

Evaluation of a Collaborative Pilot Program for School-based Public Health Nurse Services in Perth County Catholic Elementary Schools



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Background

- PDHU has been providing SBPHN services in the Avon Maitland District School Board since 2000
- 50/50 cost-share agreement between the Board of Health and the school board
- Two distinct services:

SBPHN Support Service

SBPHN Consultation and Referral Service

Background...

SBPHN Support Service

- SBPHNs work with students, parents, school staff
- Provide supportive counselling to enhance learning and promote healthy growth and development
- Refer students and families to health and community services
- Provide some group counselling and health promotion activities, and attend school committee meetings

Background...

SBPHN Consultation & Referral Service

- SBPHNs primarily provide information and consultation to parents and school staff
- Telephone and/or email
- Supportive counselling prioritized to students with highest need

HPCDSB Pilot Program

- Pilot: January – June 2007
- 5 schools received SBPHN Support Service
- 3 schools received SBPHN Consultation & Referral Service
- 1.0 FTE of a Public Health Nurse
- 4 PHNs provided services
- 0.2 FTE allocated to team leader and evaluation activities

Evaluation Goals

1. Describe how the services responded to the physical, social, and emotional (PSE) health needs of students
2. Measure the impact of the services on students, parents, and school staff
3. Determine the need for continuation of the SBPHN Support Service and the SBPHN Consultation and Referral Service in the HPCDSB.

Method

Student Record Lists

Surveys

- Pre-pilot survey for school staff

- Post-pilot surveys for school staff

- Student Survey

- Parent/Child Survey

Focus groups

- Administrators

- SBPHNs

Results: Pre-Pilot Survey

- 14% of school staff SA or A that they were confident that the PSE health needs of students (and their families) at their school were being met
- 59% not sure, 37% SD or D that students currently receiving services have received them in a timely manner
- 90% said it would be very helpful or helpful to have a service provider on-site at their school to support PSE health needs

Results: Student Record Lists

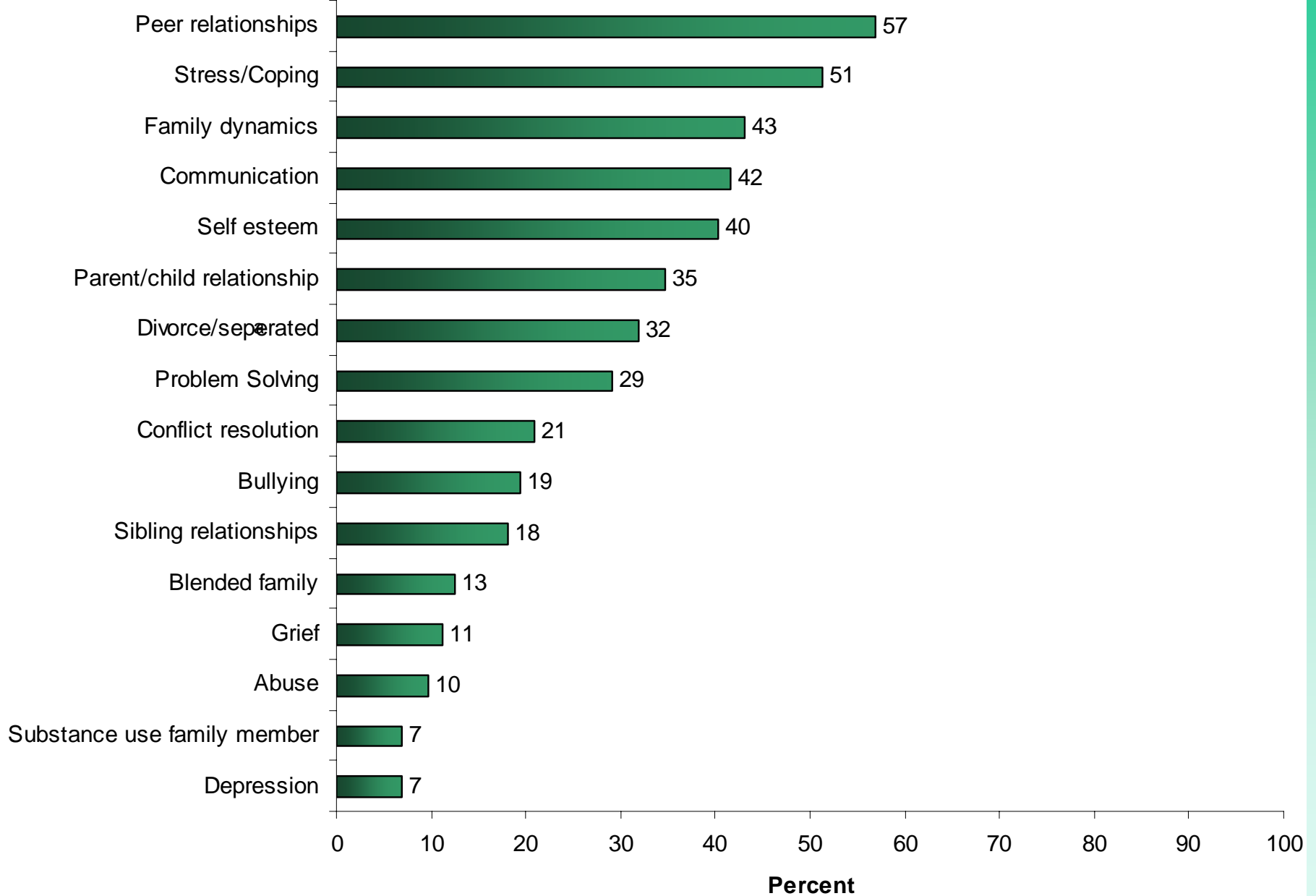
- 71 students, 4% of the student population
- SBPHNs met with 56% of students within 24 hrs and 77% within 2 weeks
- 11% of students referred to community service
- 7% referred to health service
- Leading student health issues:

Relationships with peers (57%)

Stress/coping (51%)

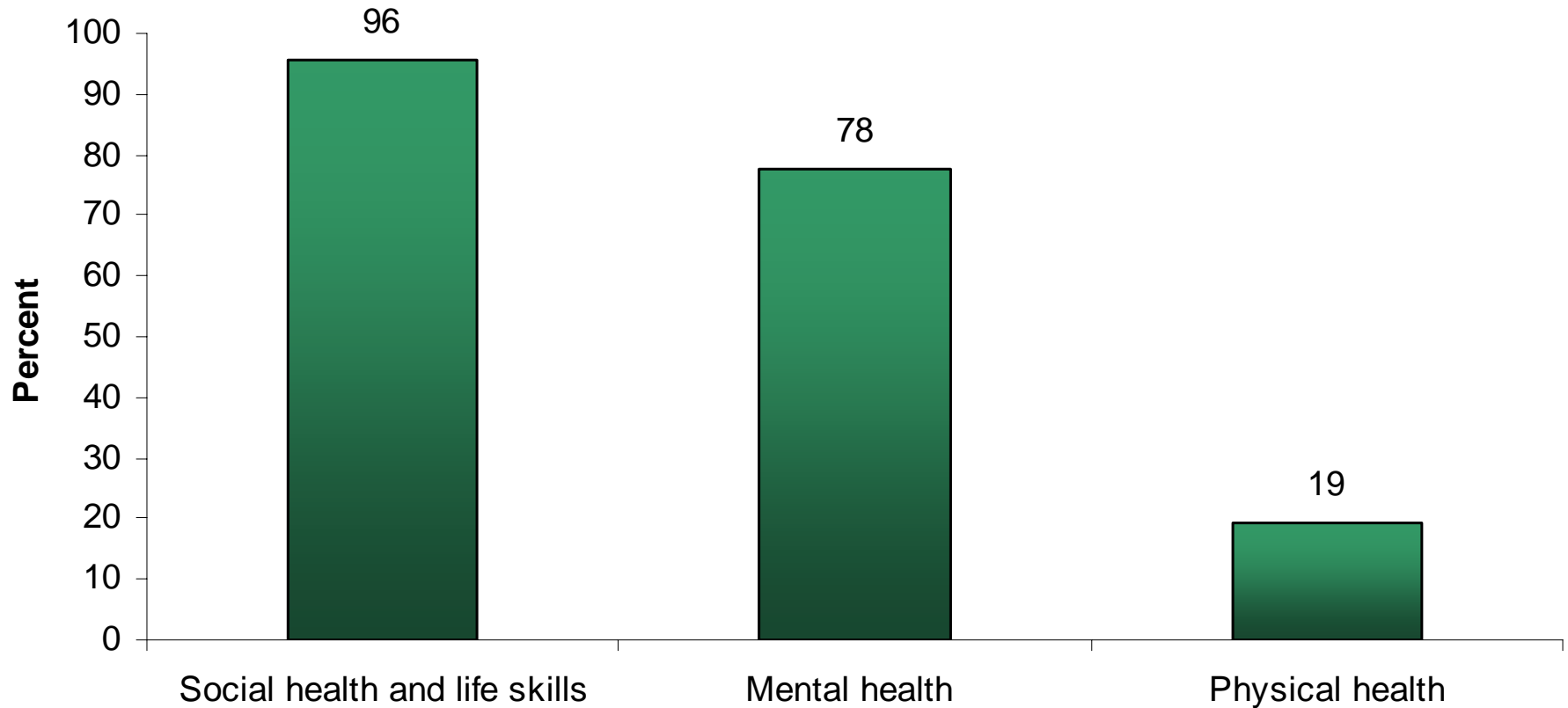
Figure 2.2 Student Health Issues

Client issues



Results: Student Record Lists...

Figure 2.3 Major Categories of Student Health Issues



Results: Student Survey & Parent/Child Survey

- 29% of parents were 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely' to have sought outside assistance for their child had the SBPHN Support Service not been available
- 100% parents and students were 'very satisfied' (61%) or 'satisfied' (39%) with the service
- 86% of students and parents SA (63%) or A (23%) that they would recommend the service to others

Results: Student Survey & Parent/Child Survey...

Students and Parents 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' that the SBPHN...

- Was a good listener (100%)
- Made the student feel comfortable (100%)
- Cared about helping the student (100%)
- Could be trusted (100%)
- Helped the student find his/her own solutions (100%)
- Was able to give the information that he/she could understand (94%)
- Maintained confidentiality (94%)
- Helped the student discover his/her own strengths (65%)



Post-Pilot Survey: SBPHN Support Service

Results: Post-Pilot Staff Survey Support Service

Access

- 83% of school staff found it 'very easy' or 'easy' to connect students with PSE health needs to the SBPHN Support Service
- 92% of school staff SA or A that there was an increase in access to support for students with PSE health needs

Impact

- 88% of school staff SA or A that they were confident that with the addition of the SBPHN, their school had improved its ability to meet the PSE health needs of students

Results: Post-Pilot Support Service...

Impact

School staff SA or A that the service had improved:

- The PSE health of students the SBPHN worked with (88%)
- The efficiency of response to problem situations (86%)
- The learning ability of those students working with the SBPHN to address their PSE health needs (73%)
- The PSE health of the student population in general (70%)
- The early identification of students (and families) with PSE health needs (60%)

Results: Post-Pilot Support Service...

Characteristics of the SBPHN

School staff SA or A that the SBPHN:

- Acted in a professional manner (100%)
- Was approachable (100%)
- Was available at scheduled times (100%)
- Was knowledgeable (93%)
- Participated as a member of the school team (82%)
- Communicated well with staff, students, and families (82%)
- Was easy to contact outside scheduled times (49%)

Results: Post-Pilot Support Service...

Satisfaction

96% of school staff were either 'very satisfied' (46%) or 'satisfied' (50%) with the SBPHN Support Service



**Post-Pilot Survey:
SBPHN
Consultation &
Referral Service**

Results: Post-Pilot Staff Survey Consultation & Referral Service

Access

- Consultation or referral to the SBPHN was very easy or easy (36%), or neither easy nor difficult (43%)
- 64% of school staff SA or A that there was an increase in access to support for students/families with PSE health needs

Impact

- 53% of school staff neither agreed nor disagreed that they were confident that with the addition of the service, their school had improved its ability to meet the PSE health needs of students/families

Figure 4.4 School Staff Perceptions of School Improvements Since the Introduction of the SBPHN Consultation and Referral Service

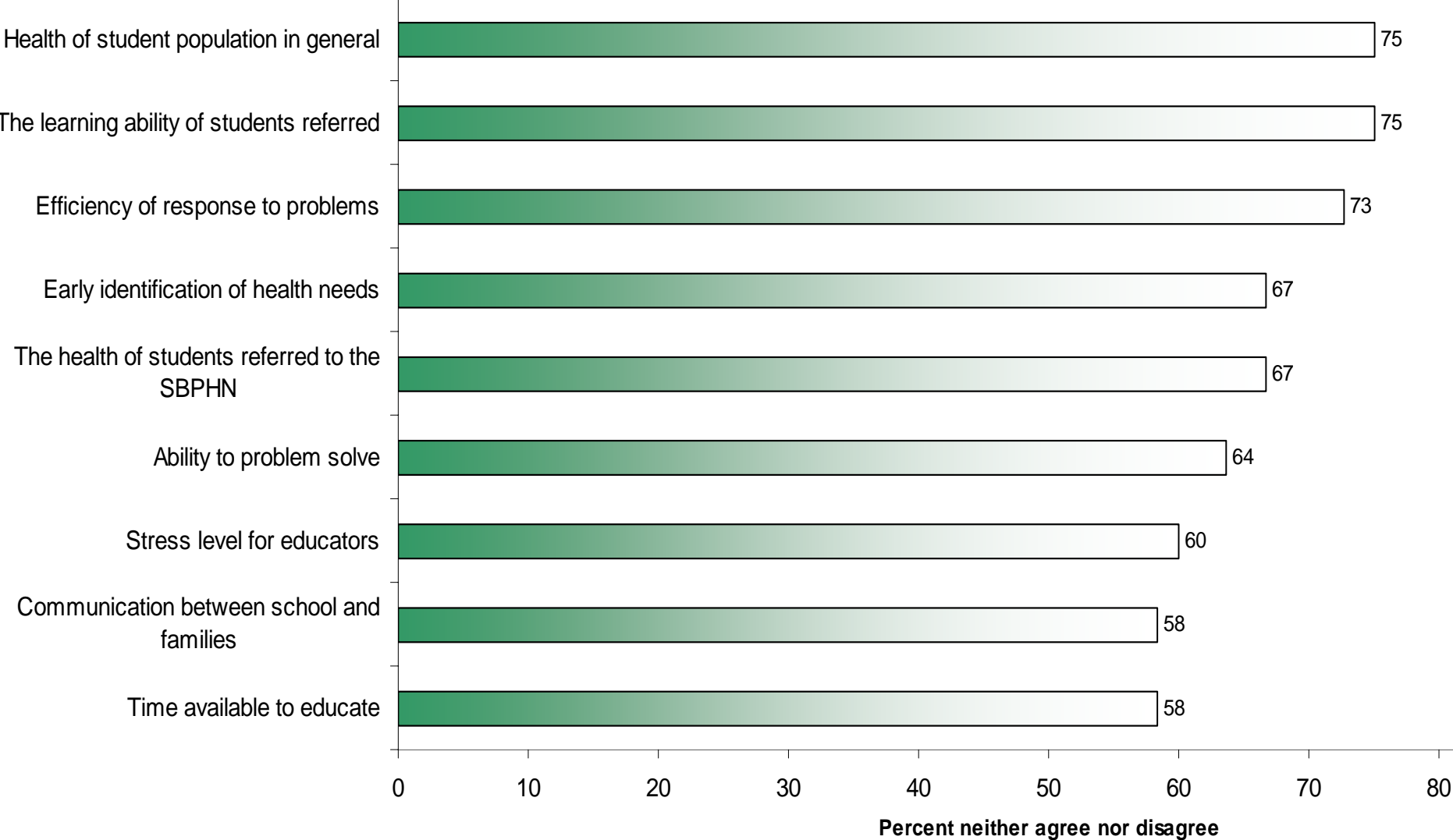
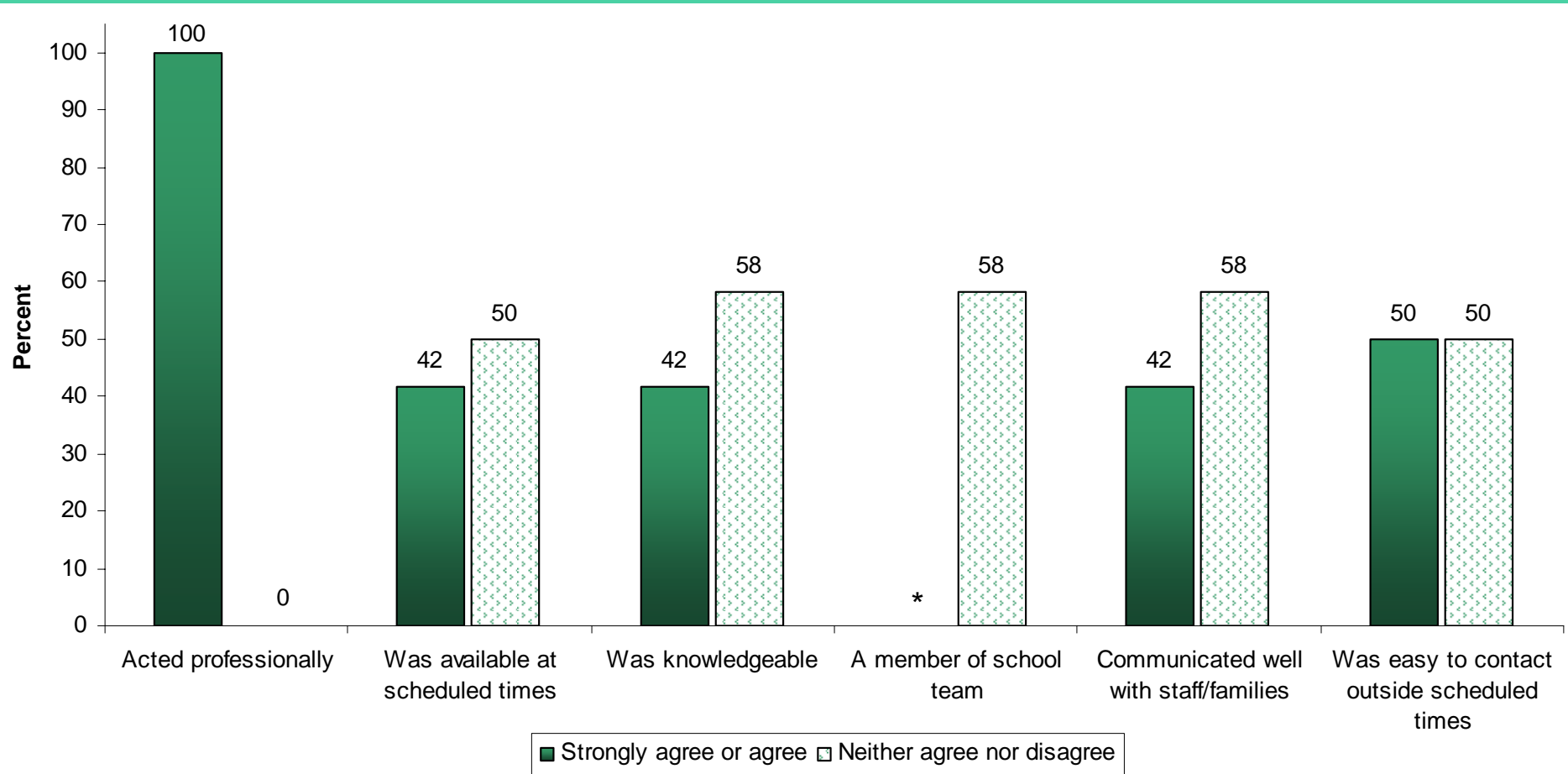


Figure 4.5 School Staff Perceptions of the Characteristics of the SBPHN in the SBPHN Consultation and Referral Service



Results: Post-Pilot C & R Service...

Satisfaction

80% of school staff were either 'very satisfied' (40%) or 'satisfied' (40%) with the SBPHN Support Service

Results: Administrator Focus Groups

- Positive impact on students, parents, and school staff
- SBPHN role and knowledge were impacts and strengths
- Recommendations for improvement = increase time, improve visibility, connections and profile

Administrators unanimously recommended program continuation, with modification of Consultation & Referral Service.

Results: Administrator Focus Groups...

Impact

“...she was able to tap into their emotions...she provided them with...coping strategies”

Role (C&R Service)

“Peace of mind knowing there was someone to contact to help initiate the process whenever we did have a need...for me that is a real big selling point of this program”

Results: Administrator Focus Groups...

Positive Experience for Students and Families

“It’s all very positive experiences...the fact that the kids want to go back and see somebody, especially an adolescent, means well you must have some connection with them, because otherwise they wouldn’t even be going there.”

Continuation: Unanimous “Yes”

“...because they come from a health care perspective...I don’t know of another provider or adult professional who could come into the building who could do what a School-based [Public] Health Nurse could do.”

Results: SBPHN Focus Group

- Communication discussed as a facilitator and barrier; a strength with families, and also an area for improvement with school staff and administrator
- Review of SBPHN role and referral process was facilitator
- Orientation and education regarding role and referral process area for improvement
- Possible expansion of service into secondary school?

Results: SBPHN Focus Group

HPCDSB School Community Acceptance

“I think the kids make you feel very accepted...they’re not uncomfortable to say “Hi!” to you in the hall...you’re accepted not only with the school staff but with the students, which is kind of nice.”

“...you feel like you’re part of the school family”

Conclusions

The pre-pilot request for services to address the PSE health needs of HPCDSB Perth County elementary students was met during the pilot program through the provision of SBPHN services to 4% of the total student population.

The SBPHN Support Service had a positive impact on students, parents, school staff, and administrators. While the SBPHN Consultation and Referral Service had a more neutral impact on school staff, administrator discussed in their focus group a positive impact on themselves, school staff, and families.

Conclusions...

A strong need for continuation of the SBPHN Support Service and the SBPHN Consultation & Referral Service in the HPCDSB has been demonstrated during this short pilot period. However, modification of the current SBPHN Consultation & Referral Service is recommended.

Recommendations

1. Continue to jointly fund the SBPHN Support Service and SBPHN Consultation & Referral Service
2. Provide consistent program initiation activities across all schools
3. Enhance communication between SBPHNs, administrators, and school staff
4. Explore ways to improve the SBPHN Consultation & Referral Service
5. Provide sufficient work space at schools
6. Review and clarify confidentiality and consent processes

Recommendations

7. Explore expansion of the services into HPCDSB Perth County secondary school
8. Continue process evaluation and satisfaction assessment
9. Examine other roles of SBPHN in future evaluations
10. Include objectives and methods specific to Consultation & Referral Service in future evaluations
11. Explore ways to evaluate the impact of the services on PSE health outcomes and student learning
12. Disseminate findings



“Oh, it definitely should continue. It serves a need within our communities. It provides families with valuable information, support; it just helps us to give the children the whole...package in terms of their development and education.”