

Caring, Compassion and Connection: Supporting Frontline and Community Based Healthcare Professionals through ECHO Coping with COVID-19 Canada

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BACKGROUND

Literature has shown that healthcare professionals (HCPs) have experienced significant anxiety, uncertainty, and distress due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.¹ HCPs, including C-L psychiatrists, have utilized virtual education, resources and capacity building programs as innovative solutions to address their mental health needs, while facilitating a sense of community and supporting self-care at a distance.²

We present outcomes of Project Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes-Coping with COVID-19 (ECHO-CWC), a virtual education program developed to support Canadian HCPs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ECHO-CWC

Rapidly implemented within weeks of the onset of the pandemic in 2020, ECHO-CWC provided weekly sessions supporting HCPs with mindfulness practice, COVID-19 knowledge and resource updates, didactics on self-care and mental well-being, discussions on HCPs experiences coping with COVID-19 distress, and an arts-based therapeutic segment.

The overall goal of the program was to promote resilience and wellbeing, while reducing feelings of isolation and distress.

METHODS

Evaluation for ECHO-CWC was informed by Moore's evaluation framework for continuing professional development.³

Participation:

Data were collected regarding participant demographics and attendance.

Satisfaction:

Weekly satisfaction survey items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

Self-efficacy:

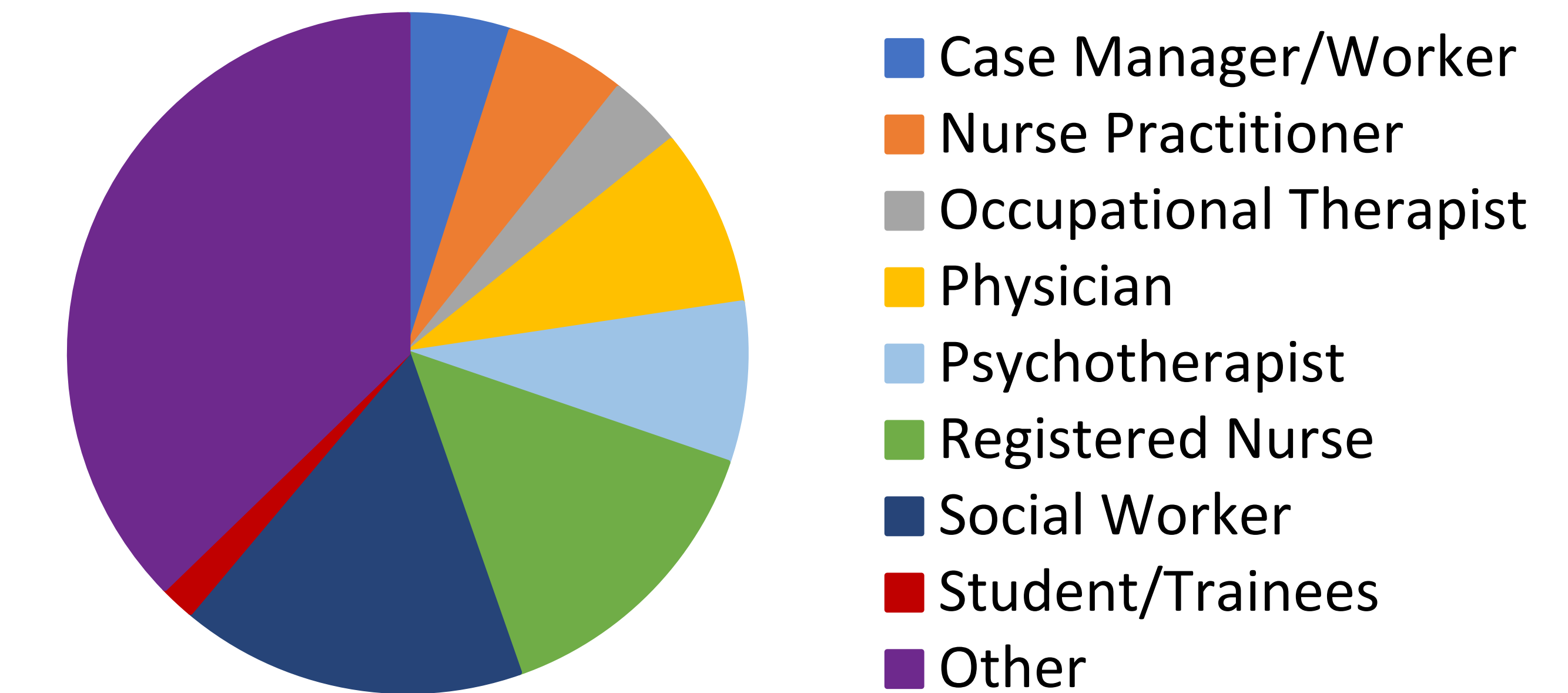
Self-efficacy was assessed at 3 time points with a 5-item scale (100-point scale; higher number = higher self-efficacy).

RESULTS

Attendance: **496** participants

Mean Attendance: **37** per session

of Sessions: **90**

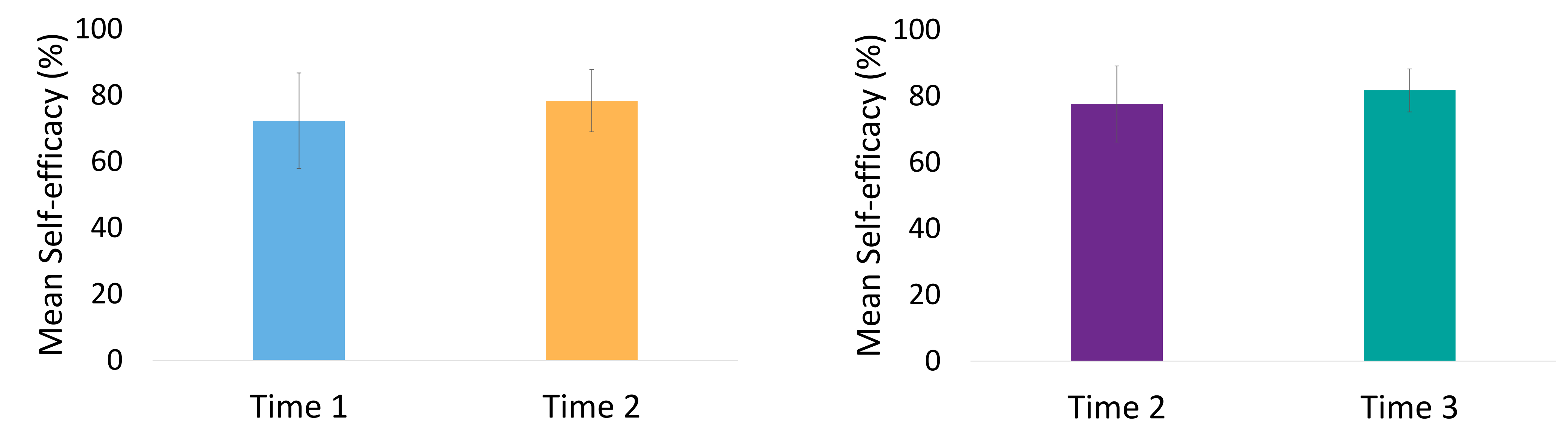


As of March 2022

Satisfaction Average Score [N=865]:

- Enhanced knowledge **4.24/5**
- Addressed learning needs **4.26/5**
- Reduced professional isolation **4.39/5**
- Recommend to others **4.50/5**
- Overall satisfaction **4.47/5**

Self-efficacy Average Score:



Statistically significant improvement from T1 to T2 (N=42, p=.018) and from T2 to T3 (N=14, p=.050)

DISCUSSION

This evaluation provides insight into the unique application of the ECHO model in supporting the mental health and well-being of HCPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. High participant engagement, satisfaction, and improvements in self-efficacy suggests that this initiative can be a beneficial model for C-L psychiatrists to consider when addressing the needs of frontline HCPs during this and future pandemics.