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Battle Back Veterans Courses

Well-being impact research 2022

Conducted for
The Royal British Legion
by The Carnegie School of Sport,
Leeds Beckett University

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Course Content and Structure

Five-day supportive courses for Veterans' have been delivered at the Back Centre since July 2017. The staff dynamically vary every course to suit the needs of the participants. The activities run and the psycho-educational content delivered is bespoke to ensure it is most relevant and useful for the participants on each course. The core ethos of the Veterans courses is to utilise adaptive sport and adventurous activities as a context to support personal development and growth.

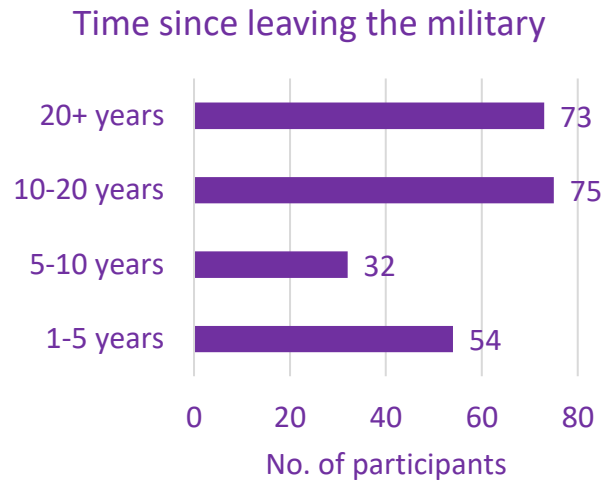
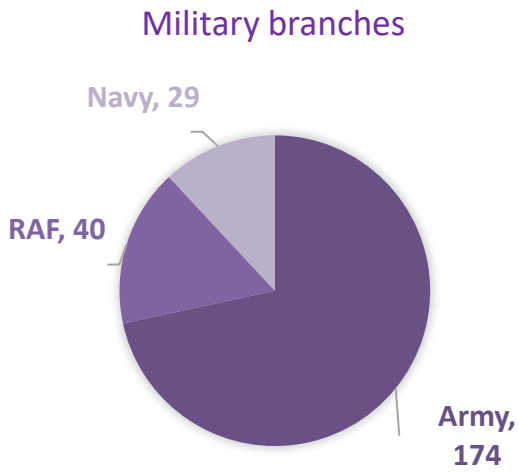
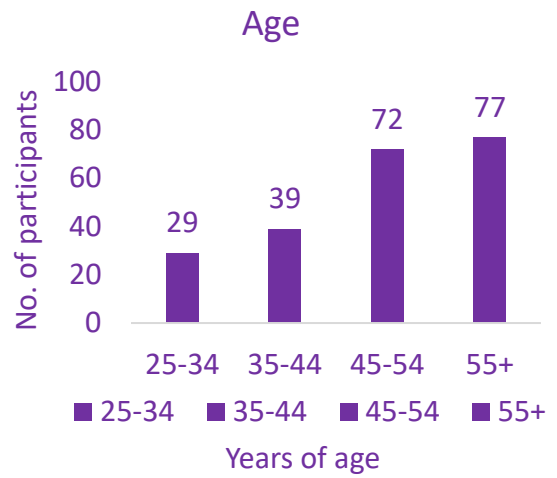
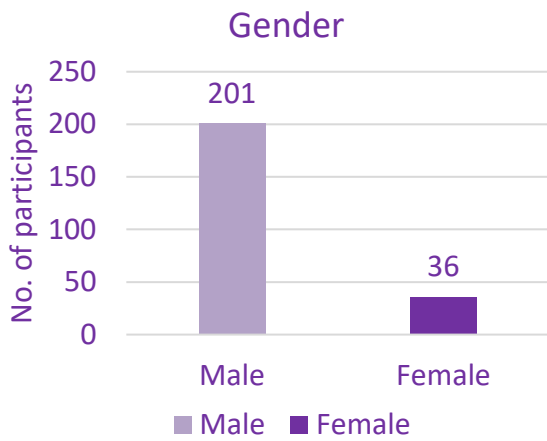
Each morning begins with an classroom-based session in which new concepts and reflective practices are introduced to develop participants' understanding of behaviour change and personal development. The staff contextualise that teaching throughout the week in various adventurous activities and sports including:

Wheelchair basketball
Indoor rock climbing
Skiing
Indoor caving
Mountain biking

Archery
Sitting volleyball
Clay pigeon shooting
Tennis
Kayaking/canoeing

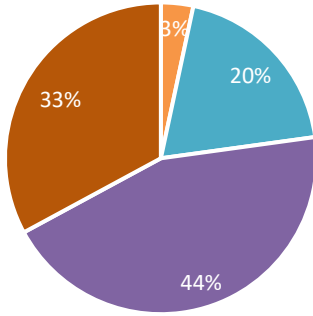
This is achieved through a person-centred approach to participation and through the delivery of educational teaching to help improve participants ability to manage aspects of their life and positively influence their mental well-being.

Participant Demographics



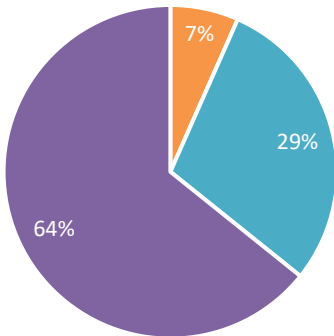
Facilitating Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness for participants whilst at The Battle Back Centre

How often were you asked to make choices and decisions?



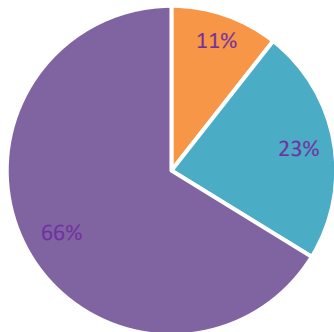
■ Rarely
 ■ Sometimes
 ■ Quite often
 ■ Frequently

How often did you feel a sense of achievement over the course?

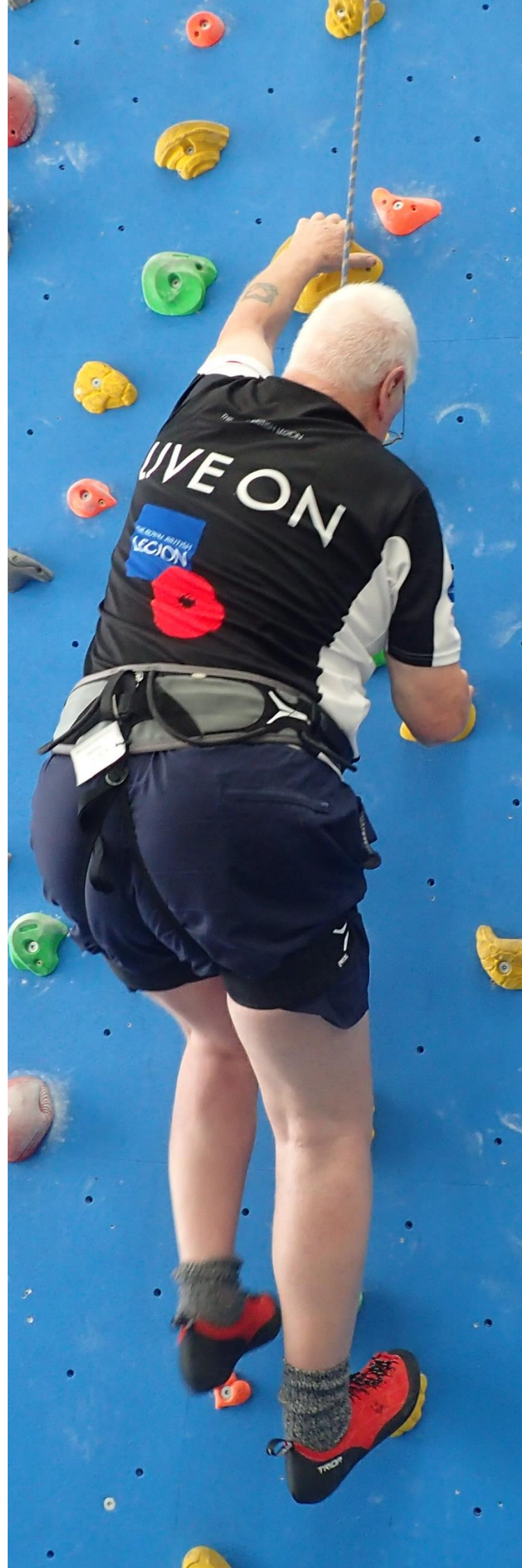


■ Sometimes
 ■ Quite often
 ■ Frequently

How well did you make friends and feel connected with others?



■ Sometimes
 ■ Quite often
 ■ Frequently



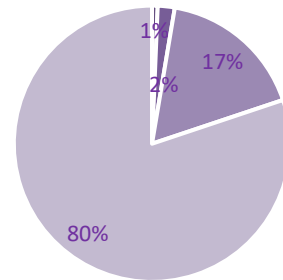
What the Veterans enjoyed the most

- Having a sense of belonging/support
- Sports & exercise activities
- Social interaction/camraderie with fellow veterans & staff
- Discussions (inspirational & banter)
- Being challenged
- Learning about different models/theories
- Sharing personal stories & advice

What the Veterans least enjoyed

- Dealing with technology
- The apprehensiveness before the course started!
- Some parts of the programme were at times overwhelming
- Filling out forms
- The programme going by so quickly
- Times when I dwelled on things

How beneficial did veterans find the course?



- Partially beneficial
- Beneficial
- Very beneficial
- Extremely beneficial

How do the Battle Back centre staff differ or compare to other supportive programmes/centres you have been on?



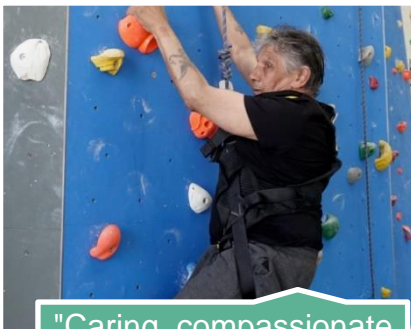
"They Help you Think"



"Treat you respectfully but not differently"



"More personalised and engaging"



"Caring, compassionate with a real desire to help us regain the 'real' us"



"Far exceed my expectations"



"Relaxed and empathetic"



"Down to Earth and non-judgemental"

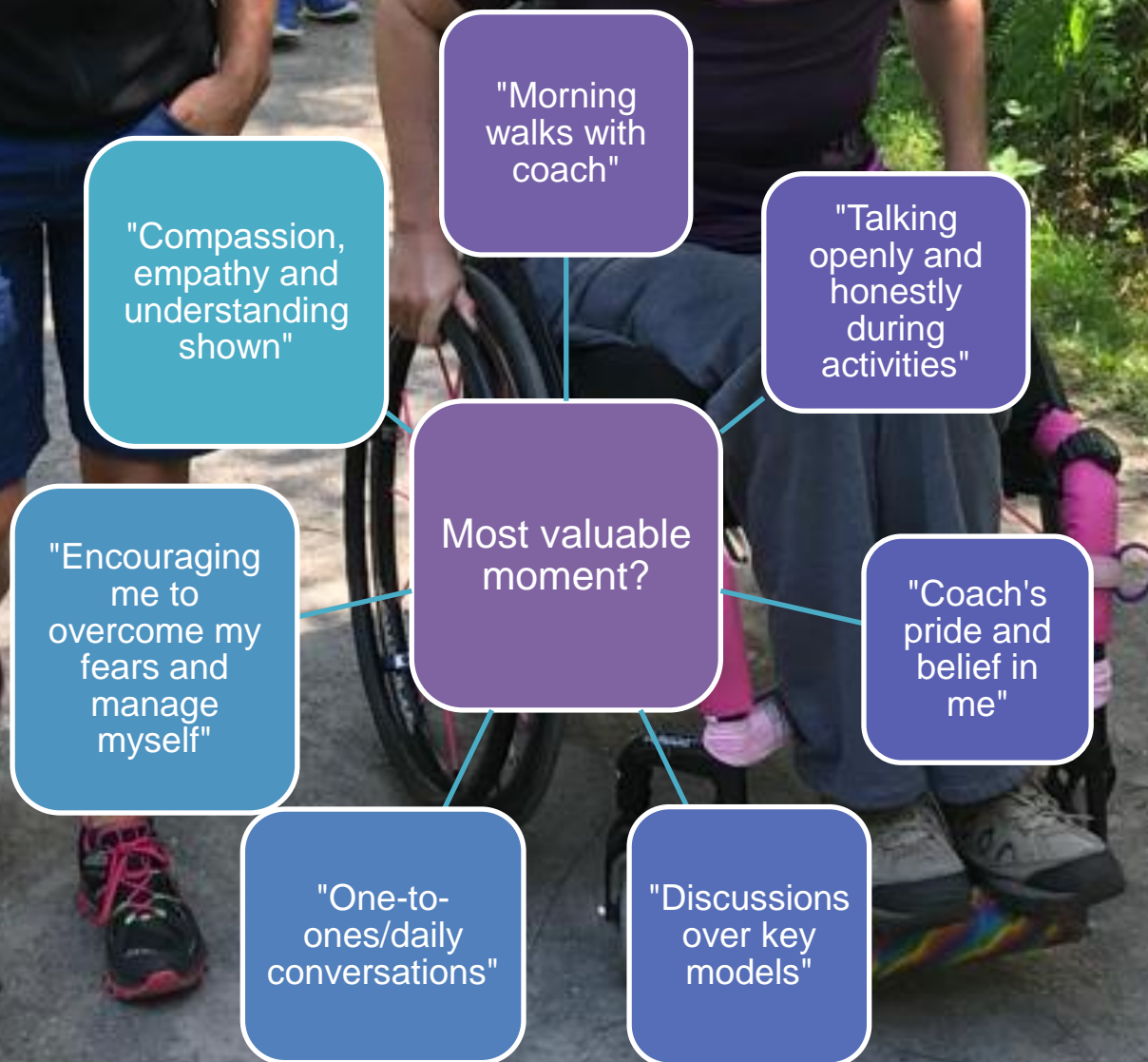



"Enthusiastic, Humourous and Understanding"

What was the most useful discussion you had or topic you learned about?



What was your most valuable moment with a Battle Back staff member?





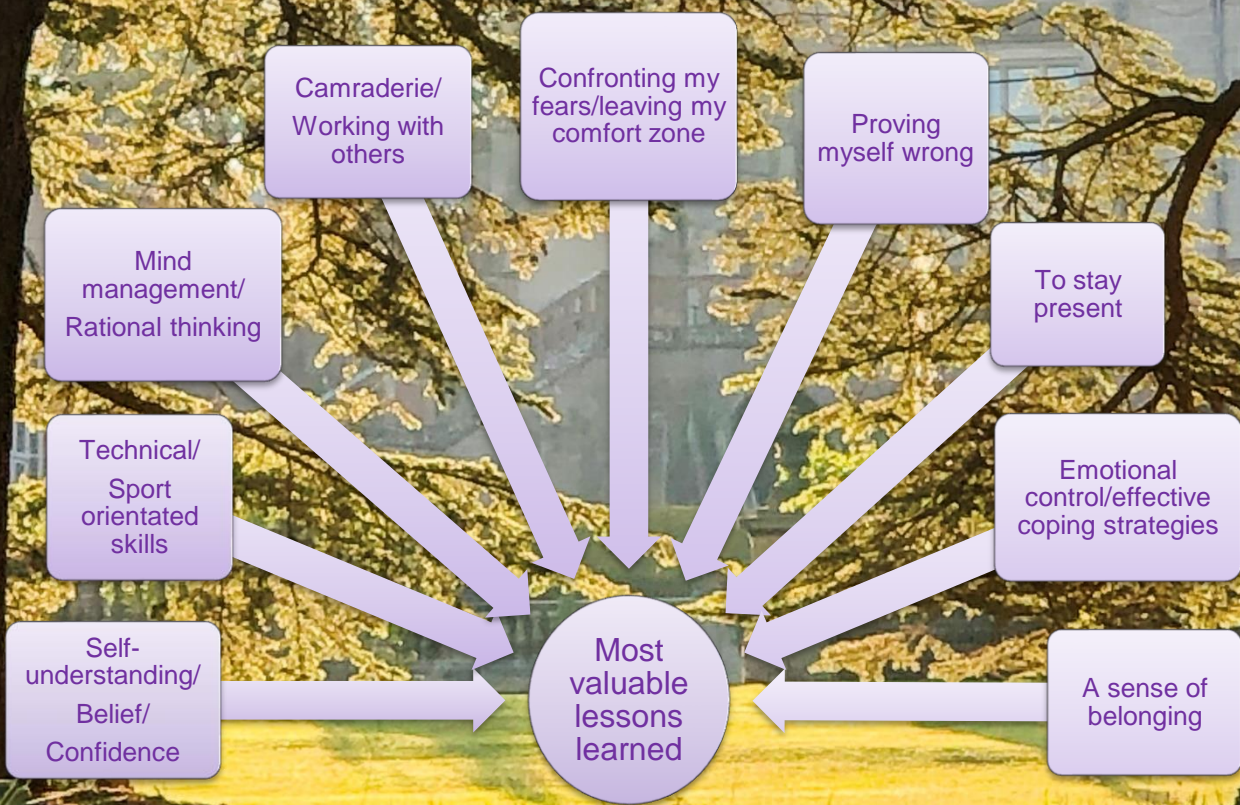
Is there anything you intend to change in your life as a result of this course?

To Start

- "Pushing myself/self-belief/being more confident"
- "Trying more sport, activities and getting in routines"
- "Thinking more/being thoughtful"
- "Self-kindness/positivity/help others"
- "Improving my nutrition/water intake/sleep"
- "Volunteering/being proactive"
- "Prioritise relaxation into my schedule"

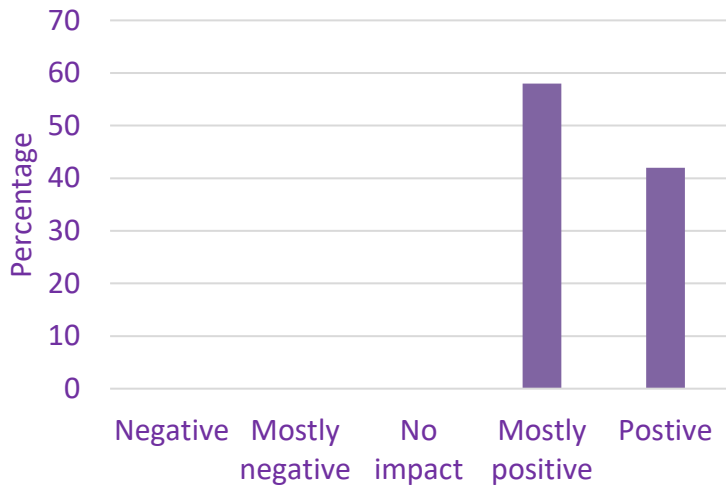
To Stop

- "Thinking negatively"
- "Unhealthy habits"
- "Isolating myself"
- "Dwelling on the past"
- "Overthinking"
- "Avoiding social interaction"
- "Procrastinating"
- "Being over-critical/beating myself up"

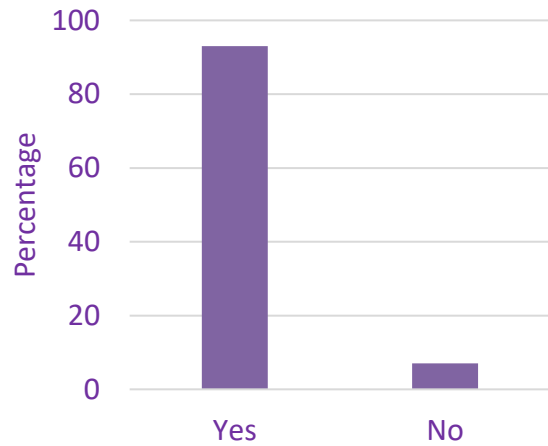


Follow Up Research 3 Months After Attending The Veterans Course

What impact has the Veterans Course had on you and your life since the course ended?



Have you made any Positive Changes in your day-to-day life?



"It enabled me to believe that I am a worthy human being and not a victim of my mental health"

"It empowered me to believe that I can achieve anything I put my mind to"

"Gave me my confidence back in myself"

" I have become mentally stronger"

"Attending the Battle Back Course gave me my confidence back in myself"

"I still talk to some I met on the battle back course"

"Being there with likeminded individuals was a fantastic feeling"

"Have been back in touch with old friends"

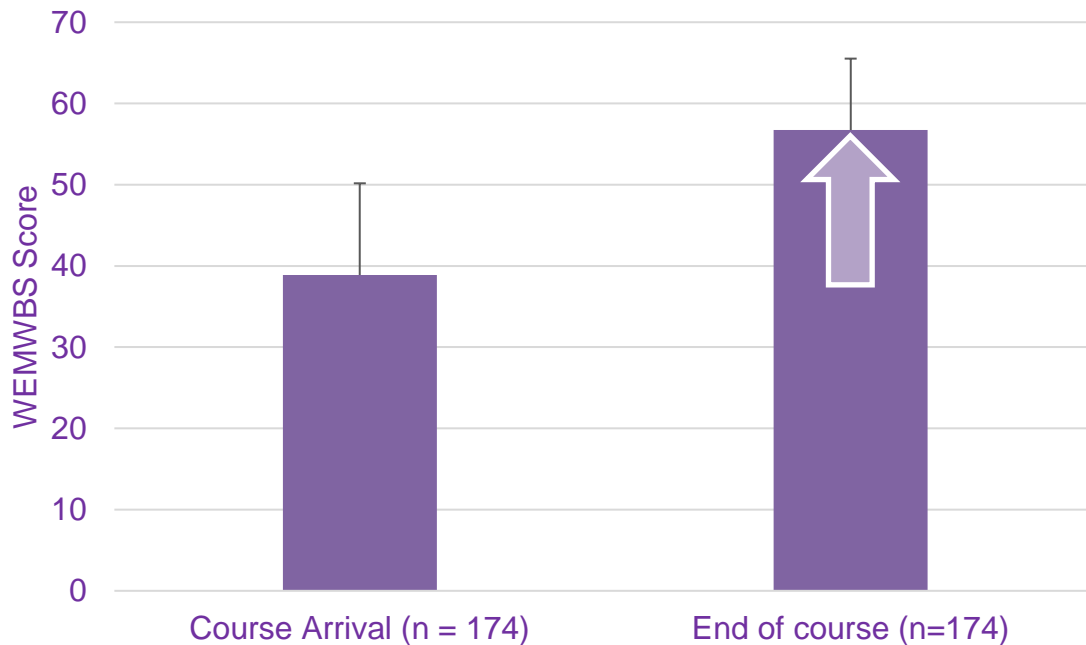
"Helped give back my identity and sense of purpose which I thought I had lost"

"Absolutely first class and it has genuinely changed my life"



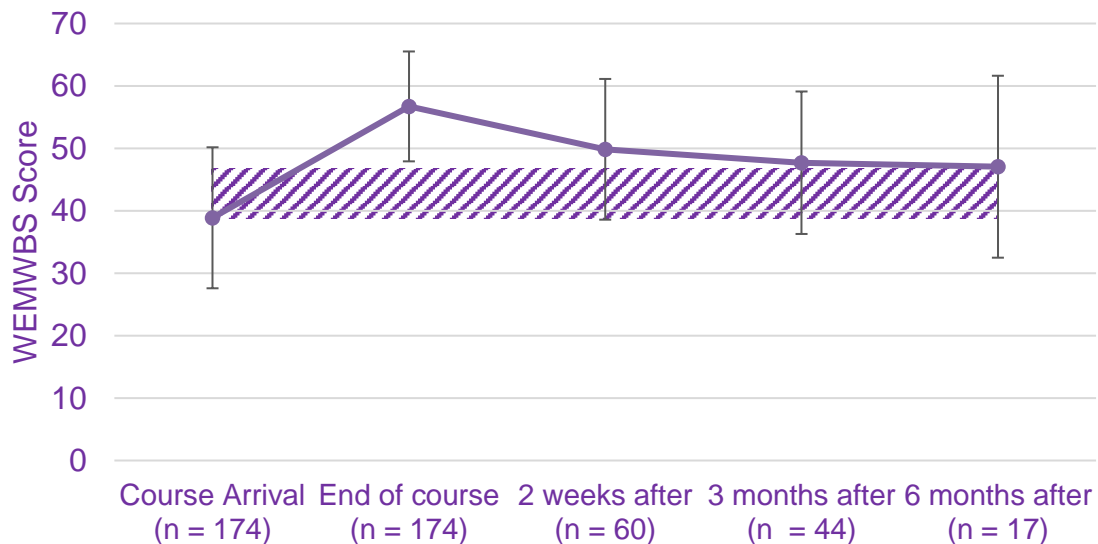
The Effect of the Multi Activity Course on Participants' Mental Well-being

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) was completed by 174 personnel at the beginning and the end of a Veterans course. There was a significant increase in the mental well-being scores of the participants between the beginning and the end of the course ($P < 0.05$).

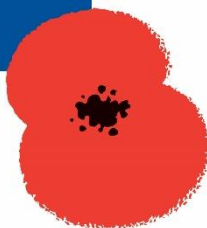


Since May 2019, participants have been invited to take part in a long term follow up study to understand the impact the course has had on their life since attending.

The shaded area indicates that participants mental well-being scores remain higher than they were before attending Battle Back three months later



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