



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

CARNEGIE

GREAT OUTDOORS

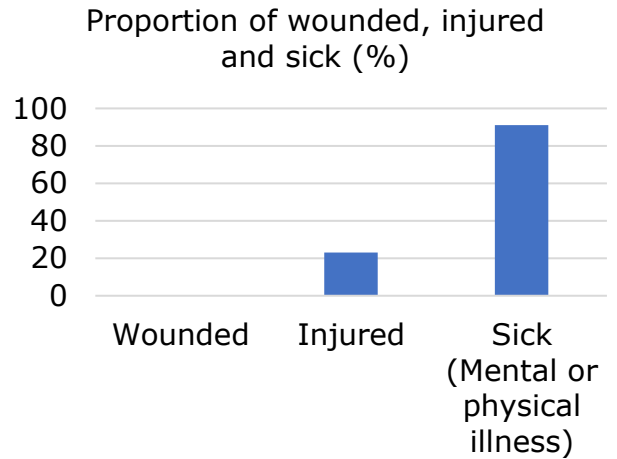
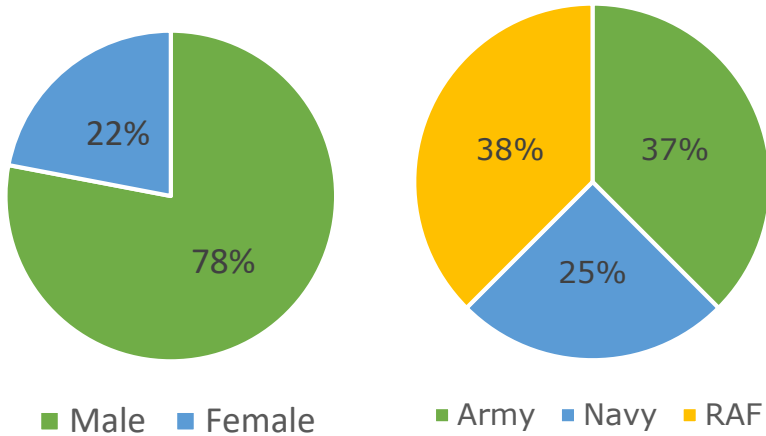


**Research from
Reduced numbers
Multi Activity
Courses (RMACs)**

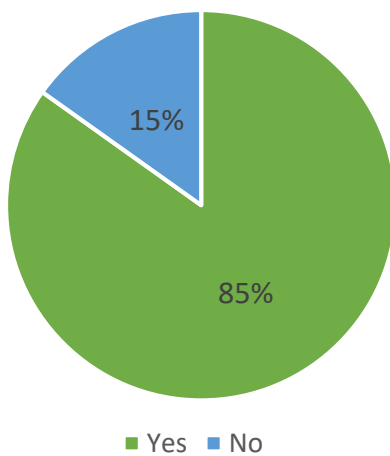
8 Participants/course

Participant demographics

This report contains research data from participants who attended an RMAC in August and September 2020 - Number of courses – 5; Number of participants - 35



Were you nervous or apprehensive about coming on the course?



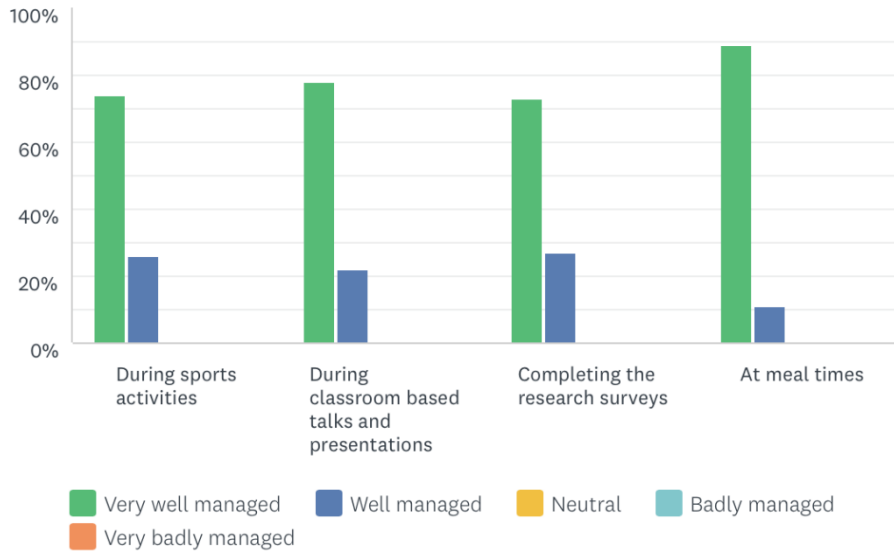
Reasons why participants were nervous to attend:

- "Been out of uniform for a while"
- "I suffer with anxiety and the unknown factor increases this"
- "Anxiety, something new"
- "I don't like being with people"
- "Very anxious feel like I would be judged a lot"
- "Normal reaction to the unknown"
- "What to expect, who will be on the course, what will be required of us"
- "First course in a long time after being isolated"

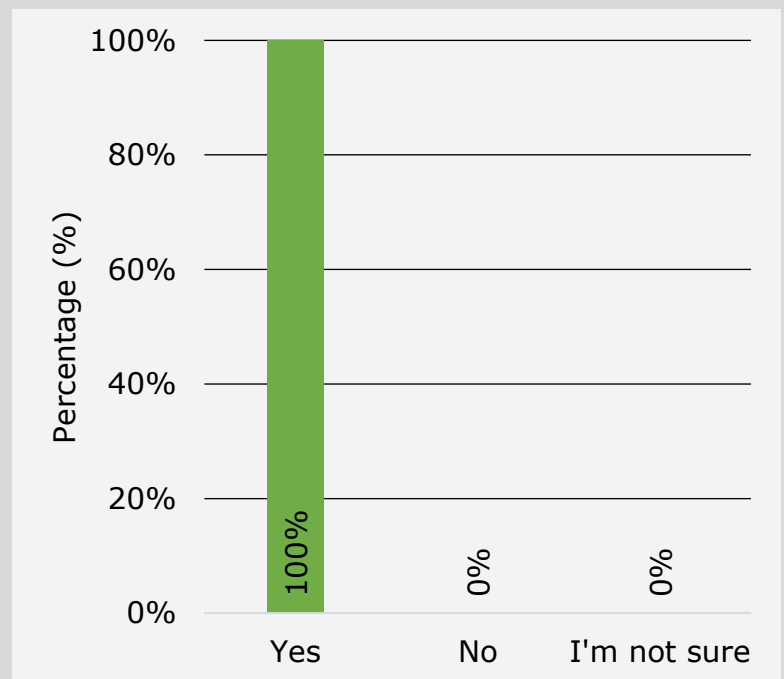


Managing COVID-19 restrictions.

During your time at The Battle Back Centre, to what extent did you feel social distancing was well managed?



Do you feel the precautions put in place to reduce the risk of infection or spread of COVID-19 were satisfactory?



Participant comments

"Extremely well managed and lots of thought and consideration taken place. Thank you all for a fantastic week and allowing the course to go ahead, it has provided me with so much aspiration, motivation and just what I needed to move forward. Thanks for all your help it's very much appreciated. Keep up the fantastic work :)"

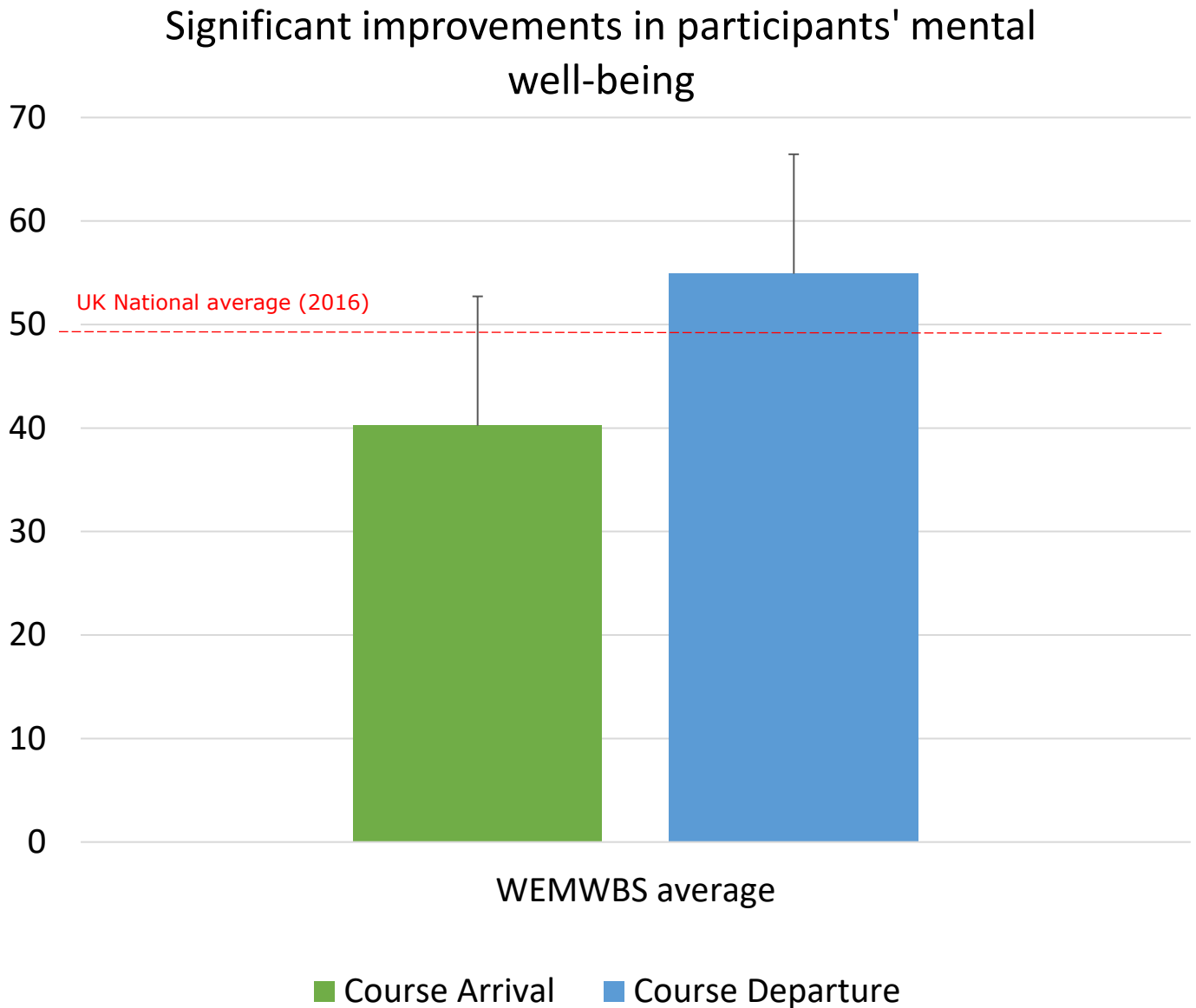
"The social distancing aspects were very well managed, there were often times where we were all touching the same item/equipment."

"Really good course just frustrated about some activities not running"

"Thank you 🙏 fully enjoyable course, game changer for me."

How did the course influence participants' mental health?

The average mental well-being score of the participants upon arrival was 40.22. This improved by 36% to 54.9 by the end of the courses. The UK National average was identified as 49.85 in the 2016 UK Health Survey.

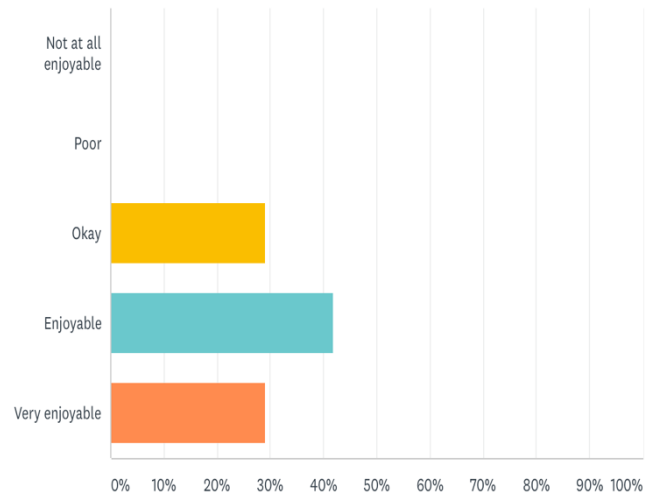


Day 1

The Battlebackers are split into two groups with one group going for a walk around the gardens and the other group using the garden environment to stop and chat. This period of time is used by both groups to introduce the team they will be working with, to discuss their expectations and to reflect on what they would personally like to achieve during that week.

At the end of the first day after the evening meal the participants attend a short presentation delivered by one of the coaches on the 'comfort zone' model. This model is used to encourage the students to think about the benefits of getting out of their 'comfort zone' and into the 'stretch zone'. Reflection is used as a tool to highlight the benefits of being in the 'stretch zone', being able to learn about true strengths and capabilities, and how that could be practised through the week.

How enjoyable was today's physical activity?



Most enjoyable part

- Brief intro with cards identifying where we feel at present
- Been put into our teams and using the cards to explain the past and what you want to be like in the future.
- socializing group activities/meeting people
- The walk around the grounds
- Relaxed atmosphere and talking about how thoughts work
- Group introductions
- Ball catching exercise
- Meeting the staff and other course members
- Arriving and getting settled in

Least enjoyable part

- Meeting people I don't know first day
- Getting use to new accommodation
- Packing and driving here
- All the talking and I'm not a fan of team Tasks
- Sleeping
- Rain!
- Not really anything
- Final session at 2000 hrs
- Turing up sat in a room full of people
- None

How could it have been improved?

- First day set just right
- Evening meal a bit earlier
- More time to get settled in
- Earlier finish
- Knowing timetable/what activities we are doing ie better idea of what to bring
- What to expect on arrival
- Nothing to note
- Finishing earlier, a long day
- Better joining instructions
- Start earlier

Day 2

In the morning presentation, a coach introduces participants to the 'Chimp Paradox' analogy. The coach explains that the basis of this theory is to help understand the way our brains process information. It revolves around the concept of three portions of the brain interacting, the chimp, the computer and the human. When questioned what they thought the 'chimp portion' was responsible for they correctly suggested "survival", "food", "family" and "sex". The human thinking portion provides a more balanced judgement of situations and relies on an evidence base in its decision-making process. Whereas the Chimp is less rational, is paranoid and catastrophic and involved in the primitive fight, flight or freeze reflex. The coach explains that although the chimp portion is present from birth it can be managed and maintained. With this plasticity in mind they suggest that being aware of these systems in the brain we may be able to alter aspects of our lives more easily, ultimately working towards making permanent positive changes in their life.



Altering participants' perspectives through sport

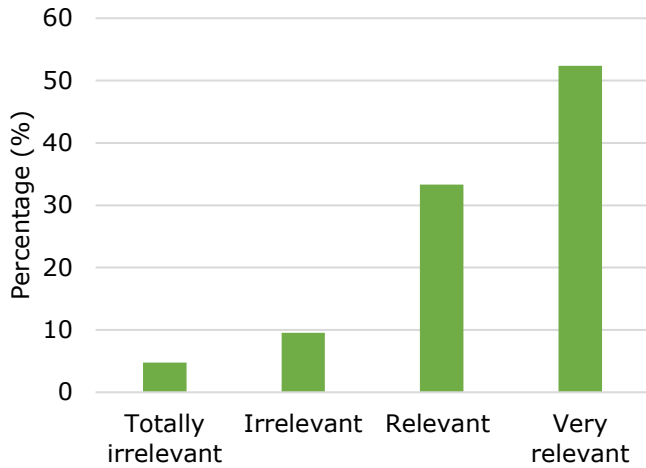
The Battlebackers could take part in archery and golf on day two of the course. Research observations of the participants identified some unease within the group about spending the day doing sport. Some explained their nervousness was around their dislike for competitive situations, for others it was the worry of trying something new and failing or performing badly amongst other people. One individual simply did not want to play golf and would have preferred to take part in archery all day.

The coaching staff always encourage participation through a 'challenge by choice' approach. Everyone took part in golf and through some expert instruction, quickly began to progress. Participants supported each other with words of encouragement and before long, comments like "wow, I'm good at this!" were being heard.

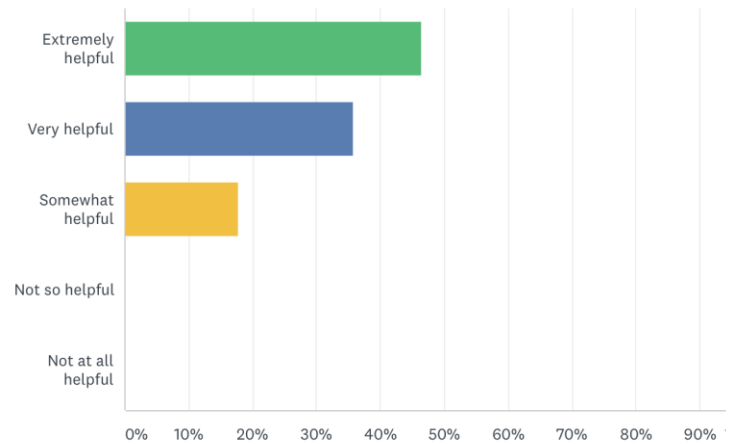
After the session, some participants spoke about how the experience was similar to other situations in our lives. Sometimes we might fill our minds with inaccurate preconceived ideas about what an experience is going to be like without knowing all the information and how this can lead to missed opportunities.

They also acknowledged they wouldn't have been able to progress without the instructor. This prompted a conversation about the people we spend time with in our lives and how surrounding yourself with people who are good for you can be a useful catalyst in supporting the way in which we wish to live our lives or make positive changes.

How relevant to your recovery circumstances were the topics you discussed with coaching staff today?



How helpful do you think the coaching support you've had can be for you in your recovery after the course?



How appropriate were today's physical activities to your ability and needs?
(0-10)

8.6/10

How could today be improved?

Maybe some more tea

Finger guards for archery

Longer on the activities, I had so much fun

I would have loved to play a few holes on the golf course

To recognise why I think so negatively about myself

What was the most rewarding part of today?

Trying new things

Team cohesion, exploring the chimp paradox, learning new skills and disciplines

Sense of achievement

Enjoying the outdoors

Being myself

The interaction between all parties during the golf session

Learning new sports

Did you learn anything about yourself?

That it's important to reflect on your feelings and understand what's causing you to feel the way you are

Sport is a fantastic tool to aid in development and life
Changing your focus on little things can make a big difference

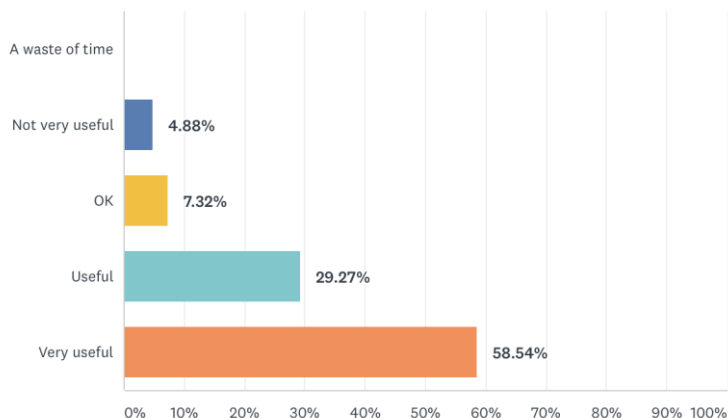
To recognise why I think so negatively about myself

How to start to have an understanding of how to better develop my chimp

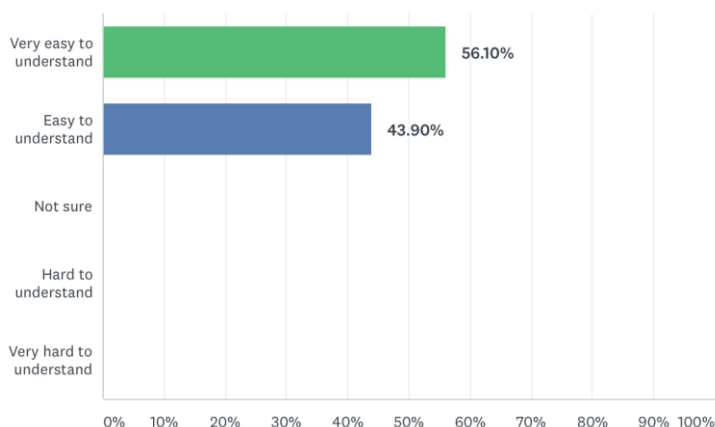
Methods of coping
I learned how to think differently about how to approach my problems

Day 3

Looking back over the week, how useful are the coaching morning briefs and daily reviews?

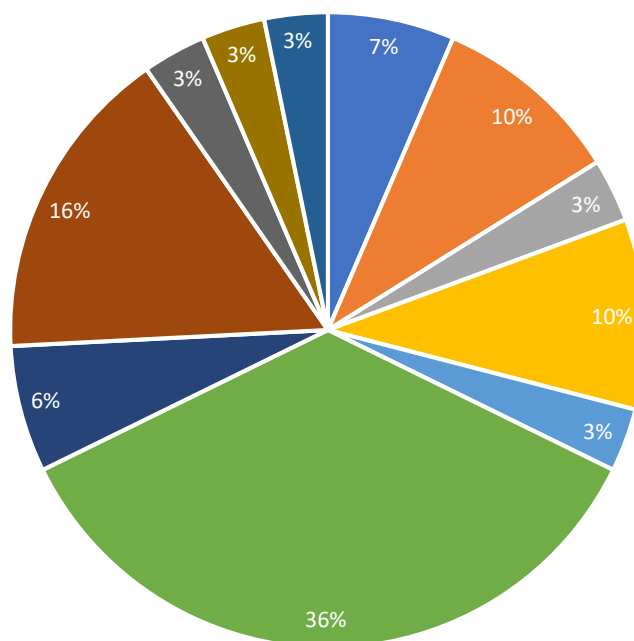


How easy are the coaching morning brief and daily reviews to understand?



What has been the most useful discussion/model/topic during the morning brief and daily review?

- Key stone behaviours
- Wheel of life
- Making 1% change in your life
- The Reticular Activating System
- Your life in Jelly Beans
- Chimp Paradox
- Vicktor Frankyl talk
- Mercedes model
- Kick starting the brain
- Comfort - stretch zone
- All



What is the most valuable thing you have learned?

Life is short and we need to take more control. Self-worth is vital to being happy.	Be kind to myself
I'm the only real barrier to my success.	Stop talking about the past
I can do more than I think I can.	Connection with other ppl
That electric mountain bikes are awesome AND the levelling and bonding within the groups is therapeutic in itself.	Re-engagement with sports, I've missed this over the past few years. It boosts my confidence.
Stop thinking and come to your senses	More about me as a person, ways to better myself
I am in charge and control of my own recovery	Learn to be selfish
Be in the present and have a positive attitude	How to assess situations and give my life MOT some careful consideration
How to try and deal with my emotions	It's ok to be the person I am
Even when all your basic human choices are taken away you still have the choice how you can take the situation	That my thoughts are holding me back

Participant perceptions of working in small groups

Participants were comfortable with the small group sizes with only 1 respondent (4%) reporting the groups were too small. When asked if they would have been comfortable working in larger coaching groups of more than 6 participants, 70% of respondents said no. The small coaching groups had a positive effect on the experience of the majority of participants.



Participant comments

"Less is more", "Superb", "Small, comfortable safe groups", "Felt involved all of the time".



Participant comments

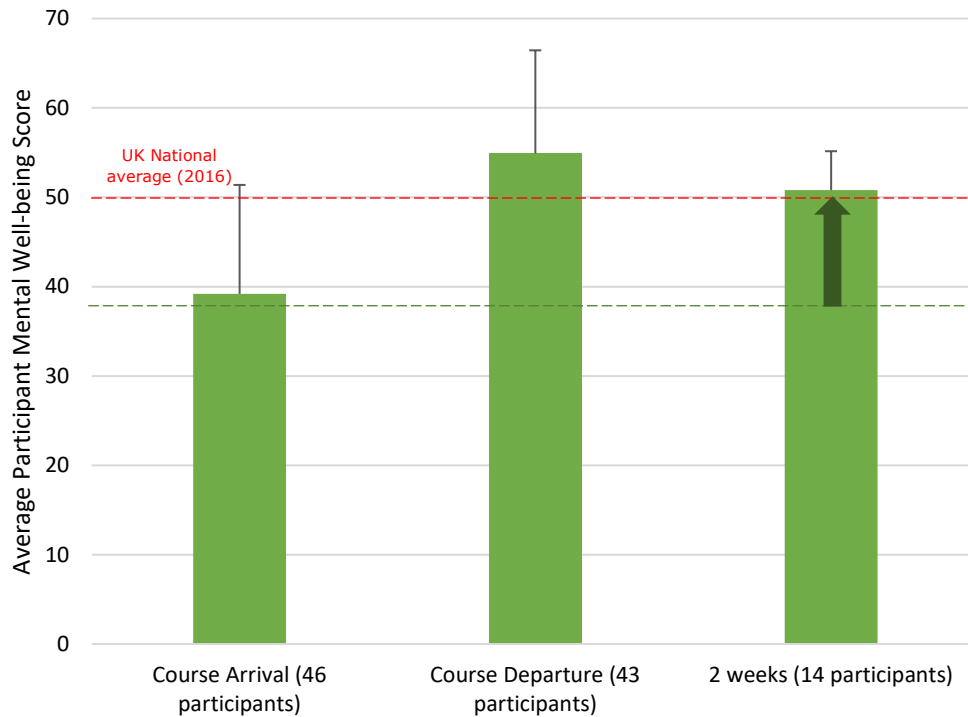
"You would feel lost and alone if you struggled with MH"

"Social anxiety"

"It was much easier to open up in front of less people"

"I genuinely believe my experience would have been affected by a larger group"

Sustainable improvements in participants' mental well-being



What part of the Multi Activity Course had the greatest impact on you?

I enjoyed the interaction and realised I've been missing out on this by hiding myself away

Given me my confidence back and passion for sports with the positive energy it provides me.

Part of a community again

There are many parts that have influenced how I've been feeling since

All of it, it was a great chilled place

They helped me deal with so much that I have been unable to process for decades.

The golf coaching

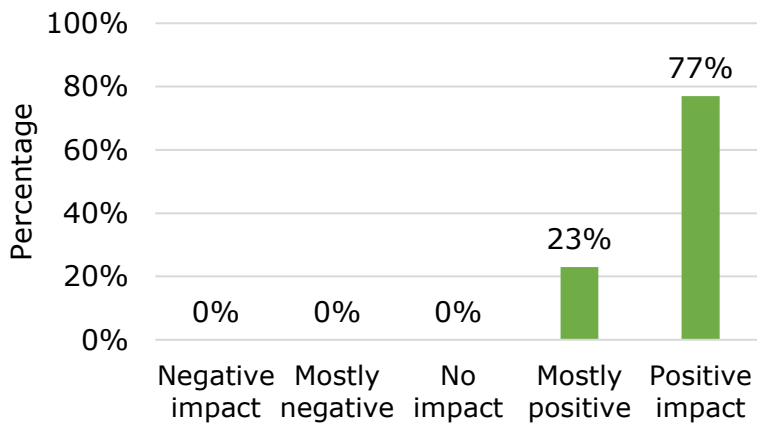
Mixing in groups

Being able to do new activities

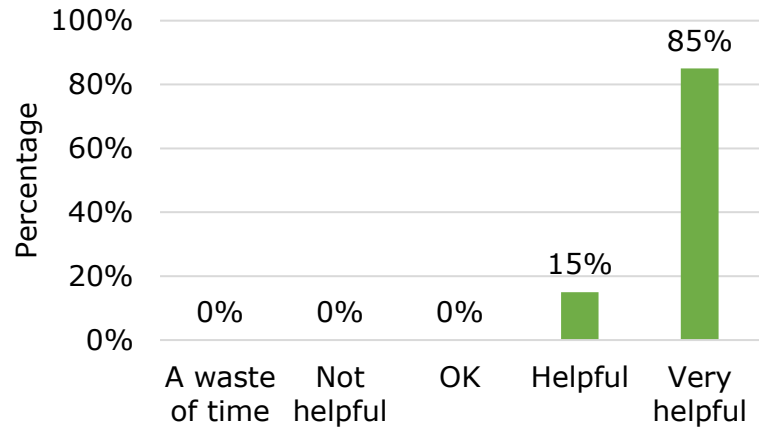
The whole learning experience

The group coaches were brilliant

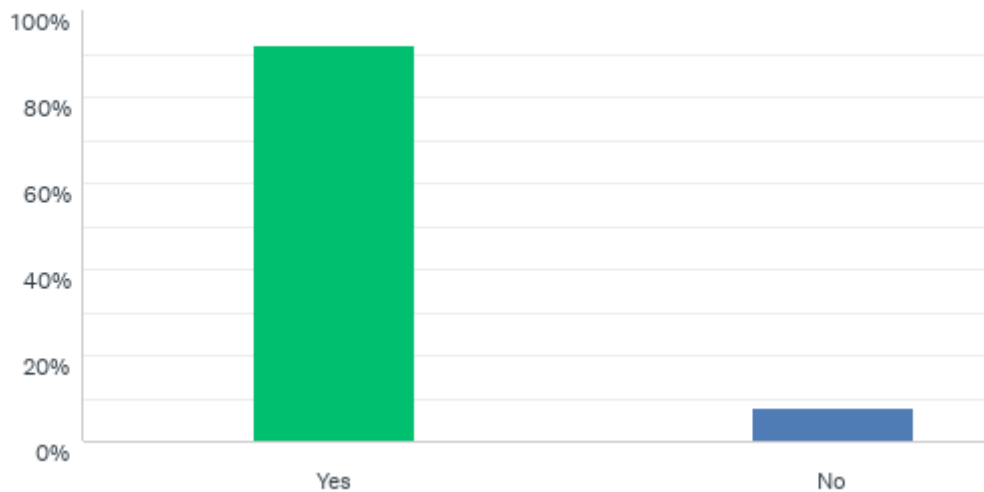
What impact has the Multi Activity Course had on you since the course ended?



In my recovery so far, the Multi Activity Course was...



Since being at the Battle Back Centre have you made any changes in your day-to-day life?



Participants commented they had stopped...

“Being reserved”

“Trying to overthink situations that are out of my control”

“Criticising myself as much as I did”

“Being as hard on myself (work in progress)”

“using negative language where possible”

“Jumping the gun”

Participants comments 2 weeks after attending

“One of the best courses I have done in my military career to date. I have stayed in touch with the people on my syndicate and we regularly support each other. Thanks to the course, we all know each other quite well!”

“Keep up the good work. Thank you to the RBL”

“Thank you to the battle back centre for showing me there is nice people left in the world”

“Personally, I think it was helpful to be grouped with other WIS personnel who were experiencing similar medical issues. It provided a further degree of shared experience on top of the military experience”

“Thank you for helping me in my recovery”