



LEEDS  
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UNIVERSITY

# BATTLE BACK

OUTDOOR CLIMBING  
COURSES FOR WOUNDED,  
INJURED AND SICK MILITARY  
PERSONNEL AND VETERANS

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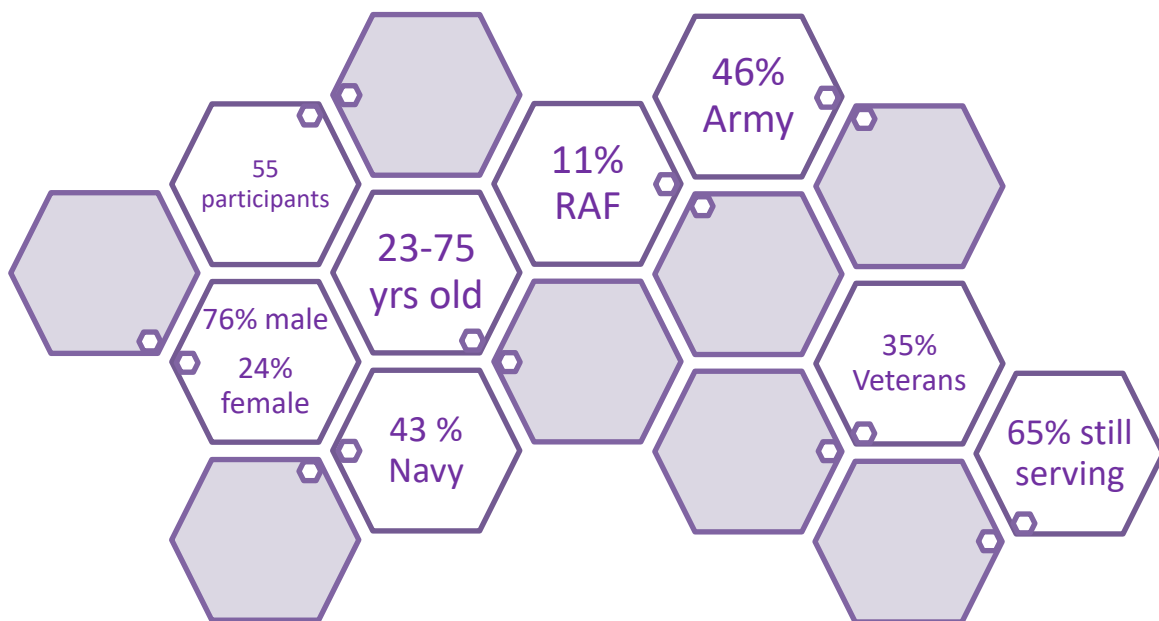
## The Courses

The five-day Battle Back Outdoor Climbing courses were co-hosted at The Battle Back Centre, Lilleshall and The Joint Service Mountain Training Centre Indefatigable, North Wales. Upon arrival, participants were shown around, briefed on the course schedule and invited to complete the first stage of participant research.

Participants voluntarily provided information about their recovery process and their current state of well-being. Information was provided by participants every day throughout the courses regarding the influence that participation was having on their state of well-being and to identify this would alter due to their involvement in the course. Compiled data from all previous course participants is presented in this report.

Students were then introduced to the course director and staff team before engaging in some introductory activities enabling the participants to share their background and experiences of climbing and what they hoped to gain from the week.

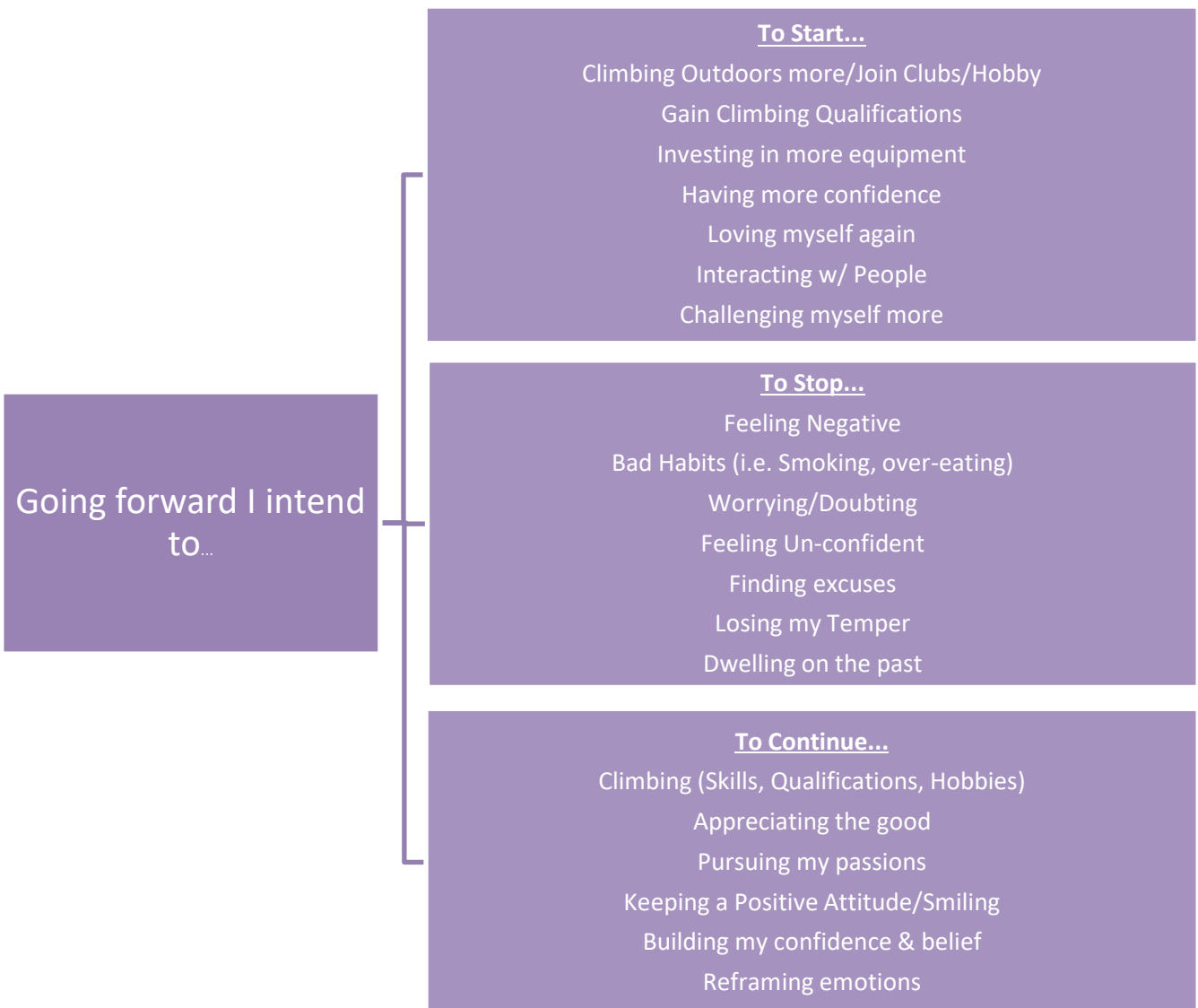
## The Participants



Within these 55 participants, 40% said they had been injured and sustained a non-operational related injury. Just 2% were wounded, having been injured on operations and 54% were living with a systemic illness or mental health problem. Of those Wounded, Injured or Sick (WIS), the most recent someone had been become WIS was six months ago and the longest time was six years ago. Within their recovery, 65% of participants felt “very supported or supported” by The Royal British Legion.

On the first evening, the group were taken to Joint Services Training Centre Indefatigable where they stayed until the fourth day. Across days two and three, students engaged in multi-pitch rock climbing in the Moelwyn Mountains or Ogwen Valley, working in pairs with a coach who led and guided them through several routes. On day four, participants engaged in 'single pitch climbing' at Llanberis slate quarries before returning to the Battle-Back Centre for dinner and an optional social event to round off the week.

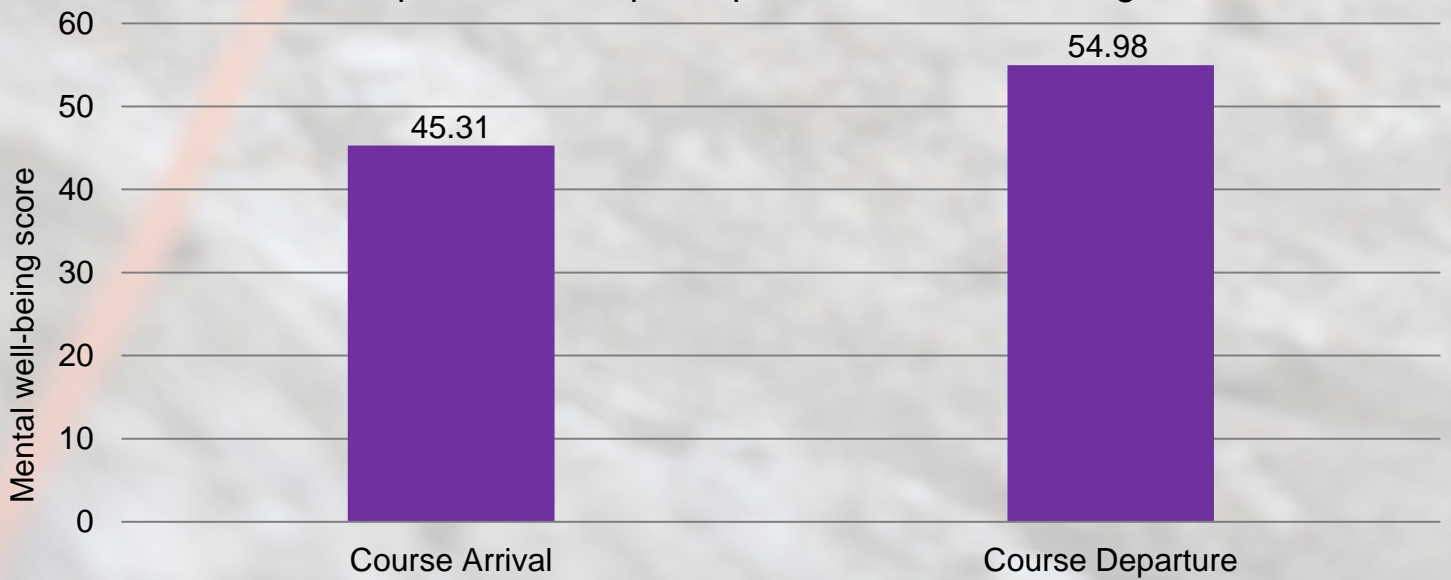
On the final day, the course concluded with a brief climbing session at Newport indoor climbing wall; students were split into teams and participated in a bouldering competition. Following this, the students and staff returned to the Battle Back Centre for a course debrief; where the students completed their final evaluations, shared their experiences and reviewed what they had learned and intended to translate into their lives to aid their recovery and progression.







18% Improvement in participants mental well-being scores



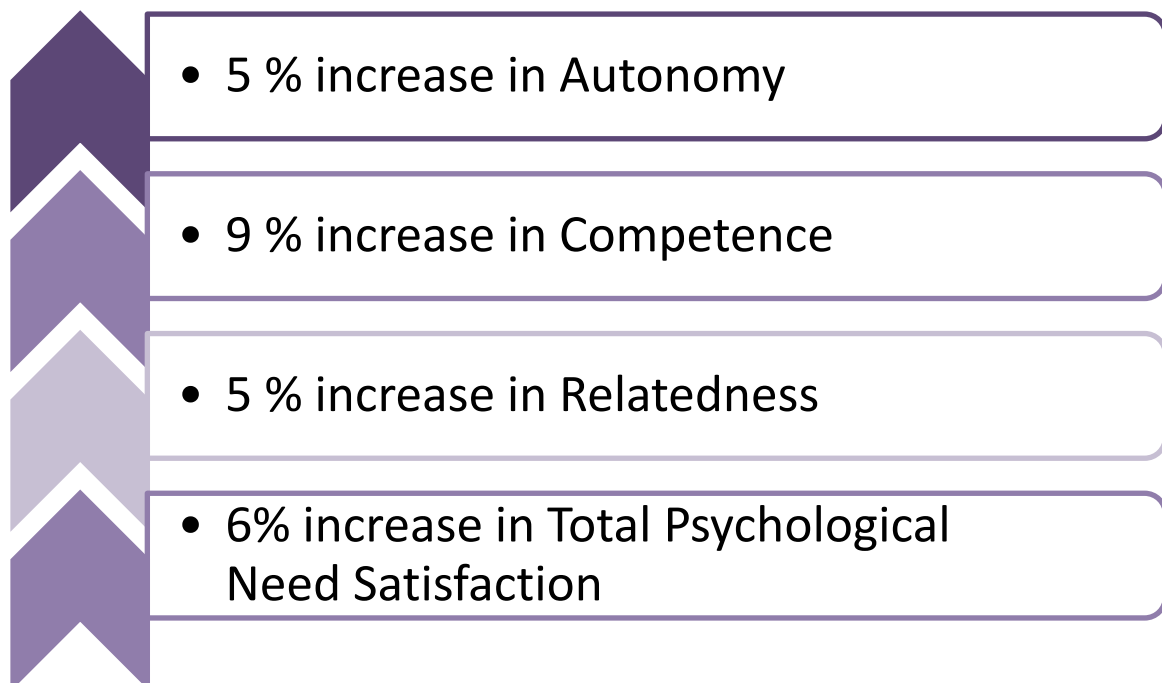
All Battle Back courses aim to improve three universal needs of the participants that should be continually satisfied for an individual to maintain optimal psychological health. These are the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness:

**Autonomy** is the need for individuals to feel in control of their lives and their future. Most importantly, this centres on participants making their own decisions and independently choosing from among many programme options. This is supported with the delivery of educational lessons for the participants about information processing in our brains and how this influences our behaviour which is contextualised in the day's outdoor and physical activities

**Competence** concerns our achievements, knowledge, and skills; individuals have a need to build competence and develop mastery over tasks that are important to them. Sport offers a rich context for experiencing competence at a range of levels.

Given the human imperative for feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness with others, **Relatedness** is the third theme. A significant lack in any of one, or combination, of these three psychological needs will have a robust detrimental impact on an individual's well-being.

### Improvements in participants Psychological Needs after the Outdoor Climbing Course

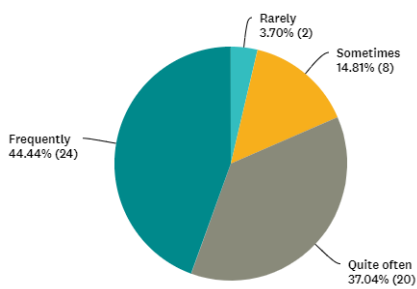




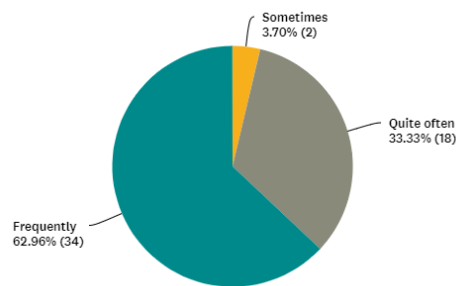




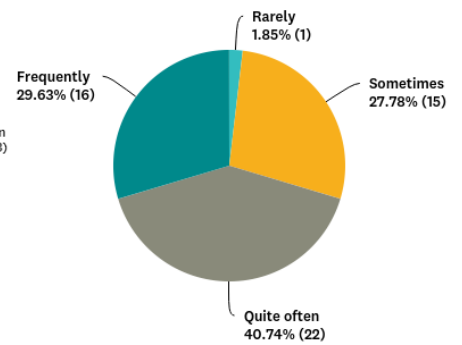
## Facilitating Relatedness, Competence and Autonomy through outdoor climbing.



How well participants made friends and connected with others



How often participants felt a sense of achievement



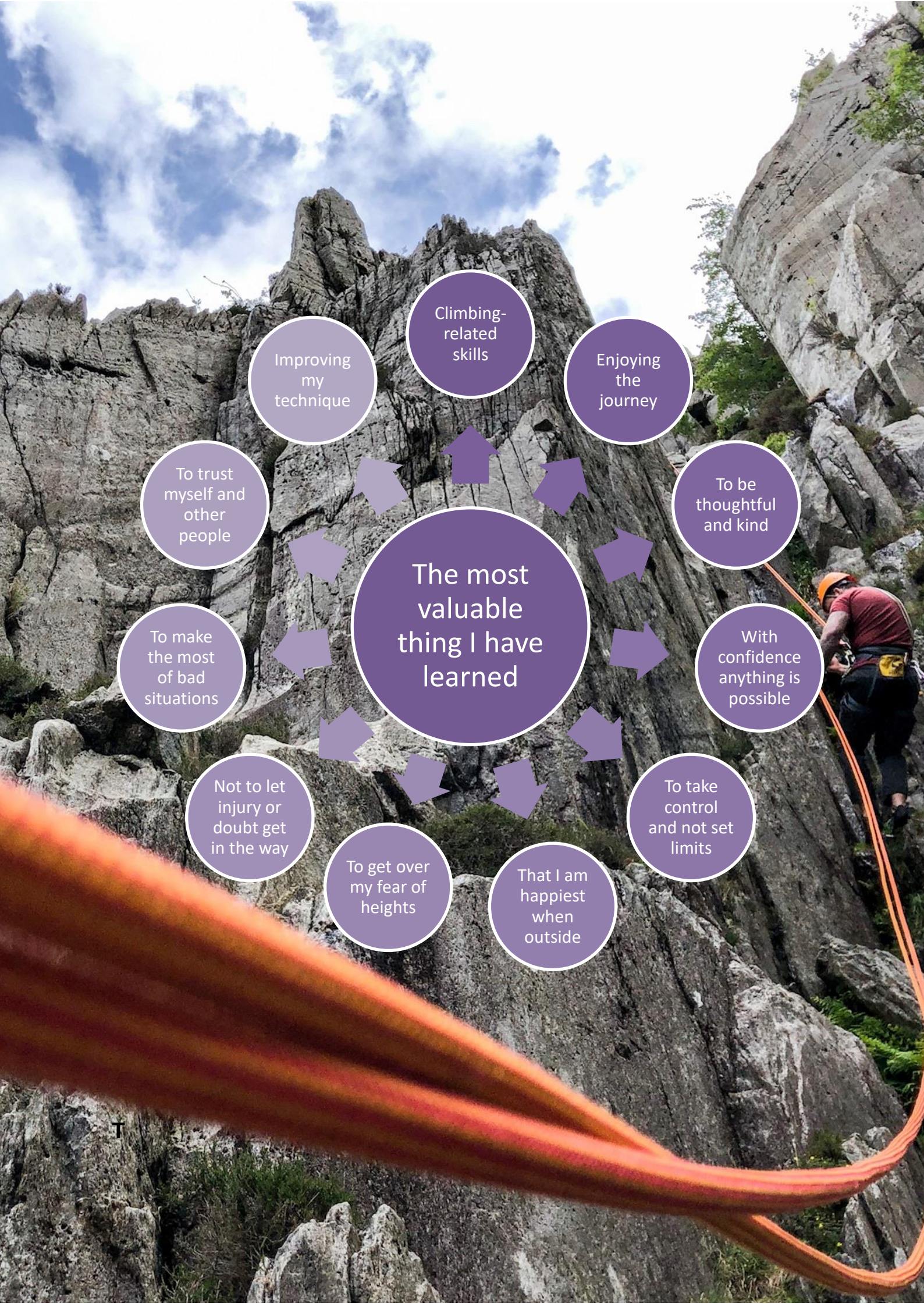
How often participants made their own decisions and make choices

### Participants' most valuable experiences with their coach

"Completing a successful Climb"	"Working in general with an exceptional mentor and coach"	"Talking in depth about issues in my life"	"When I was encouraged and given opportunity to lead a climb"
"Being taught the correct technique"	"The way he just instilled confidence to go ahead and do it. And the trust I had in him to keep me safe."	"One-to-one support"	"Gaining great knowledge on climbing and motivational support"
"Having a good laugh, feeling comfortable and climbing out of my comfort zone"	"Learning to cope with stress and share personal experiences"	"His belief I could achieve things "	"Being a reassurance"
"Discussing positive thinking and how it helps overcome those hesitant situations"			







The most valuable thing I have learned

Climbing-related skills

Enjoying the journey

Improving my technique

To be thoughtful and kind

To trust myself and other people

With confidence anything is possible

To make the most of bad situations

To take control and not set limits

Not to let injury or doubt get in the way

That I am happiest when outside

To get over my fear of heights





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