RACE4LIFE

Empowering people in SUD recovery

Capacity Building Program Evaluation

A Capacity Building program for sport trainers and health professionals on how to deliver tailored sport-based interventions for SUD recovery

The role of Sport
in Addiction Recovery

Play, feel, meet, live

Deliverable # 3.3
RACE4LIFE Pilot implementations & evaluation Report

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RACE4LIFE Capacity-building Program

STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

The RACE4LIFE Capacity Building training program is designed to take place over four days. Two days in online training and two days face-to-face. Additional days can be used, depending on the context and profile of the trainees. In some circumstances, the participants may not be available for full days, or conducting the training over four days may be too demanding due to their workload. There may also be other aspects to consider, such as factoring in extra time for interpretation during the training. Depending on these considerations, the training can be implemented either over four (or fewer/ more) consecutive days, or it can be spread over a longer period.

The following section will provide an overview of the RACE4LIFE Capacity-Building structure and key considerations for preparing the training. It includes three components:

A. The **RACE4LIFE Theory Guide** presents an overview of key concepts and the theoretical foundation of the Sport-based behavior change protocol for people under SUD recovery. The Theory Guide is a crucial resource that should be frequently consulted when adjusting each session to the specific needs of the trainees.

B. The **RACE4LIFE Sport-based behavior change protocol** for people under SUD recovery

C. **The RACE4LIFE Capacity-building Training Manual**, a crucial part of the RACE4LIFE training program, offers guidance and tools for the preparation, design, and implementation of sports trainer and health professional training.

A. The RACE4LIFE Theory Guide is divided into six thematic modules

Session 1: Understanding Addiction

The [Understanding Addiction session](#) focuses on key aspects to consider when exploring addiction, which is crucial for designing sport-based interventions for substance use disorder recovery, highlighting key aspects to consider.

Supporting materials:

1. [Modeling The Addiction Presentation](#)
2. [The role of Motivation_presentation](#)
3. [The recovery capital_presentation](#)
4. [The recovery stages_presentation](#)

Session 2: The role of sport in SUD recovery

The session discusses [The role of sport in SUD recovery](#), emphasizing its holistic approach to supporting individuals, highlighting barriers and facilitators to exercise, and its contribution to physical and psychological well-being.

Supporting materials:

1. [The role of sport in SUD recovery_presentation](#)
2. [Evidence-based recommendations for sport implementations in SUD recovery](#)
3. [What about sport and physical exercise in substance use disorder recovery? Perceptions of individuals undergoing SUD recovery. Barriers & Benefits](#)
4. [What about sport and physical exercise in substance use disorder recovery? Health professionals' perceptions](#)
5. [Empowering Substance Use Disorders treatment through physical exercise. An overview of studies](#)

Session 3: Design sport-based intervention for SUD recovery

The session discusses the process of <u>Designing a sport-based intervention for SUD recovery</u>, which uses exercise and sports as therapeutic tools to promote physical health, mental well-being, and community. Key components and steps are discussed, ensuring a structured and supportive environment.

Supporting materials:

1. <u>Design sport-based intervention for SUD recovery__presentation</u>
2. <u>Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) Taxonomy</u>
3. <u>Application of a theory-based exercise promotion program (RACE) to adults in therapy for substance use disorders: A longitudinal interventional study.</u>

Session 4: Theories of Behaviour Change

When designing a sport-based intervention for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) recovery, incorporating theories of behavior change is essential for developing effective strategies to promote and sustain positive behavior change. Several behavior change theories provide frameworks for understanding the factors influencing behavior and guiding the development of interventions. The <u>Theories of Behaviour Change session</u> focuses on prominent theories that can be applied to sport-based interventions for SUD recovery

Supporting materials:

1. <u>Social Cognitive Theory__presentation</u>
2. <u>Self-Determination Theory__presentation</u>
3. <u>Self-efficacy__presentation</u>
4. <u>Goal-Setting Theory__presentation</u>
5. <u>Motivational interviewing__presentation</u>

Session 5: Life skill development through sport

The Life Skill Development through sport session discusses the importance of incorporating life skill development through sport into Substance Use Disorder recovery programs, highlighting its holistic approach that considers physical, mental, and social well-being. It emphasizes the benefits of sports in promoting physical health, community building, and personal growth.

Supporting materials:

1. Life Skills_ presentation
2. The role of life skills in SUD recovery_ presentation
3. What about sport and physical exercise in substance use disorder recovery? Perceptions of individuals undergoing SUD recovery. Life Skills Development

Session 6: Experiential learning

Experiential learning is a crucial aspect of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) recovery programs, offering practical experiences for personal growth, self-discovery, and skill development. The Experiential learning session focuses on incorporating experiential learning into sport-based interventions.

The debriefing process is a structured and reflective discussion that occurs after a specific event, activity, or experience. The purpose of debriefing is to review and analyze what happened, identify lessons learned, and improve future performance. The session also presents some key techniques and considerations for an effective debriefing process

Supporting materials:

1. Experiential learning_ presentation
2. The Debriefing Process/technics

B. The RACE4LIFE Sport-based behavior change protocol

The Sport-based behavior change protocol for people under SUD recovery is divided into 5 sessions

Session 1: RACE4LIFE Sport-based behavior change protocol presentation

SUD recovery is a long-term process involving multiple interventions and regular monitoring. Targeted interventions in an exercise and sport environment can be beneficial for SUD recovery, as they help individuals develop life skills and behavior change strategies. The RACE4LIFE protocol is a suggested framework for implementing exercise interventions aimed at changing behavior by enhancing motivation in SUD recovery. The protocol aims to improve the quality of exercise and sport interventions for SUD recovery, promoting sports engagement in treatment and lifelong engagement in exercise that enhances mental and physical health. It emphasizes the importance of tailor-made interventions considering participants' physical, cognitive, emotional, and moral aspects. The protocol also emphasizes using theories or models as guides, based on evidence and data, to enhance the effectiveness of sport-based interventions.

Supporting materials:

1. Race4Life protocol_presentation

Session 2: Stage # 1: Readiness "Let's get physically active"

BCTs help individuals identify their motivations for exercising, setting meaningful goals, and addressing common barriers like time constraints and low energy levels. They teach problem-solving skills, seek social support, and consider the stages of the change model to tailor interventions to meet individuals' readiness stages. By understanding motivations, setting achievable, time-bound goals, and addressing barriers, BCTs increase the likelihood of exercise initiation and adherence. Stage # 1: Readiness "Let's get physically active" focuses on promoting physical activity and readiness for exercise by incorporating a Motivational Interviewing protocol to support the readiness of the clients to start exercising

Stage #1: Readiness "Let's get started is connected with the early stage of recovery

Supporting materials:

1. Stage # 1 Readiness Let's get started_presentation
2. ACSM pre-participation health screening exercise
3. Resistance Training for Health
4. Being Active as We Get Older
5. Motivational interviewing RACE4LIFE protocol
6. Weekly Monitoring Goal-Setting Form

Session 3: Stage # 2: Arousal "It feels good"

Long-term substance abuse can significantly impact an individual's well-being and quality of life, leading to dropout rates. Exercise and sport participation can enhance physical and mental well-being and social functionality during the early stages of recovery. Exercise programs should be provided as a "here and now" intervention, supporting treatment and managing factors that may lead to early dropout. Exercise and sport should complement therapeutic goals; as higher relapse rates occur within the first three months of recovery. Arousal and motivation play crucial roles in exercise engagement. BCTs can promote positive behavior change, enhancing physical exercise arousal, by setting goals, providing feedback, and emphasizing benefits. Social support, such as social modeling, social comparison, and peer support, can also significantly impact exercise behavior. Stage # 2 involves intentionally increasing arousal to a level that encourages active engagement.

Stage # 2: Arousal "It feels good" is connected with the early stage of recovery

Supporting materials:

1. Stage # 2: Arousal "It feels good __presentation

Session 4: Stage # 3: Competencies "What have I learned?"

Exercise and sports programs are beneficial for individuals undergoing SUD recovery, as they improve self-efficacy and social life skills, preparing them for sustainable social reintegration. These programs provide a safe learning environment for developing control, time management, communication, social, collaboration, leadership, problem-solving, and goal-setting skills. Mastery experiences, achieved through personal experiences, foster a strong sense of effectiveness and coping mechanisms. Stage # 3: Competencies "What have I learned?" focus on improving sports competencies through a combination of sports participation and strategies, such as BCTs Taxonomy and Experiential learning.

Stage # 3: Competencies "What have I learned?" is connected with the second & and third stages of recovery

Supporting materials:

1. Stage # 3 Competencies What have I learned __ presentation
2. The Debriefing Process/technics

Session 5: Stage # 4: Engagement "What will be my next sport experience?"

SUD recovery can be challenging due to the return of old behaviors, but it can be managed through aftercare, relapse prevention, and general recovery support. A healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise and sport participation, is crucial for overall well-being. Exercise professionals should gradually target behavioral change and help clients identify PA opportunities. A local network between sport services is necessary to reduce stigma and barriers. Using BCTs can enhance engagement in sport and promote long-term adherence to physical activity goals. The choice of techniques should consider the client's preferences, needs, and the specific context of the sport or activity.

Stage # 4: Engagement: "What will be my next sport experience?" is connected with the second and the third stages of recovery.

Supporting materials:

1. Stage # 4 Engagement What will be my next sport experience

The Agenda

The suggested agenda can be adjusted to meet timing requirements, but the order of activities should not be altered.
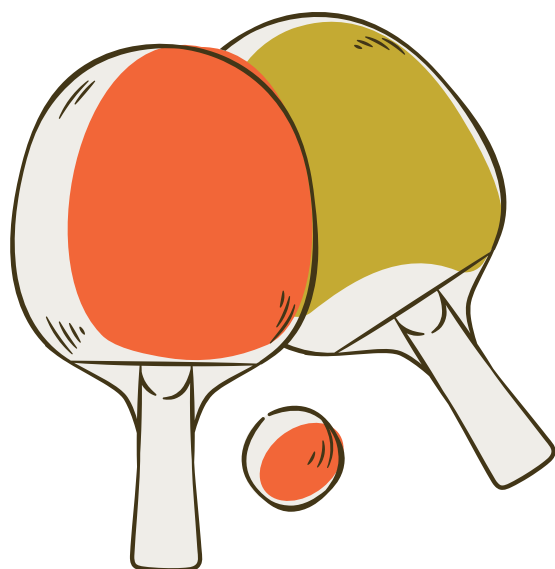
Online sessions

Day 1

Session	Title	DURATION	TIMING
1	**Team introduction, Project presentation** 1.1 Activity 1. Expectations & Concerns 1.2. Race4Life protocol_presentation	30 min	11.00-11.30
2	**Understanding Addiction** 2.1. Modeling The Addiction 2.2 The Role of Motivation 2.3 The recovery capital 2.4 The recovery stages	30 min	11.30-12.00
Break			
3	**The role of sport in SUD recovery** 3.1. The role of sport in SUD recovery	30 min	12.10-12.40
4	Design sport-based intervention for SUD recovery 4.1. Design sport-based intervention for SUD recovery	30 min	12.40-13.10
Break			
5	**Theories of behaviour change** 5.1. Social Cognitive Theory 5.2. Self-Determination Theory 5.3. Self-efficacy 5.4. Goal-Setting Theory 5.5 Motivational interviewing	30 min	13.20-13.50
6	**Wrap-up and evaluation of Day 1** Brief summary of learning. Participants to mention activities or takeaways. Ask for additional questions, comments, and feedback.	10 min	13.50-14.00

Day 2

Session	Title	DURATION	TIMING
7	**Welcome back and recap**	10 min	11.00-11.10
8	**Behavior change Techniques presentation** 8.1. Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) Taxonomy	30 min	11.30-12.00
Break			
9	**Life skill development through sport** 9.1. Life Skills 9.2. The role of life skills in SUD recovery_ presentation	30 min	12.10-12.40
10	**Experiential learning** 10.1. Experiential learning_ presentation 10.2. The Debriefing Process/technics	30 min	12.40-13.10
Break			
11	**RACE4LIFE Sport-based behavior change protocol** 11.1. Race4Life protocol_presentation	30 min	13.20-13.50
12	**Wrap-up and evaluation of Day 2** Brief summary of learning. Participants to mention activities or takeaways. Ask for additional questions, comments, and feedback.	10 min	13.50-14.00

Face to Face sessions

Day 1

Session	Title	DURATION	TIMING
1	**Welcome back and recap** Welcome participants and recap previous sessions. Remind participants of ground rules. Introduce next training part.	30 min	10.00-10.30
2	**Stage # 1: Readiness "Let's get physically active"** 2.1. Stage # 1 Readiness Let's get started_presentation 2.2. ACSM pre-participation health screening exercise 2.3. Resistance Training for Health 2.4. Being Active as We Get Older 2.5. Motivational interviewing RACE4LIFE protocol 2.6. Weekly Monitoring Goal-Setting Form 2.7. S*tage of recovery* 2.8. *Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) Taxonomy*	45 min	10.30-11.30
Break			
3	**Stage # 2: Arousal "It feels good"** 3.1. Stage # 2: Arousal "It feels good __ presentation 3.2. Stage of recovery 3.3. Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) Taxonomy	45 min	12.00-12.45
4	**ACTIVITY 2** Design of a sports-based intervention for the early recovery stage	35 min	12.45-13.20
Lunch Break			
5	**Stage # 3: Competencies "What have I learned?"** 5.1. Stage # 3 Competencies What have I learned __ presentation 5.2. The Debriefing Process/technics 5.3. Stage of recovery 5.4. Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) Taxonomy	45 min	14.00-14.45
7	**ACTIVITY 3:** Design of a sports-based intervention to enhance capabilities and skills	35 min	14.45-15.20
8	**Wrap-up and evaluation of Day 1** Brief summary of learning. Participants to mention activities or takeaways. Ask for additional questions, comments, and feedback.	40 min	15.20-16.00

Day 2

Session	Title	DURATION	TIMING
9	**Welcome back and recap** Welcome participants and recap previous sessions. Remind participants of ground rules. Introduce next training part.	15 min	10.00-10.15
10	**Activity 4** KORFBALL GAME	45 min	10.15-12.00
Break			
11	**Stage # 4: Engagement "What will be my next sport experience?"** 11.1. Stage # 4 Engagement What will be my next sport experience_ presentation 11.2. Stage of recovery 11.3. Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) Taxonomy	45 min	12.30-13.15
12	**Activity 5:Video presentation**	45 min	13.15-14.00
Lanch Break			
13	**Discussion**	30 min	14.45-15.15
14	**Closing, wrap-up and program evaluation** Brief summary of learning. Participants to mention activities or takeaways. Ask for additional questions, comments, and feedback. • Evaluation Immediately after the completion of RACE4LIFE Blended Capacity Building • Evaluation after three months from the completion of RACE4LIFE Blended Capacity Building	45 min	15:15-16:00

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

This summary provides guidelines for facilitators to prepare for training sessions within the RACE4LIFE Blended Capacity Building program. These guidelines ensure effective delivery and meet participant needs. By adhering to these principles, facilitators can ensure the training is informative, engaging, and respectful of trainees' cultural contexts. Careful planning and execution of these elements are crucial for achieving the desired outcomes of the program and its success in various implementation contexts.

Access to Training Materials: All requisite materials for conducting the training are readily available through the RACE4LIFE Blended Capacity Building e-platform and the accompanying Training Manual. Facilitators should ensure that they are thoroughly familiar with these resources and have them organized for easy access during the training sessions. This preparation ensures that facilitators can effectively support participants and provide accurate information and guidance throughout the training.

Facilitator Collaboration and Preparation: The training sessions necessitate the involvement of at least two facilitators: a lead facilitator and a co-facilitator. Both facilitators must collaborate closely to meticulously prepare the training content and logistics. This collaborative preparation involves dividing responsibilities, aligning on training objectives, and rehearsing the delivery of training modules to ensure a seamless and coherent facilitation process. Such meticulous preparation is critical for maintaining the flow of the training and effectively addressing any questions or challenges that may arise.

Contextual and Cultural Adaptation of Materials: It is imperative to translate all training materials into the language of the trainees to facilitate comprehension and engagement. Additionally, materials should be adapted to fit the specific context of the trainees, including any local cultural nuances or particularities that might affect their relevance or applicability. Where appropriate, facilitators should substitute the original materials with local alternatives that are culturally appropriate and resonate more deeply with the participants. This adaptation process not only makes the content more accessible but also enhances the relevance and impact of the training.

Group Size and Composition: The training sessions should be conducted with groups of 15-20 trainees to foster an interactive and engaging learning environment. This group size is optimal for ensuring active participation and effective communication among trainees. Furthermore, there should be a deliberate effort to achieve a gender balance among both facilitators and trainees. Such balance is crucial in promoting inclusivity and ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented and respected within the training environment.

Provision of Meals and Refreshments: To maintain the well-being and concentration of trainees, it is important to provide meals, drinks, and snacks throughout the training sessions. The provision of refreshments not only supports the physical needs of the participants but also contributes to a comfortable and conducive learning atmosphere. Facilitators should plan for these provisions in advance, ensuring that dietary requirements and preferences are taken into account to accommodate all trainees.

RACE4LIFE Capacity Building Program Evaluation

Aims and Objectives

The RACE4LIFE Capacity Building program was evaluated for its practicality, relevance, reliability, and feasibility. The evaluation aimed to identify areas needing modifications and revisions, enhancing the program's efficacy and aligning with its goals. The program's readiness for broader implementation was assessed using a mixed-method approach to analyze the program's components, substantiating its scalability and applicability in different settings. It also produced actionable insights and recommendations to inform future iterations of the program. This iterative approach emphasizes continuous improvement and adaptation to changing needs and contexts.

The evaluation utilized Kirkpatrick's evaluation model, which focuses on evaluating training programs through multiple levels—reaction, learning, behavior, and results—to gather high-quality feedback and derive critical insights into the program's effectiveness. This approach collected and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data, allowing for a detailed examination of participant experiences, knowledge acquisition, behavior change, and the ultimate outcomes of the training.

The insights gained from this evaluation laid the groundwork for the successful deployment of the program across diverse contexts. The comprehensive feedback collected facilitated an in-depth understanding of the program's strengths and areas for improvement, enhancing its potential impact on capacity-building initiatives globally. The evaluation's adherence to a robust framework and focus on detailed feedback provided a strong foundation for the program's ongoing development and refinement. This iterative process confirmed the program's current efficacy and identified opportunities for future enhancements, ensuring the program remains relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of capacity-building efforts worldwide.

Methodology

To ensure the quality of the RACE4LIFE Capacity Building program and to gather comprehensive feedback on this initiative, an adapted version of a questionnaire based on Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation was utilized. Kirkpatrick's model is widely recognized for its effectiveness in evaluating training and educational activities, offering a structured approach that can be applied to both formal and informal styles of training.

Kirkpatrick's model evaluates training effectiveness across four distinct levels:

Level 1 – Reaction: This level assesses participants' reactions to the training experience, capturing their perceptions, satisfaction, and engagement with the course content and delivery.

Level 2 – Learning: This level evaluates the extent to which participants have acquired and comprehended the knowledge and skills taught during the training.

Level 3 – Behavior: This level assesses whether participants are applying the knowledge and skills gained from the training in their workplace or real-life scenarios.

Level 4 – Results: This level measures the organizational impact of the training, focusing on whether the application of acquired knowledge and skills has resulted in tangible benefits or improvements within the organization. It is noted that this level has not yet been applied specifically to this course.

By employing Kirkpatrick's model, this evaluation framework provides a comprehensive assessment of the RACE4LIFE Capacity Building program's effectiveness at multiple levels. This structured approach not only facilitates the identification of strengths and areas for improvement but also helps in understanding the overall impact of the Capacity Building program on both individual participants and the organization as a whole. This ensures that the evaluation process is robust, systematic, and aligned with best practices in assessing training outcomes across diverse educational contexts.

The RACE4LIFE Capacity Building program underwent a two-phase evaluation using a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative data. This comprehensive analysis allowed for a detailed assessment of the program's effectiveness, capturing both immediate and sustained impacts over time. The evaluation strategy supported continuous improvement by providing feedback for refinement and enhancement. The insights gained from this evaluation approach demonstrated the program's value and informed decisions about its future development and application in diverse contexts. The dual-phase evaluation ensured alignment with the evolving needs of participants and organizations.

Initial Evaluation

The initial evaluation of a training program was conducted on Levels 1 and 2, following the completion of the training sessions. Level 1 assessed participants' immediate reactions and learning outcomes, focusing on the relevance of the content, effectiveness of instructional methods, and overall satisfaction. Level 2 assessed the extent to which participants acquired the intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a result of the training, evaluating the effectiveness of the content and methods in achieving the desired learning outcomes.

Follow-Up Evaluation

A follow-up evaluation was conducted one month after the initial training to assess Levels 3 and 4, focusing on the longer-term impact and effectiveness of the training. Level 3 assessed participants' ability to apply the acquired knowledge to their work environments. Level 4 measured the overall impact of the training on organizational outcomes and objectives, assessing key performance indicators like productivity, work quality, and project objectives.

The pilot implementations

The RACE4LIFE Blended Capacity Building program was successfully replicated across four European Union project partner countries: Greece, Norway, Spain, and Italy. The program aimed to enhance competencies related to the recovery and rehabilitation of individuals with Substance Use Disorder (SUD). The program engaged 96 trainees, reflecting a robust commitment to capacity building within the field of substance use recovery.

Greece

In Greece, the program's implementation involved a structured approach with two distinct training programs. These programs were instrumental in engaging a diverse group of 33 participants, each bringing varied professional experiences and perspectives to the training environment. This approach not only facilitated a thorough understanding of SUD recovery practices but also fostered a collaborative learning atmosphere conducive to shared knowledge and skills development.

Norway

Norway's involvement in the program saw 25 participants undergoing a detailed training regimen aimed at enhancing their competencies in SUD recovery and rehabilitation. The Norwegian cohort benefited from a curriculum that was carefully adapted to meet the country's specific healthcare and policy framework regarding substance use disorders. This adaptation ensured that the training was both relevant and applicable, thereby maximizing its impact on the participants' professional practice.

Italy

In Italy, the program successfully trained 22 participants. The Italian training sessions were characterized by a strong emphasis on integrating innovative approaches to SUD recovery within the context of the country's existing healthcare infrastructure. Participants in Italy were provided with extensive resources and support, enabling them to translate their learning into practical, real-world applications that could enhance the effectiveness of SUD rehabilitation efforts within their communities.

Spain

Spain's implementation of the program engaged 15 participants, each of whom benefited from a highly focused and contextually relevant training experience. The Spanish training program emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to SUD recovery, ensuring that participants were well-equipped to address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the Spanish healthcare landscape.

The Sample

During the initial evaluation phase of the training, a substantial proportion of the trainees—83 out of the 99 participants—completed the evaluation questionnaire. However, during the follow-up evaluation, participation decreased significantly, with only 37 trainees completing the subsequent evaluation form. This decline in response rate highlights a potential area for further investigation to understand barriers to continued engagement in the evaluation process.

The demographic composition of the participants revealed that a slight majority, 51.8%, were female. The average age of the participants was 40 years, indicating a mid-career demographic engaged in the training program. The professional background of the participants was diverse, with the majority working as sports trainers (36.1%), followed by therapists (31.3%), and those employed in the education sector (20.5%). This distribution underscores the multidisciplinary approach of the RACE4LIFE program, which seeks to integrate various professional perspectives in addressing SUD recovery.

Female 51.8%
Male 48.2%

Administration 4.8%
Other 6%
Therapy 31.3%
Sport trainer 36.1%
Education 20.5%
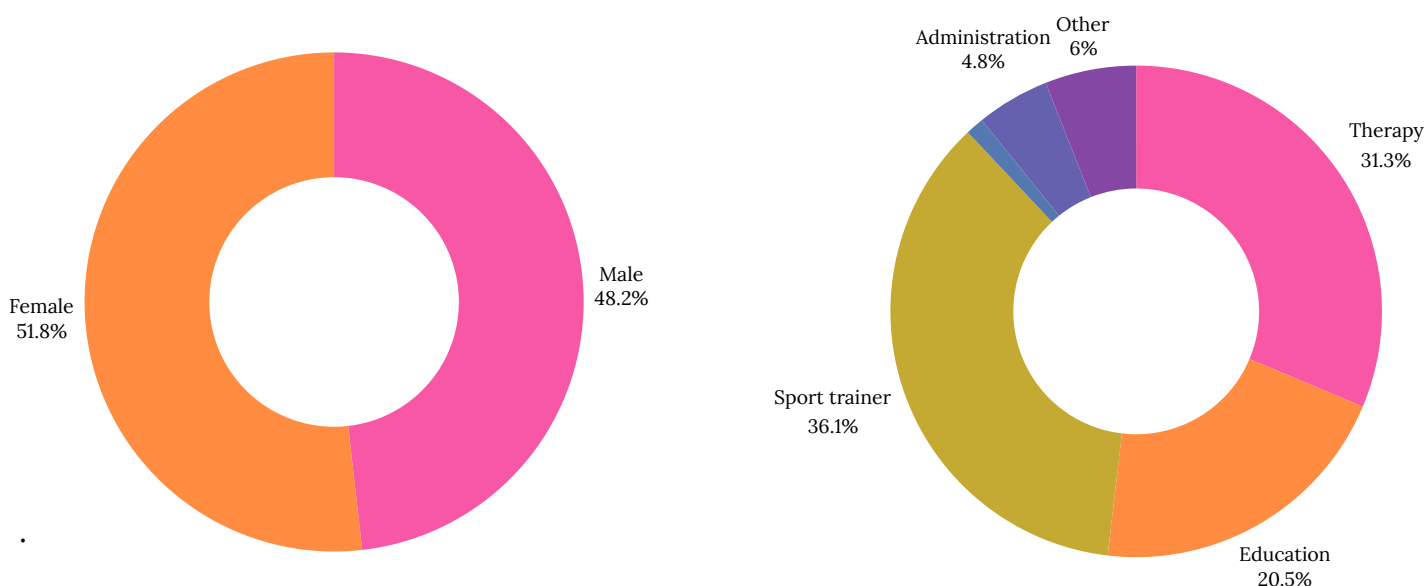
In terms of educational qualifications, a significant proportion of the participants held advanced degrees: 39.2% had attained a Master's degree, while 22.9% possessed a Bachelor's degree. This high level of educational attainment among participants suggests a well-qualified cohort, likely to benefit from advanced capacity-building initiatives tailored to complex professional roles in SUD recovery.

Additionally, the majority of the participants had substantial professional experience, with more of 10 years working in the field of SUD recovery treatment. This extensive experience among the trainees not only indicates a depth of practical knowledge and expertise but also suggests that the RACE4LIFE Capacity Building program attracted professionals deeply embedded in their respective fields who were seeking to enhance their skills and competencies further.
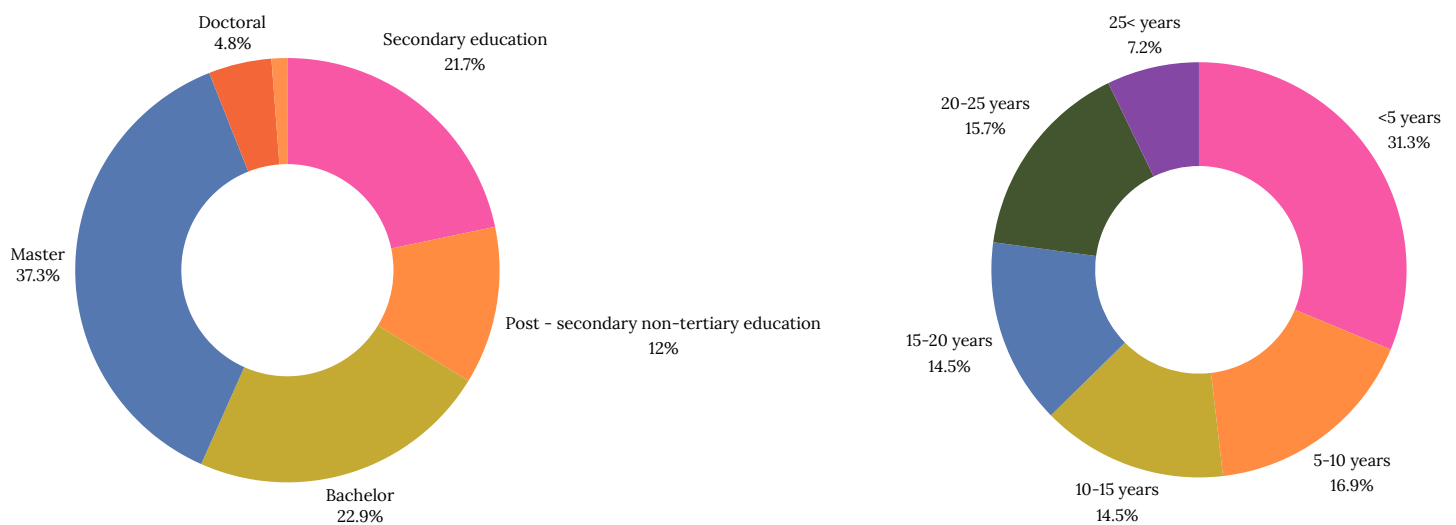
This comprehensive demographic and professional profile of the participants underscores the program's reach and relevance across various professional domains and national contexts. The initial high response rate for the evaluation highlights the trainees' engagement and the perceived value of the training. However, the lower response rate in the follow-up evaluation warrants further analysis to identify factors that may influence long-term engagement and the perceived ongoing relevance of the program content.

Future iterations of the program may benefit from strategies aimed at maintaining higher levels of engagement throughout the evaluation process, thereby ensuring more comprehensive feedback and enabling continuous program improvement. Overall, the RACE4LIFE Capacity Building program's replication across multiple countries and its engagement with a highly qualified and experienced cohort of professionals highlight its significant potential to contribute to capacity building in the field of SUD recovery on a broad scale..

Results

Initial Evaluation

Level 1: Reaction

Factor 1: *The reactions of the trainees to the trainers*

The results from the evaluation form indicate a strong positive response from the participants concerning the trainers' pedagogical approaches. Notably, 73.5% of the trainees strongly agreed with the statement that the trainers applied effective teaching methods that were well-aligned with the goals of the training program. This indicates that the instructional strategies employed by the trainers were effective in meeting the participants' educational needs and expectations. The trainers' ability to align their teaching methodologies with the training objectives indicates their competence in delivering relevant and engaging content, facilitating a productive learning environment. A significant majority of participants, 69.9%, agreed that the trainers delivered scientific content appropriately and consistently with the training course's objectives. This positive feedback highlights the trainers' proficiency in communicating complex scientific information effectively and ensuring accessibility and comprehensibility. The alignment between content delivery and training objectives is crucial for the efficacy of any educational program, and the high level of agreement among participants reflects a well-executed alignment in this context.

*The trainers applied effective teaching approaches that fit with the training goals.*

Neutral 3.6%
Agree 22.9%
Strongly Agree 73.5%
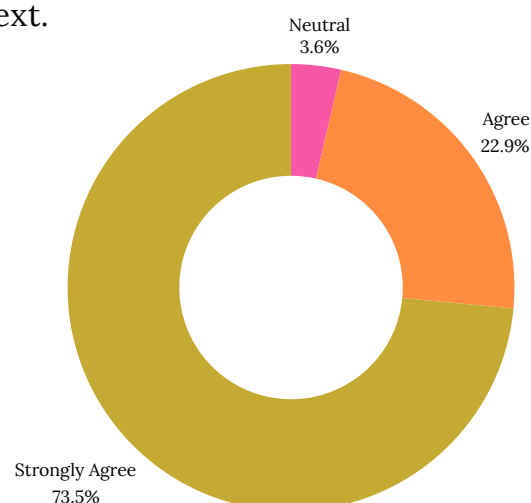
The trainers delivered the scientific content in an appropriate manner and in accordance with the training course's objectives.



Neutral 6%
Agree 24.1%
Strongly Agree 69.9%
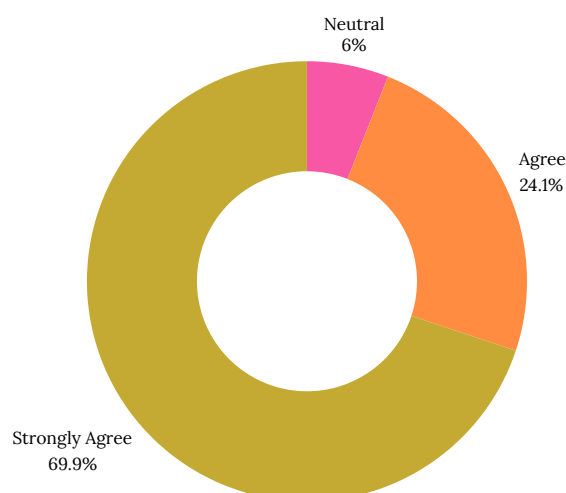
The training program was highly effective, with 63.9% of participants agreeing that the trainers effectively conveyed the necessary skills simply and concisely. This is crucial for effective knowledge transfer and skill acquisition. The clarity and simplicity of the instruction ensure learners can grasp and apply the concepts, enhancing the program's efficacy. Furthermore, 73.5% of participants agreed that the trainers' activities were meticulously planned and executed, aligning with the course objectives. This highlights the importance of systematic planning and relevance in maintaining participant engagement and ensuring comprehensive training objectives are met.

*The trainers delivered the skills to be taught in a simple and concise manner.*

Neutral
2.4%

Agree
33.7%

Strongly Agree
63.9%
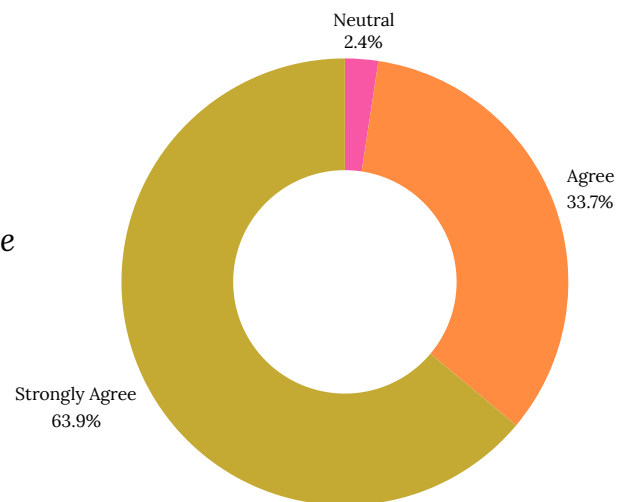
The trainers planned training activities in a way that was acceptable and in line with the training course's objectives.
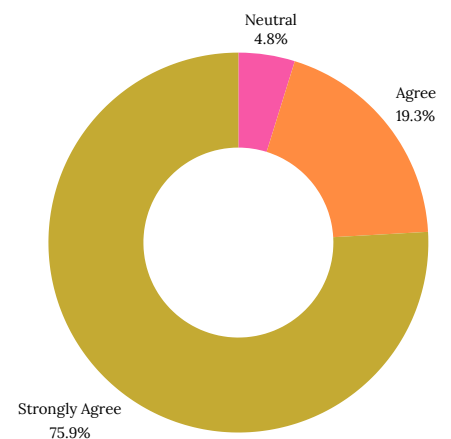
Neutral
1.2%

Agree
25.3%

Strongly Agree
73.5%
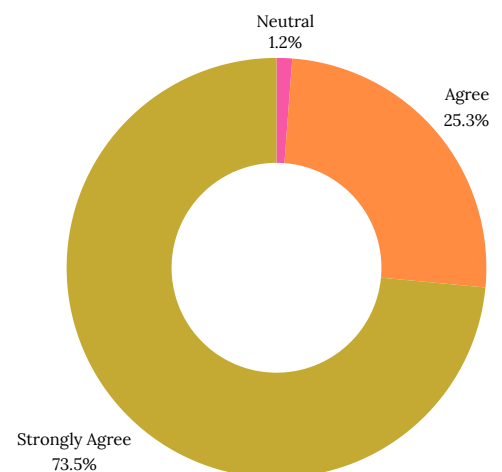
The majority of respondents, 75.9%, agreed that trainers were proficient in communicating with trainees, a crucial aspect of any educational program. This communication facilitates understanding, encourages participation, and supports the learning process. Additionally, 75.9% of respondents felt they were given ample opportunities to interact with trainers, discuss topics, and ask questions, promoting an interactive and participatory learning experience. This not only enhances knowledge retention but also promotes a learner-centered approach. 69.9% of participants believed trainers established a friendly and conducive learning environment, which is crucial for enhancing learner motivation, engagement, and satisfaction. A supportive atmosphere encourages active participation and encourages sharing ideas. The trainers' ability to create such an environment reflects their interpersonal skills and fosters a sense of community and collaboration among participants, essential for effective learning.

The trainers were able to effectively communicate with the trainees.

Neutral
2.4%

Agree
21.7%

Strongly Agree
75.9%
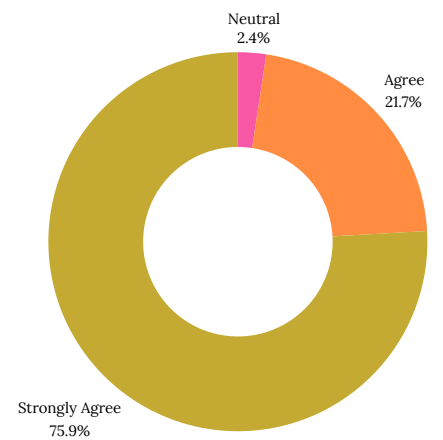
Trainees were given the time to discuss with the trainers and ask questions.

Neutral
4.8%

Agree
19.3%

Strongly Agree
75.9%

In general, how effective were the trainers in establishing a learning-friendly environment

To some extent
4.8%

Rather much
24.1%

Very much
69.9%
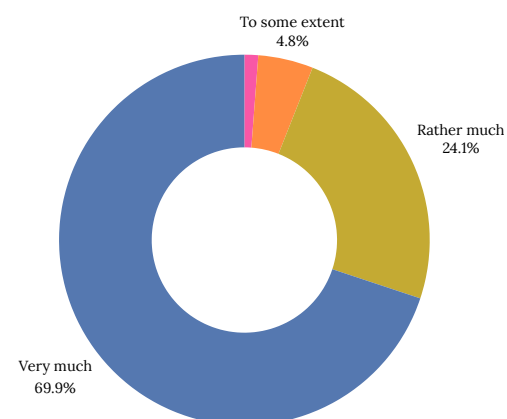
Factor 2: *Trainees' reactions to training delivery*

The RACE4LIFE program's training delivery received positive feedback from trainees, with 91.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the topics covered were highly relevant to their professional responsibilities. The course was praised for its balanced approach to imparting theoretical and practical knowledge, with 95.2% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that the content was current and effectively bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world applications. The course was also praised for its ability to be tailored to participants' learning needs, ensuring accessibility and engagement.
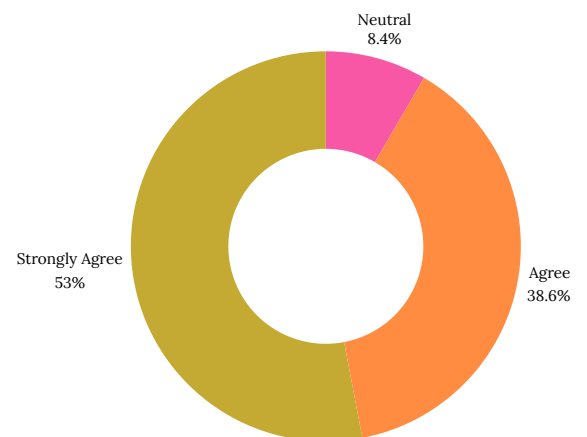
The RACE4LIFE program's topics was relevant to my work

Neutral
8.4%

Strongly Agree
49.4%

Agree
42.2%
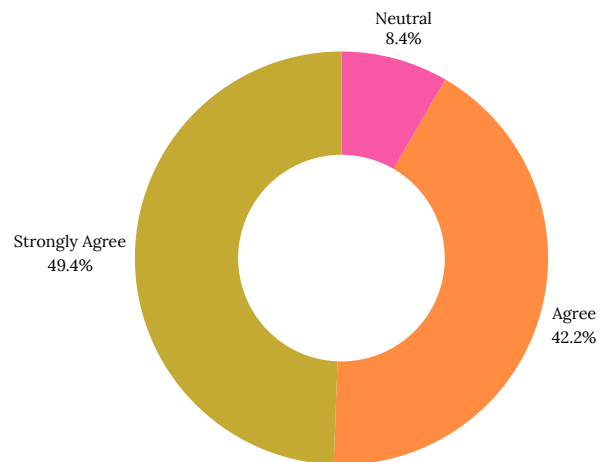
The RACE4LIFE program provided both theoretical and practical knowledge that was up-to-date.

Neutral
3.6%

Agree
39.8%
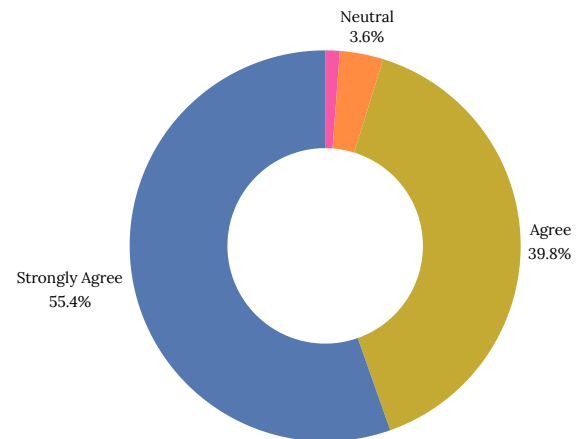
Strongly Agree
55.4%

The information was delivered in a way that was tailored to the trainees' learning needs.

Neutral
8.4%

Strongly Agree
53%

Agree
38.6%

The program was well-received by participants, with 92.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the length was appropriate and sufficient for the intended learning objectives. This indicates that the course was designed to accommodate the learning pace and time constraints of participants, optimizing their educational experience. 92.8% of participants reported that the training needs were satisfactorily met based on the materials presented, indicating that the course content was highly relevant and well-aligned with the participants' learning goals. The program's ability to meet these needs is a testament to its rigorous and thoughtful design, prioritizing the practical application of knowledge and skills in real-world settings. Additionally, 91.6% of participants agreed that the program was tailored to meet both their skill development demands and current work requirements, highlighting the course's dual focus on enhancing competencies and addressing immediate professional challenges.
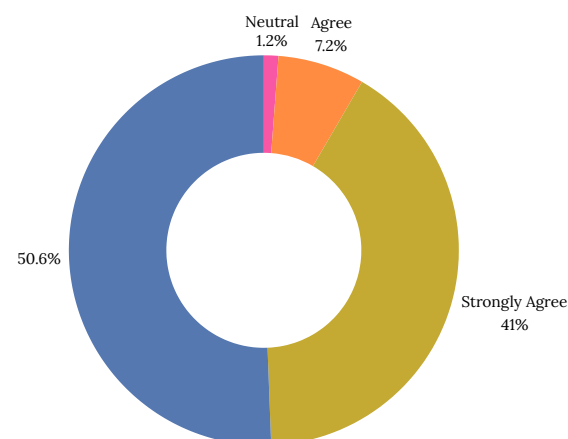
The length of the RACE4LIFE program was appropriate and sufficient.

Neutral 6%
Strongly Agree 53%
Agree 39.8%
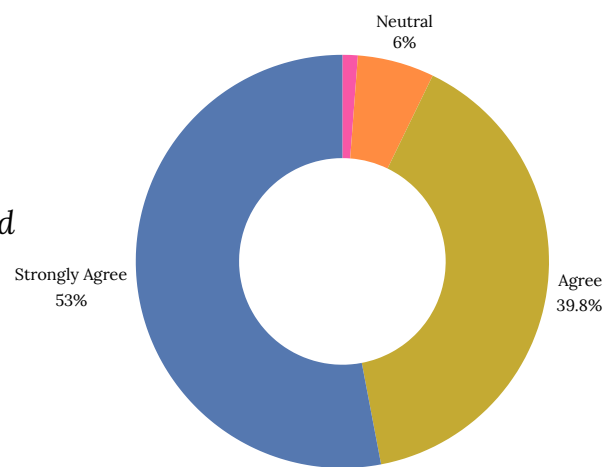
Based on the materials presented, my training needs were met.

Neutral 6%
Strongly Agree 39.8%
Agree 53%
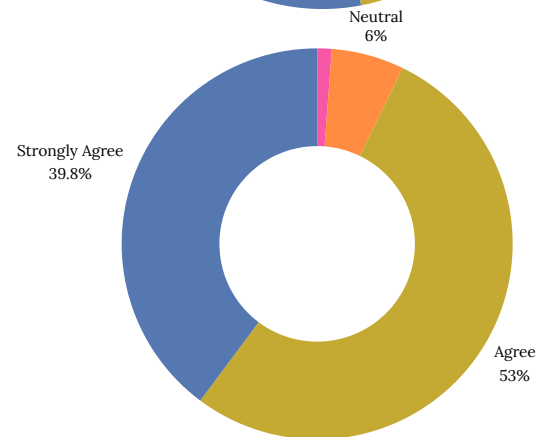
*The RACE4LIFE program was designed to meet both my skill development demands and my current work requirements*

Neutral 1.2%   Agree 7.2%
50.6%
Strongly Agree 41%

Finally, the evaluation revealed that an overwhelming 94% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the training techniques employed were well-suited to meet the demands of their training needs. Furthermore, a substantial 89.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program would significantly enhance their ability to perform more effectively in their daily professional practices.

The training techniques were appropriate for the training demands.
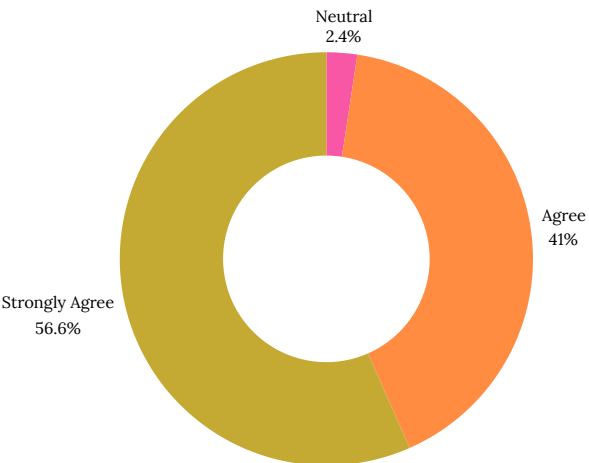

Neutral 1.2% Agree 5.9%
Strongly Agree 39.3%
53.6%
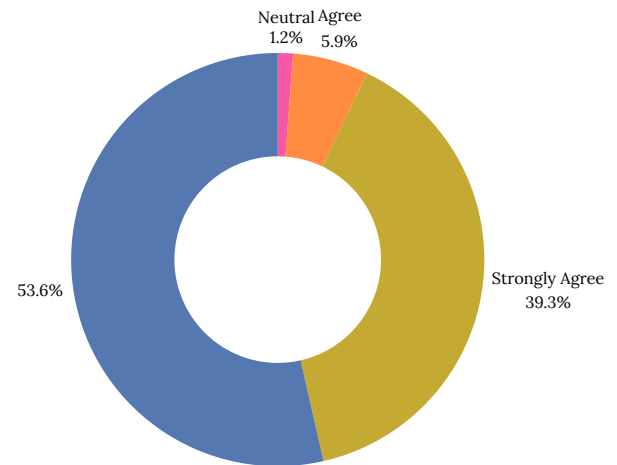
I believe that the RACE4LIFE program will help me to act more efficiently in my everyday practice.

Disagree 1.2% Neutral 9.6%
Agree 33.7%
Strongly Agree 55.5%
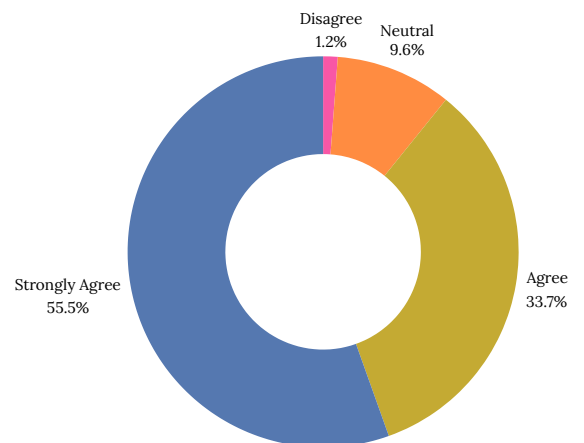
The third factor assessed at the primary level of analysis focuses on trainees' responses to the training environment. Specifically, an overwhelming majority of 97.6% either agreed or strongly agreed that the location was appropriately set up for the RACE4LIFE program. Furthermore, 96.3% of participants expressed agreement or strong agreement regarding the suitability of the facilities provided. Lastly, a significant proportion of 98.8% agreed or strongly agreed that the overall program was well-organized.

The location was set up in a way that was appropriate for the RACE4LIFE program

Neutral 2.4%

Agree 41%

Strongly Agree 56.6%

The facilities were appropriate.

Neutral 3.6%

Agree 37.3%

Strongly Agree 59.1%
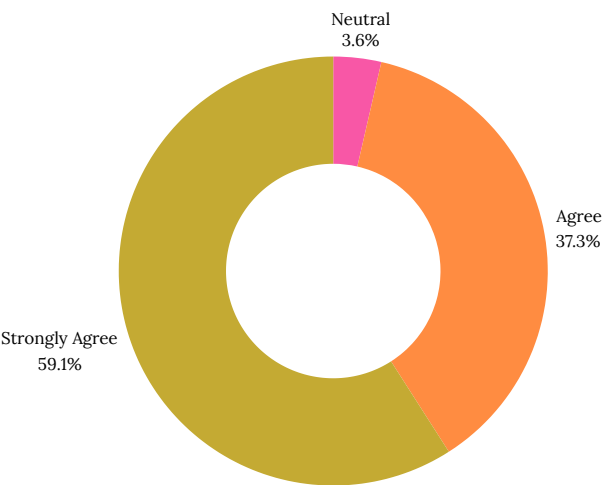
The RACE4LIFE program was, on the whole, well-organized.

Neutral 1.2%

Agree 26.5%

Strongly Agree 72.3%

Level 2: Learning
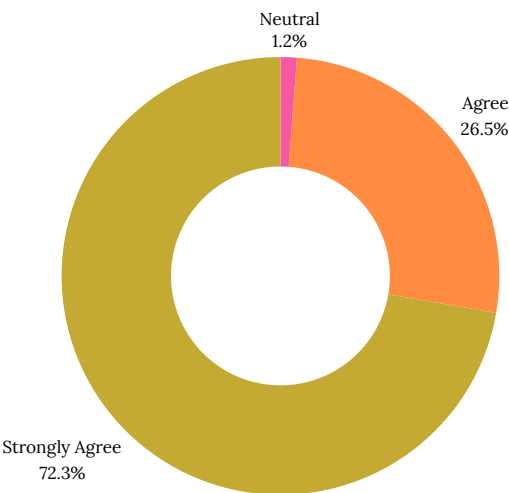
Factor 1: *Trainees' perceptions of the impact on their learning and knowledge*

The analysis reveals that 95.2% of the participants expressed agreement or strong agreement regarding the enhancement of their knowledge and skills through the RACE4LIFE program. Moreover, a substantial majority, amounting to 81.7%, indicated agreement or strong agreement that they gained insights into various theories and practices previously unfamiliar to them. Furthermore, an overwhelming 88.9% of participants affirmed that the program equipped them with new practical skills pertinent to their professional roles.

As a result of the RACE4LIFE program, my knowledge and skills improved.

Neutral 4.9%
Strongly Agree 47.6%
Agree 47.6%
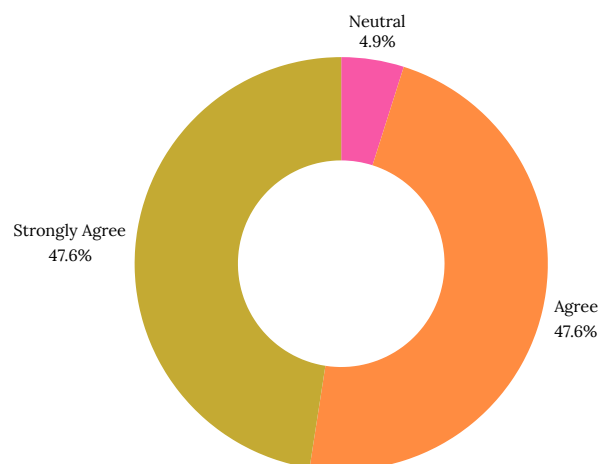
I learned about various theories and practices, as well as knowledge I didn't know previously, as a result of the RACE4LIFE program

Disagree 2.4%
Neutral 15.9%
Strongly Agree 40.2%
Agree 41.5%
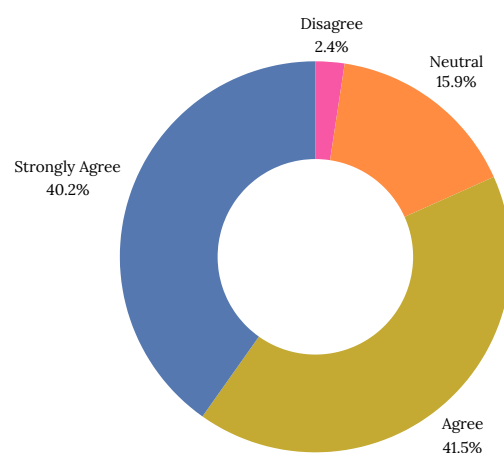
The RACE4LIFE program provided me with new practical skills in my profession.

Disagree 1.2%
Neutral 9.9%
Strongly Agree 38.3%
Agree 50.6%
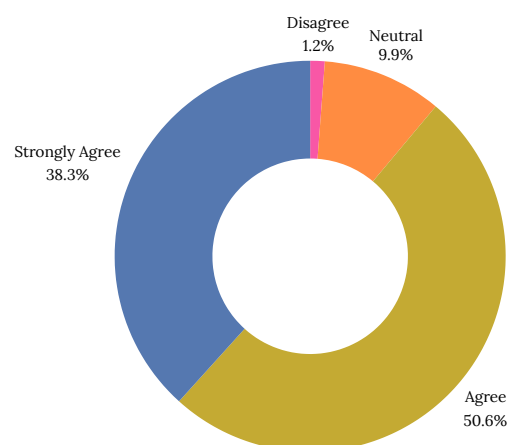
The evaluation showed high satisfaction among participants, with 93.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the program provided valuable opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences. This highlights the course's effectiveness in fostering a collaborative learning environment. Additionally, 85.3% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the program would enhance their work in ways they previously couldn't, indicating its substantial impact on applying new skills and knowledge to their professional practice. This high level of agreement suggests that the program successfully addressed gaps in participants' competencies and provided practical tools and methodologies for direct implementation in their work.

The RACE4LIFE program provided an opportunity for the participants to share new knowledge, expertise, and experiences.

Neutral
4.9%

Agree
40.2%

Strongly Agree
53.7%
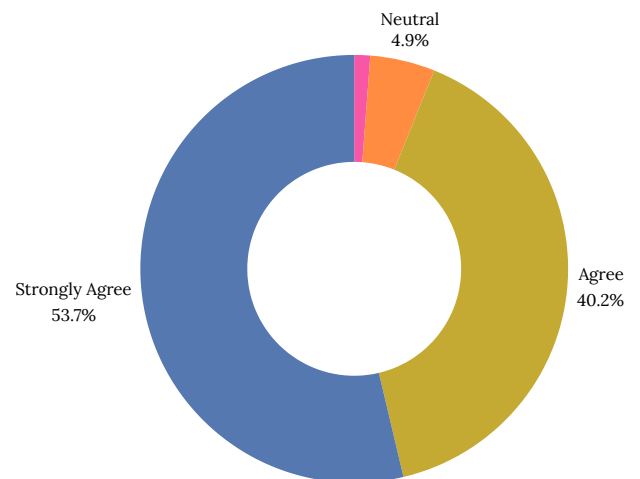
I will be able to improve my work in ways that I would not have been able to previously.

Neutral
14.6%
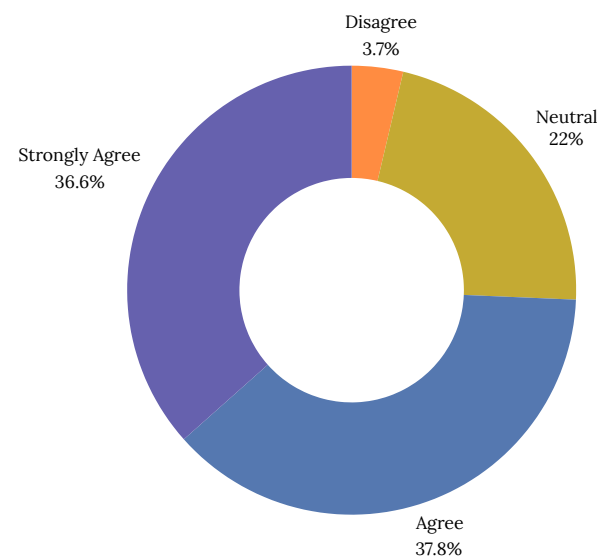
Strongly Agree
40.2%

Agree
45.1%
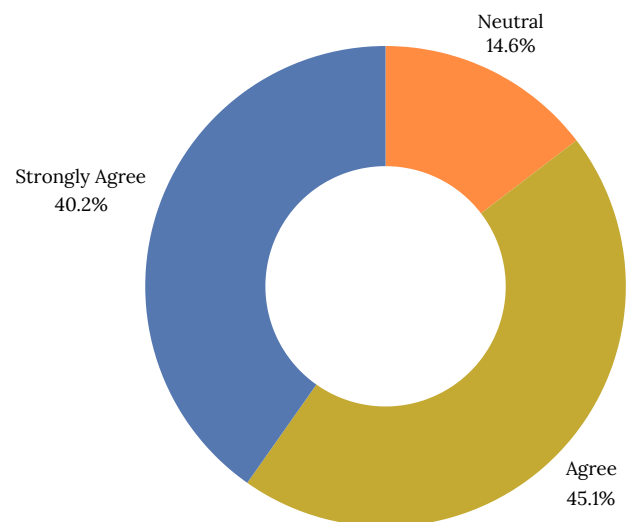
The RACE4LIFE program successfully captured the attention and curiosity of 89% of participants, indicating its effectiveness in fostering genuine interest in the subject matter. Additionally, 74.4% of respondents reported a positive attitude change due to their participation, indicating that the program not only conveyed information effectively but also facilitated a deeper understanding and appreciation of the training content. This attitudinal shift suggests that the program can significantly impact participants' perspectives, enhancing their commitment to the learning process and their willingness to apply newly acquired knowledge in real-world contexts.

The RACE4LIFE program aroused my attention and stimulated my curiosity about the learning topics presented.

Neutral 11%
Agree 36.6%
Strongly Agree 52.4%
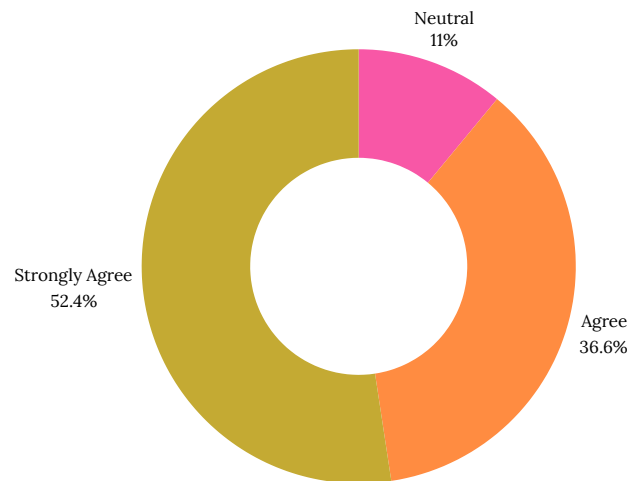
My attitude toward the training topics has changed as a result of the RACE4LIFE program.

Disagree 3.7%
Neutral 22%
Strongly Agree 36.6%
Agree 37.8%

Open-ended questions

In response to the open-ended question soliciting their ***perceptions of the overall strengths of the program***, participants provided a variety of insightful comments that underscored several key aspects of the program's effectiveness and value. These responses highlighted both specific attributes of the training and its broader impact on the participants' professional development and capabilities. The participants' feedback is presented below in their own words, illustrating the diversity and depth of their experiences with the training:

- *"I believe that the best aspect of the RACE4LIFE program was the practical tools it provided, which participants could directly apply in their lessons. Moreover, it wasn't limited to athletic or sports activities; it offered guidance applicable to any activity that a therapist or educator might use."*
- *"The course fostered cooperation, introduced us to new colleagues, and emphasized the importance of building human relationships. It underscored the critical nature of becoming independent and steering clear of negative, illegal choices."*
- *"The face-to-face contact and the sharing of knowledge and experience were invaluable aspects of the training."*
- *"The combination of practical and theoretical knowledge was particularly beneficial."*
- *"I believe that the RACE4LIFE program equipped me with new techniques and practical skills, which will enable me to perform more effectively in my profession."*
- *"The program introduced me to new methodologies and approaches, and it emphasized the development of life skills through sports. I learned several things pertinent to my job and how to apply them effectively."*

The RACE4LIFE program's diverse feedback indicates its ability to cater to diverse needs and preferences among its participants, indicating its potential for broad applicability in educational and therapeutic settings. The program's ability to deliver meaningful, practical, and transformative educational experiences is strongly endorsed.

In response to the open-ended question regarding their ***perceptions of the program's weaknesses and suggestions for improvement***, participants provided several insightful comments. These reflections underscore various areas where the course could be enhanced to better meet the learners' needs and expectations. The following are representative excerpts from their feedback:

- *"I would need more time in practical work experience"*
- *"I would prefer to have extra physical training as well to put into practice what I have learned. Perhaps we could also role-play something relevant"*
- *"Implementation of BCTs on everyday practice scenarios and specific populations"*
- *"Maybe there should have been fewer Online theory-based sessions and try to create more dynamic and interactive activities instead"*
- *"Maybe to make even more practical tools /activities within the seminar and the theoretical part could be only on an online basis and Maybe after the seminar so every participant can concentrate by him/herself to see it on his/her own"*

Participants strongly prefer practical, hands-on learning opportunities and a reduction in traditional online instruction. Feedback suggests incorporating dynamic, interactive activities to enhance the learning experience. Participants suggest role-playing and implementing behavioral change techniques in real-world scenarios for practical applications. This feedback should be considered for future program's revisions to align with learners' needs and preferences, enhancing the program's impact and relevance.

Follow up Evaluation

Level 3: Behavior

Factor 1: *Trainees' perceptions on behavior*

The results from the study reveal that a majority of trainees reported positive outcomes from their training, with 86.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the course effectively motivated them to improve their professional performance. Additionally, 72.8% of participants observed a marked improvement in their ability to perform effectively in their roles as a direct result of the program. This suggests that the training not only motivated participants but also imparted tangible skills and competencies that translated into better performance in their professional duties.

*The RACE4LIFE program motivated me to improve my work.*

Neutral 13.5%
Strongly Agree 37.8%
Agree 48.6%
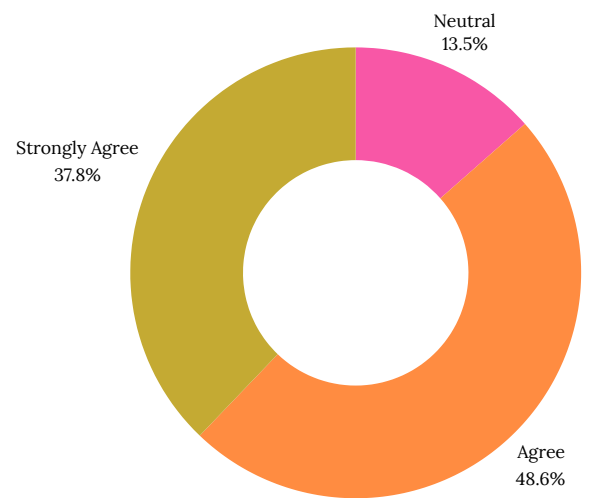
My ability to perform effectively in my working area improved as a result of the RACE4LIFE program

Strongly Agree 21.6%
Neutral 27%
Agree 51.4%
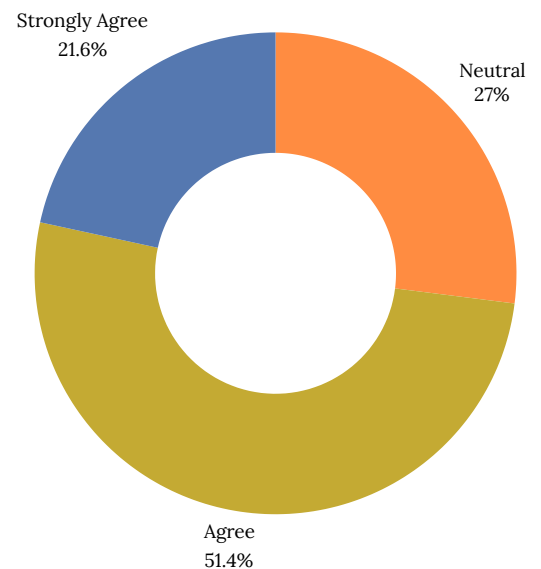
In addition, the RACE4LIFE program was found to be effective in influencing work behavior changes among participants, with 59.4% reporting a change in their behavior after completion. This indicates that the training was informative and practical. Additionally, 72.9% of respondents agreed that specific aspects of their work behavior were developed or enhanced as a result of their participation, indicating a significant positive effect on their professional development and operational practices. This highlights the program's success in fostering continuous improvement and competency development in a professional setting.

After completing the training, my work behaviour changed.

Strongly Agree 24.3%
Neutral 40.5%
Agree 35.1%
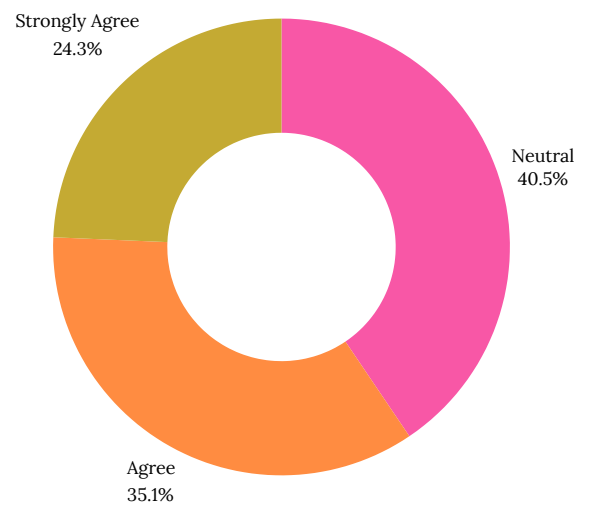
Some aspects of my work behaviour were developed as a result of the RACE4LIFE program.

Strongly Agree 29.7%
Neutral 27%
Agree 43.2%
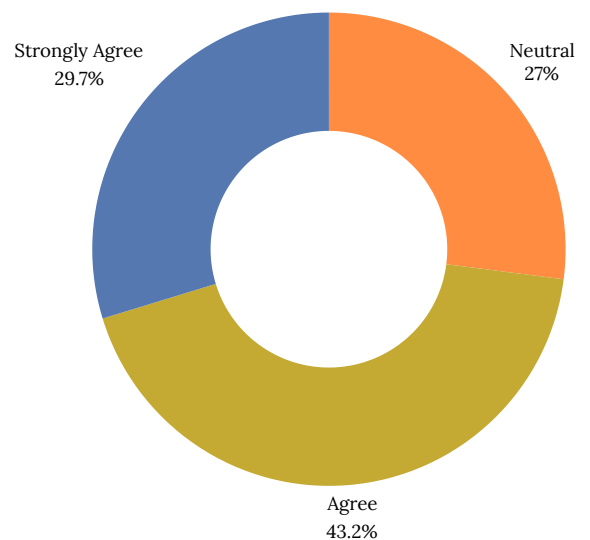
In response to the open-ended question regarding their ***perceptions of the most significant changes in their work practices as a result of attending the RACE4LIFE program***, participants provided various insightful comments. Their feedback highlights the transformative impact of the training on their professional approaches and underscores the program's effectiveness in enhancing their skill sets.

- *"Found new ways of motivating my clients and educating them on how to incorporate athletic goals into therapy"*
- *"I am applying better the sport skills-life skills"*
- *"I do more sport activity with the autistic kids that I work with"*
- *"Participating in the training program changed my perspective on therapy, giving me another skill. The foundations have already been laid for the combination of exercise and treatment*

The RACE4LIFE program has significantly impacted participants' professional practices by promoting innovative approaches that integrate physical activities with therapeutic interventions. This has led to more dynamic and effective treatment methodologies. Participants' reflections highlight the program's value in broadening their perspectives and enhancing their capacity to meet diverse client needs through a more comprehensive therapy approach.

In response to the inquiry, "***How did the RACE4LIFE program contribute to these changes?***" participants provided insightful feedback that underscored the program's impact on their professional practice and understanding of the role of sport in SUD recovery. The following are illustrative responses from the participants, highlighting the diverse ways in which the program facilitated meaningful changes:

"By highlighting the importance of behavioral change approach in therapeutic exercise"
-*"I learned things that I didn't know before. I work with behavior so I know how to use positive reinforcement, thanks to the BCT file, I learned more"*
"To know better how to apply the sport skills -life skills methodology"

The RACE4LIFE program significantly enhanced participants' professional growth by enhancing their knowledge and practical skills. The program effectively addressed knowledge gaps and promoted the integration of advanced methodologies in their practices. Participants' comments indicated that the program fostered an environment conducive to learning and professional development, reinforcing its value of sport in SUD recovery

In response to the question, **"*Which other factors contributed to the development of your knowledge/skills in the training area?* (if any),"** the participants provided several insightful reflections that highlight diverse aspects of the training experience:

- "That sport can help to get in a relationship with others even for autistic people"
- "The display of visual material related to the application of exercise in therapy and experiential education"
- "The technical staff who do their job very well, of course"

In response to the question, "What helped you to apply what you have learnt?" participants provided a variety of insightful answers that underscore the multifaceted nature of learning application in professional settings. The responses were quantified as follows:

The study found that 43.8% of participants identified opportunities to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills as crucial for effective workplace application. This suggests that having a conducive environment or specific scenarios for practice is essential for effective learning transfer. 25% of participants emphasized the relevance of training topics to their role, highlighting the importance of tailoring content to align with job responsibilities and real-world tasks.

Another key factor was support from colleagues and supervisors, with 31.3% stating that a supportive network within the organization is essential for fostering a culture where newly learned skills are encouraged and reinforced. Additionally, 31.3% of participants were encouraged by previous accomplishments, highlighting the significance of prior success and recognition in motivating individuals to continue their development and apply new skills. Positive reinforcement and acknowledgment of past achievements can significantly enhance the ongoing application of skills.

These findings collectively underscore the critical role of both external factors, such as the availability of practical opportunities and organizational support, and internal factors, such as the relevance of training content and self-efficacy, in the effective application of learned knowledge and skills. The results suggest that a holistic approach that integrates practical, relevant, and supportive elements can significantly enhance the transfer of learning in professional contexts.

Level 4: Results

Factor 1: Organizational impact

In response to the Level 4 inquiry, which asked participants, **"To what extent have your services' therapeutic processes changed as a result of your participation in the RACE4LIFE program and its associated products?"**, a nuanced distribution of responses was observed. Specifically, 37.1% of participants indicated that their service processes had changed "rather much" or "very much," suggesting a significant positive impact attributed to the RACE4LIFE program. This indicates that over a third of the respondents experienced a substantial transformation in their job practices, which can be interpreted as a notable endorsement of the program's effectiveness in facilitating meaningful changes.

Conversely, 59.4% of participants reported that their service processes had changed "only a little" or "to some extent." This majority response reflects a more moderate perception of change, indicating that while the program did influence their job practices, the extent of this impact varied. These participants may have recognized incremental improvements or partial adaptations in their approaches rather than profound or comprehensive shifts.
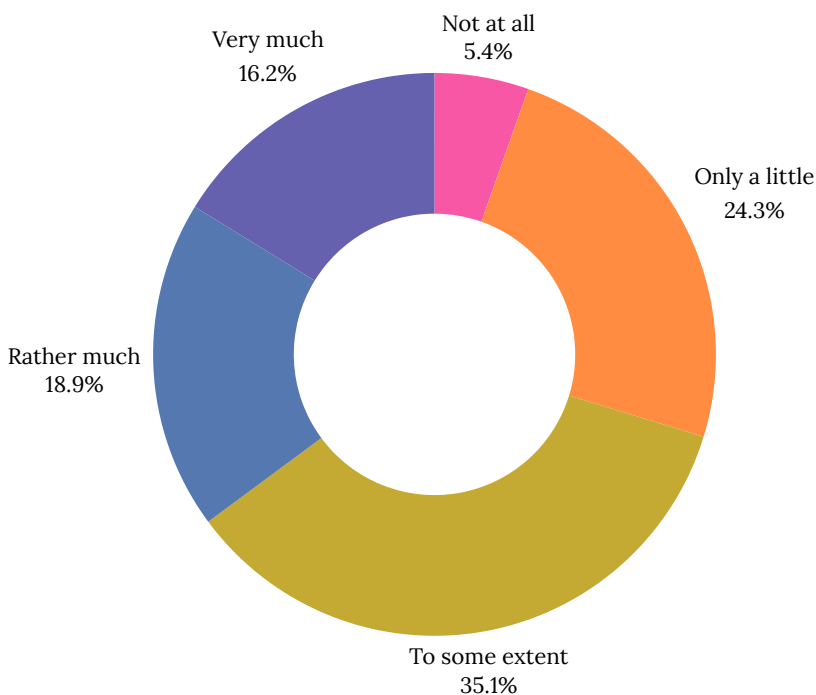
The differential in responses highlights the variability in how different participants engaged with and applied the RACE4LIFE program and its products. Several factors could account for this variability, including individual differences in prior therapeutic practices, the context within which services are delivered, and the degree to which participants were able to integrate new methods and tools introduced by the program.

Discussion

The evaluation of the RACE4LIFE Blended Capacity Building program reveals a high degree of participant satisfaction with the trainers' teaching approaches and the relevance of the content delivered. The positive feedback highlights the trainers' success in creating an engaging and supportive learning environment, which facilitated effective learning and skill acquisition. This feedback, derived from comprehensive evaluation metrics, underscores the program's ability to meet the educational and professional development needs of its participants.

Participants expressed strong agreement regarding the clarity of instruction and the alignment of training activities with the program objectives. The trainers demonstrated both pedagogical competence and a deep understanding of the program's content, effectively bridging theoretical knowledge with practical applications. This alignment was crucial for reinforcing learning outcomes and ensuring participants could apply their newly acquired skills in real-world contexts.

The evaluation data also emphasize the importance of addressing participants' specific needs through a well-structured program that promotes both theoretical understanding and practical skill development. The positive feedback reflects the course's effectiveness in enhancing professional practices and promoting meaningful behavioral changes, indicating a significant impact on participants' job performance and overall professional growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evaluation findings suggest that the RACE4LIFE Blended Capacity Building program has been highly effective in meeting the educational objectives and professional development needs of its participants. The positive feedback regarding the program's structure, content delivery, and alignment with practical applications underscores its potential for broader implementation and scalability. The high levels of participant satisfaction highlight the program's success in fostering a conducive learning environment and promoting significant improvements in professional competencies.

These results validate the program's approach and content, suggesting that it serves as a model for successful capacity-building initiatives. The findings also emphasize the importance of continuous evaluation and refinement to ensure the program remains relevant and effective in addressing the diverse needs of its participants. Future iterations of the program should consider incorporating more practical, hands-on learning opportunities and enhancing support mechanisms to maximize its impact and facilitate meaningful changes across various contexts. Overall, the RACE4LIFE program demonstrates a strong foundation for continued success in promoting transformative educational and professional development experiences.

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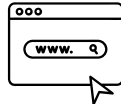
www.race4life.rtsport.eu

www.facebook.com/ketheasport/

The RACE4LIFE project is of a duration of three years (2022 – 2025).

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