



INTRODUCTION

Problem: Drowning is leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 & second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children ages 5-14⁸

- Research shows children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 160 times more likely to die from drowning compared to neurotypical peers^{4, 10}
- Participation in swimming lessons proven to be associated with 88% reduction in drowning risk in children¹
- Participation in aquatics direct relation to occupations of social participation, leisure, education, health management, play, sleep², attention, & water safety¹⁴
- Feedback from current aquatics directors, indicates current adaptive swimming training programs are costly & time consuming
- One program, claiming to be global leader in adaptive swim instruction, takes 16+ hours & costs >\$800 to achieve Level 3 certification¹²

Solution: Make adaptive swimming lesson training program, rooted in occupational therapy (OT) principles & research based methods, more accessible → Increase in adaptive swimming lessons provided to children with disabilities → Decrease in drowning deaths in children with disabilities.

Program: The Sunfish Method© is an online adaptive swimming lesson training program for individuals to receive a certificate in adaptive swimming.¹¹

- Designed by occupational therapist & adaptive swim instructor, Marykate Galluzzo, OT, OTD, OTR
- Takes 2.5 hours & includes 5 modules: Introduction, Basics, Physical & Visual Impairments & Hearing Loss, Inclusivity & The Sunfish Method© Catalog

PURPOSE & AIMS

Purpose: To increase the accessibility of adaptive swimming lessons for children with disabilities within the community through initiating the dissemination of The Sunfish Method©, an online adaptive swimming lesson training program.

- Aim 1** Conduct outreach to potential stakeholders to identify if they are trained or train instructors in adaptive swimming lessons & determine interest.
- Aim 2** Provide individuals with information to make an informed decision & motivate at least 5 stakeholders to utilize the training.
- Aim 3** Evaluate The Sunfish Method© through post-satisfaction survey to gather data on ways to improve.

METHODS

- 1 Conduct market analysis to create contact list of swim instructor training programs, swim schools, & college OT departments.
- 2 Initial outreach to identify market rates of programs to create pricing guide & make informed decision on pricing of The Sunfish Method©.
- 3 Secondary outreach to identify stakeholder interest in The Sunfish Method©.
- 4 Give stakeholders access to The Sunfish Method© to initiate dissemination.
- 5 Develop, utilize & evaluate data from post satisfaction survey.

PARTICIPANTS

Swim Organizations/ Swim Instructors:	College OT Departments:	Independent Users/Non-Instructors
# Contacted: 152 Response Rate: 24% (36) Sign-Ups: 6	# Contacted: 70 Response Rate: 11% (8) Sign-Ups: 7	# Contacted: 8 Response Rate: 100% (8) Sign-Ups: 7

PES Model

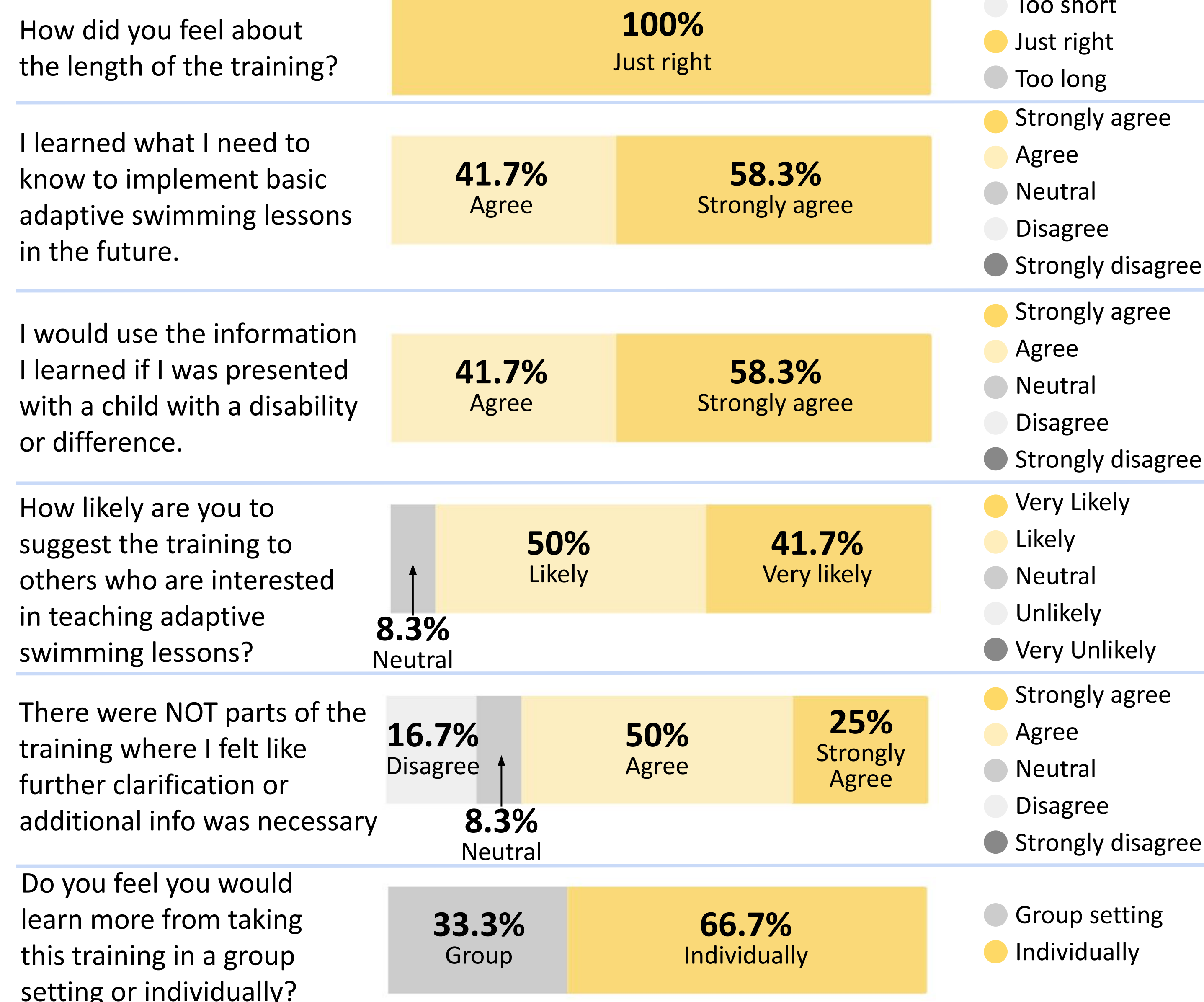


Infographic by Isabelle Copponi, OT/s for The Sunfish Method©¹¹

RESULTS

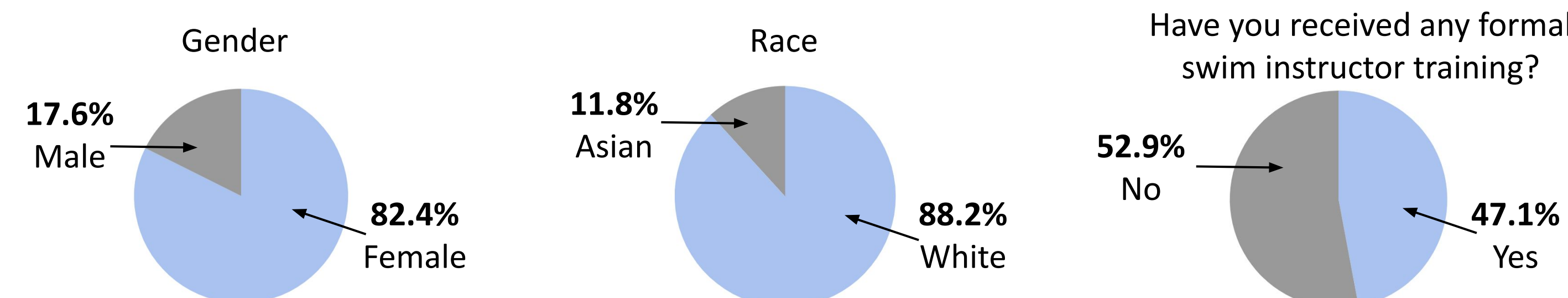
Post-Satisfaction Survey Results:

*12/20 or 60% of users completed Satisfaction Survey



Demographic Questionnaire Results:

*17/20 or 85% of users completed Demographic Questionnaire



DISCUSSION

This project sought to initiate dissemination of The Sunfish Method© to increase accessibility of adaptive swimming lessons in the community. User feedback gathered to refine & optimize The Sunfish Method© & increase its effectiveness.

- **Study Limitations:**
 - 60% of users completed satisfaction survey
 - Did not have testimonials from current users for stakeholders to reference
 - Current students interested but do not have time with academic responsibilities
 - Swim schools are often franchises & cannot easily add to standard training
 - Double negative survey questions may be hard to interpret & respond to
- **Strengths:** Promoted advancement of emerging practice area in OT. Used OT lens to serve the community by saving lives through increasing number of organizations/individuals who provide basic adaptive swimming lessons. In doing so, promoted inclusivity & empowerment while highlighting OT's role in addressing needs & enhancing quality of life⁶.
- **Future Considerations:**
 - Make animated videos
 - Add more interactive components
 - Create/offer group learning format
 - Add explanation section on satisfaction survey to make precise improvements
 - Add additional info to specific modules for clarification
- **Collaborations:** Initiated with YMCA¹³, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston⁵ & Canadian Swim School Alliance⁷
 - **Plan:** Organization receives a discount on The Sunfish Method© → They provide The Sunfish Method© to their members/employees at discounted rate as a benefit
- High number of sign-ups from OT students - may be due to interest in creating OT based program in future

CONCLUSION

Per the satisfaction survey, participants reported they would use the information on The Sunfish Method© if presented with a child who has a disability or difference, thus increasing children's accessibility to adaptive swimming lessons & eventually decreasing the numbers of deaths in this population due to drowning.

Recommendations for Increasing Use of The Sunfish Method©

- 1 Continue outreach to community-based swim organizations/instructors, & college OT departments via email.
- 2 Increase access to info about The Sunfish Method© by presenting at conferences (i.e. MAOT, AOTA Inspire) & submitting to journals.
- 3 Gather testimonials from users to increase stakeholder buy-in & trust.
- 4 Create & finalize collaborations with additional organizations.
- 5 Apply for AOTA's Approved Providers Program³ for continuing education.

REFERENCES & CONTACT INFO

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References &
Link to The Sunfish
Method© Online
Training Program:

