽³⁾⁽¹³⁾⁽⁸⁾⁽⁴⁾

Research shows lack of leader training results in negative effects on leaders/clients:



Research on group facilitation training & its effectiveness for leaders/clients, specifically for open-enrolling SUD treatment groups, is limited

Site: This is a community-based, residential facility serving up to 24 male-identifying individuals with SUD, with co-occurring mental-health disorders, &/or chronic health conditions⁽¹⁰⁾. Currently, counselors facilitating groups have no formal training in group leadership; which has been reported to contribute to high turnover rates amidst the counselors who facilitate groups

Occupational Therapists (OT) have skills to provide evidence-based training re: interdisciplinary constructs of leading groups, i.e. leadership skills, group theory, group structure & dynamics, while utilizing a client-centered, holistic approach⁽¹¹⁾⁽²⁾

THE AIMS

Design, implement, & evaluate effectiveness of a group facilitation training program for counselors at SUD treatment facility using evidence-based research with the goal of increasing counselors' knowledge of group facilitation skills

METHODS



The Kirkpatrick Model⁽⁵⁾ used as basis for group facilitation training program evaluation to determine **reaction & learning**. Open response survey questions used to gather **reaction** (post); pre-post Likert scale survey outcomes were analyzed for **learning**. Due to 14-week timeline, behavior/results unable to be assessed

Modified Group Leader Self-Assessment (GLSA)⁽¹⁾ used to create pre-post survey
4 functions of effective group leaders were measured:

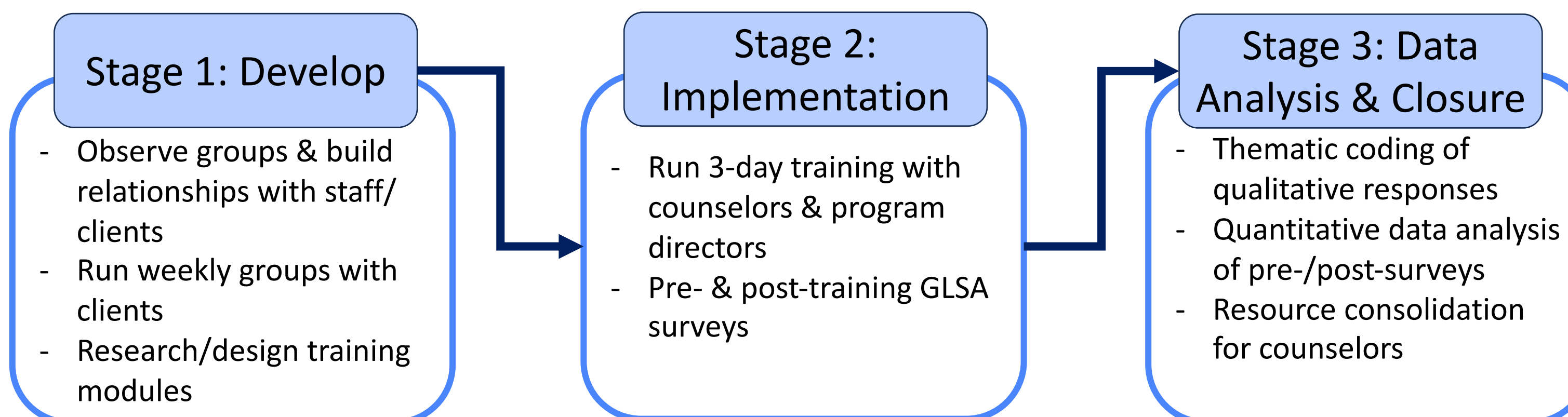
Caring: support/concern, encouragement/praise, caring/warmth, protection, genuineness

Meaning Attribution: clarify, interpret, translate feelings & experiences, explain concepts, encourage expression of differences, give corrective feedback

Executive Function: Provide structure, manage time, introduce topics, set group rules & goals, manage member/group conflict, draw out quiet members, redirect group/member if off track

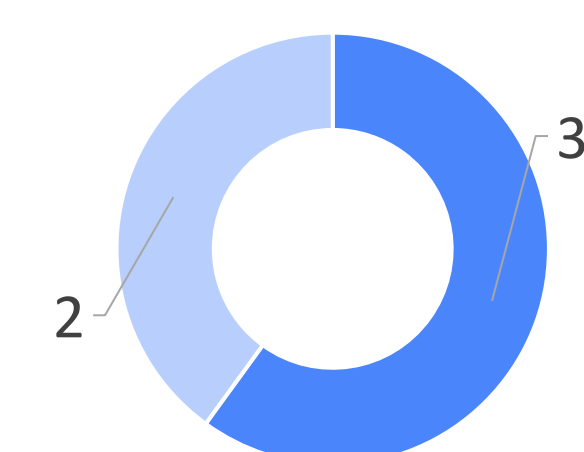
Emotional Stimulation: help members relate to other members, self-disclosure, model personal risk-taking, challenge thoughts/ideas

STAGES/PROCESS



RESULTS

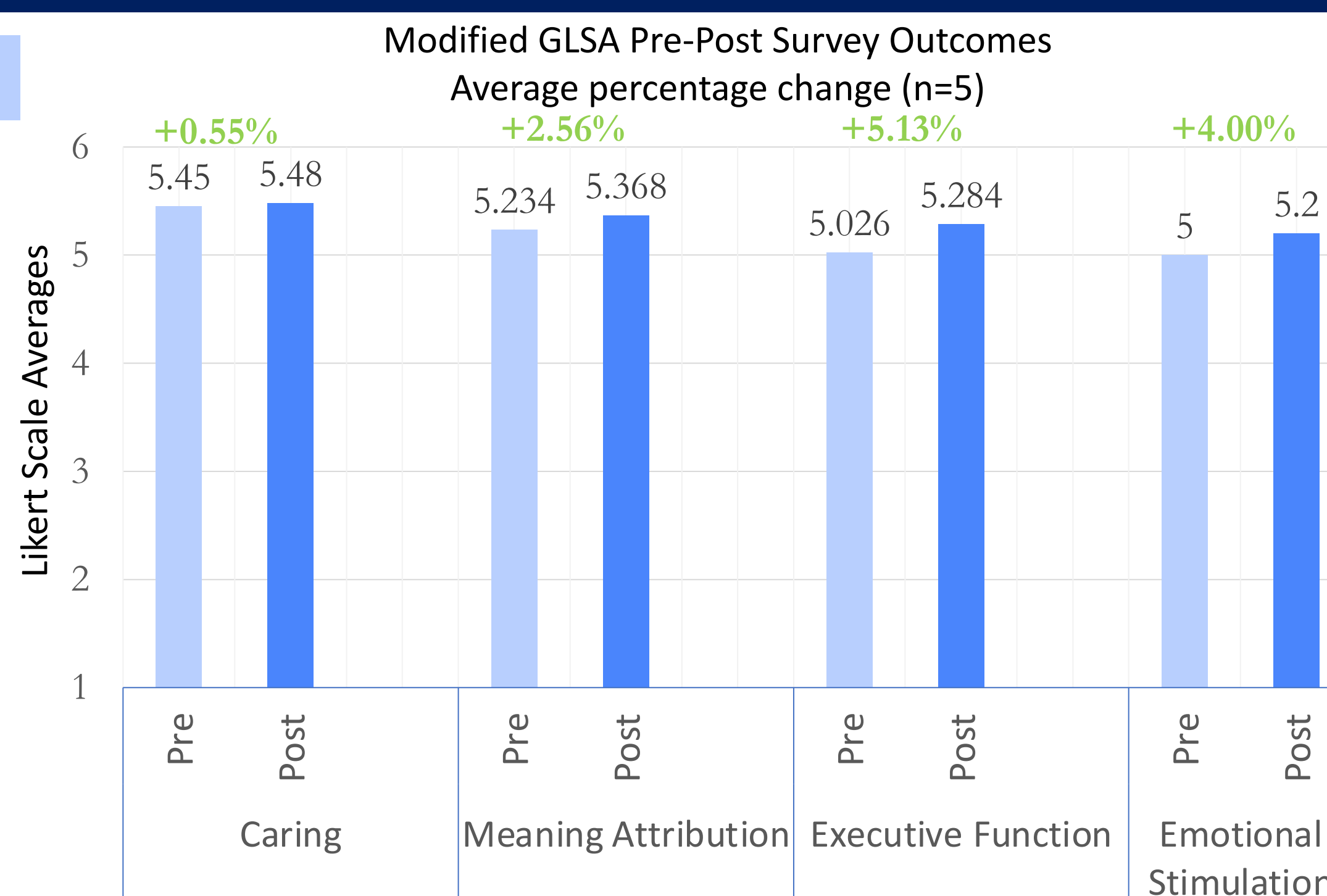
PARTICIPANTS



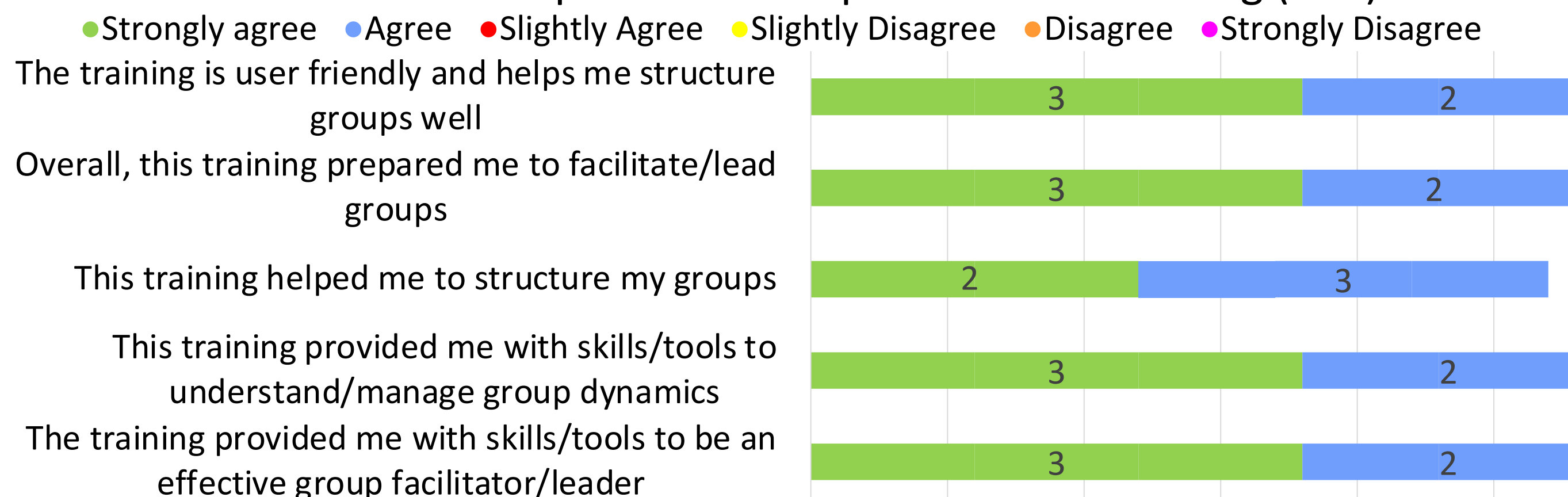
Total Participants: n=5

- # of program directors
- # of counselors

100% of participants reported having participated previously in some formal education &/or training in group facilitation



Initial Perceptions of Group Facilitation Training (n=5)



Theme 1: Content

- Clear & concise slides
- Interactive activities
- Informative & thorough
- Appreciation for facilitator's clarity, engagement, time management
- Effective use of role plays

"It was a very complex subject, but all the main points were reviewed and expanded on so well"

Theme 2: Main Takeaways

- Fostering group cohesion & safety
- Using reflection and linking as a skill
- Techniques for managing different group dynamics
- Focus on process commentary skills

"My biggest takeaway is the importance of having here and now conversations with clients"

Theme 3: Training Feedback

- Training was time-consuming
- More concrete examples of managing different group dynamics
- Spending more time describing the 5 skills for group facilitation

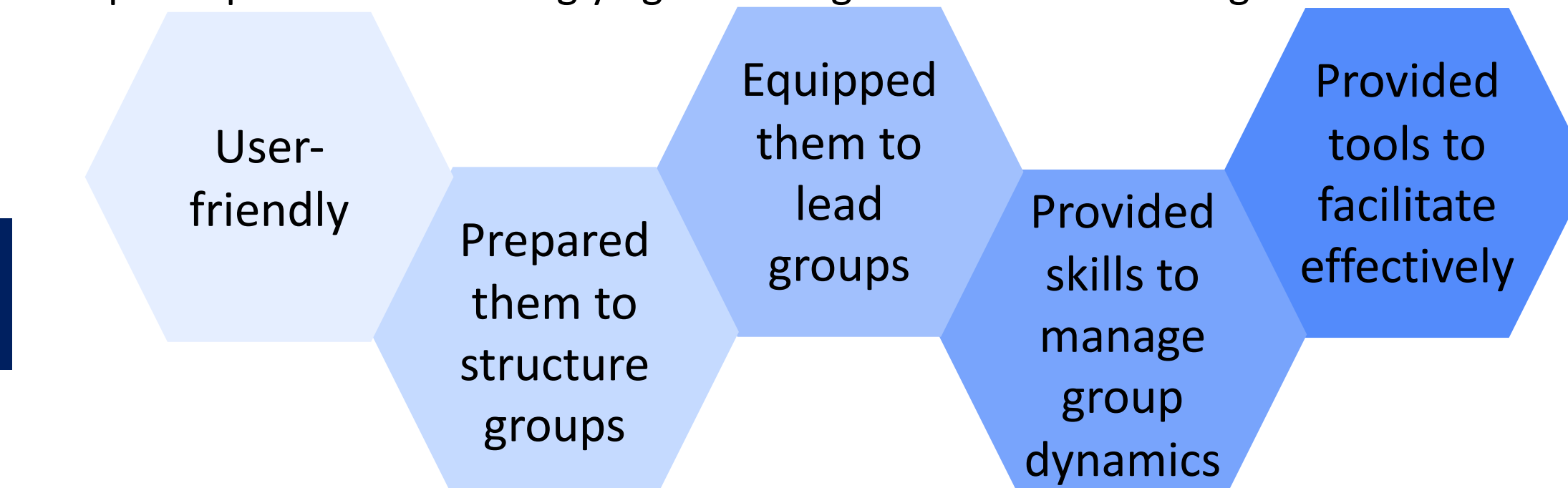
"Could have spent more time with more examples of the 5 [process commentary] skills in depth"

DISCUSSION

Qualitative responses showed participants appreciated the content & overall, they improved their specific group facilitation skills, such as reflection & linking

While average pre- & post- survey scores only slightly increased in self-perception of participants group facilitation skills, initial perceptions of training were positive

All participants either strongly agreed or agreed that the training was:



Role for future DEC students at this site is to continue to examine the group facilitation training through behavior & results stages of the Kirkpatrick Model to assess if training aligns with the group research⁽¹²⁾⁽⁴⁾. According to the literature, the training should have an overall positive effect on clients & counselors

LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size (n=5)
- Curriculum specific to site, non-generalizable
- Limited time to complete pre- & post-surveys due to fast-paced environment
- Highly rated self-perceptions of group skills making it difficult to demonstrate objective quantitative change

OT IMPLICATIONS

Occupational therapists can leverage their expertise to not only teach & demonstrate group facilitation skills, but also tailor these skills specifically for the context of SUD intervention. Equipping staff with tools/techniques directly impacts clients by increasing engagement in & effectiveness in group intervention while enhancing counselor's lives & their professional development

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Role for directors of program moving forward is to present group training content to newly hired counselors in a way that is engaging, informative, & concise

Offer training annually for newly hired & tenured counselors to ensure there is uniformity

Provide more concrete examples of various group dynamics

Add more interactive opportunities or activities to practice with various skills discussed in training

REFERENCES & CONTACT INFO



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References:

