



Women's Retreats

2024-2025



Prepared For
LIFE A PLENTY
CHARITABLE TRUST

OVERVIEW



Six retreats were planned for the 2024/2025 year in May, June, August, October, December 2024 and March 2025. We aim to have eight women and two facilitators on every retreat, as the optimal number for learning and growth. For this year, due to a lesser number of suitable referrals, the October retreat was cancelled. The May and August retreats ran with seven participants, due to last minute withdrawals, and no suitable reserves.

The overall number of regional women who experienced a Life A Plenty retreat for 2024/2025 was 38.

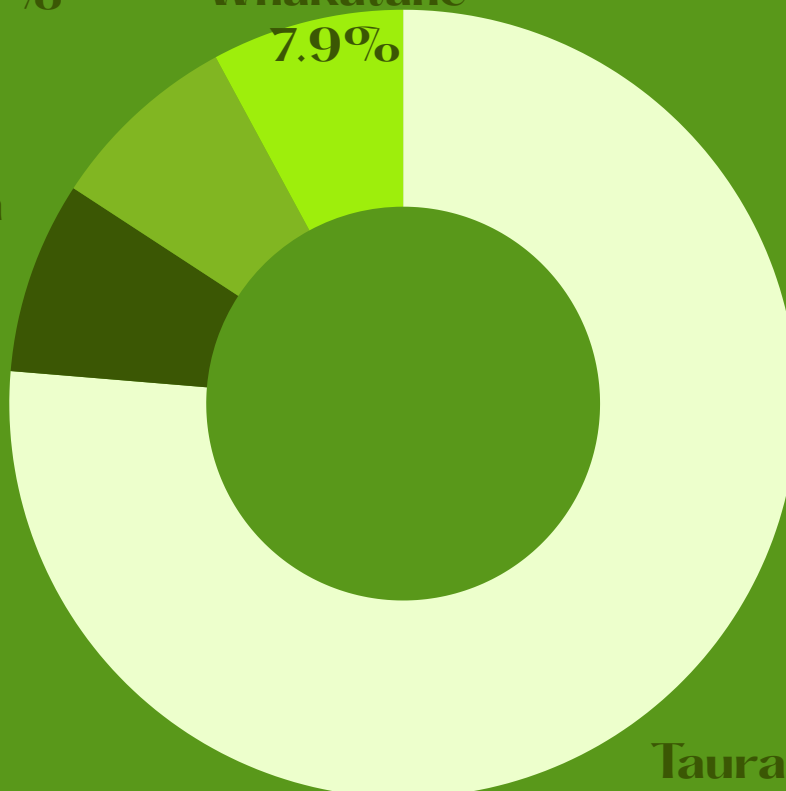
Western Bay of Plenty

7.9%

Whakatane

7.9%

Rotorua
7.9%



Tauranga
76.3%

FIG.1 OUR 2024/2025 RETREAT PARTICIPANTS CAME FROM...

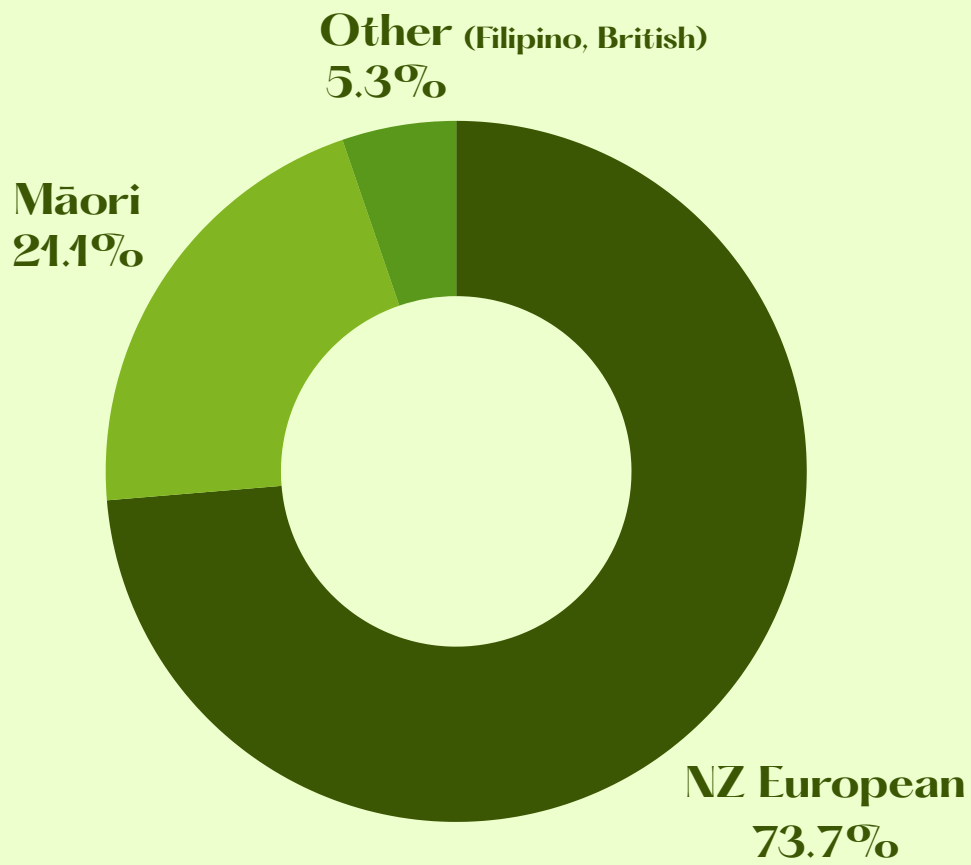


FIG.2 RETREAT PARTICIPANTS' ETHNICITY

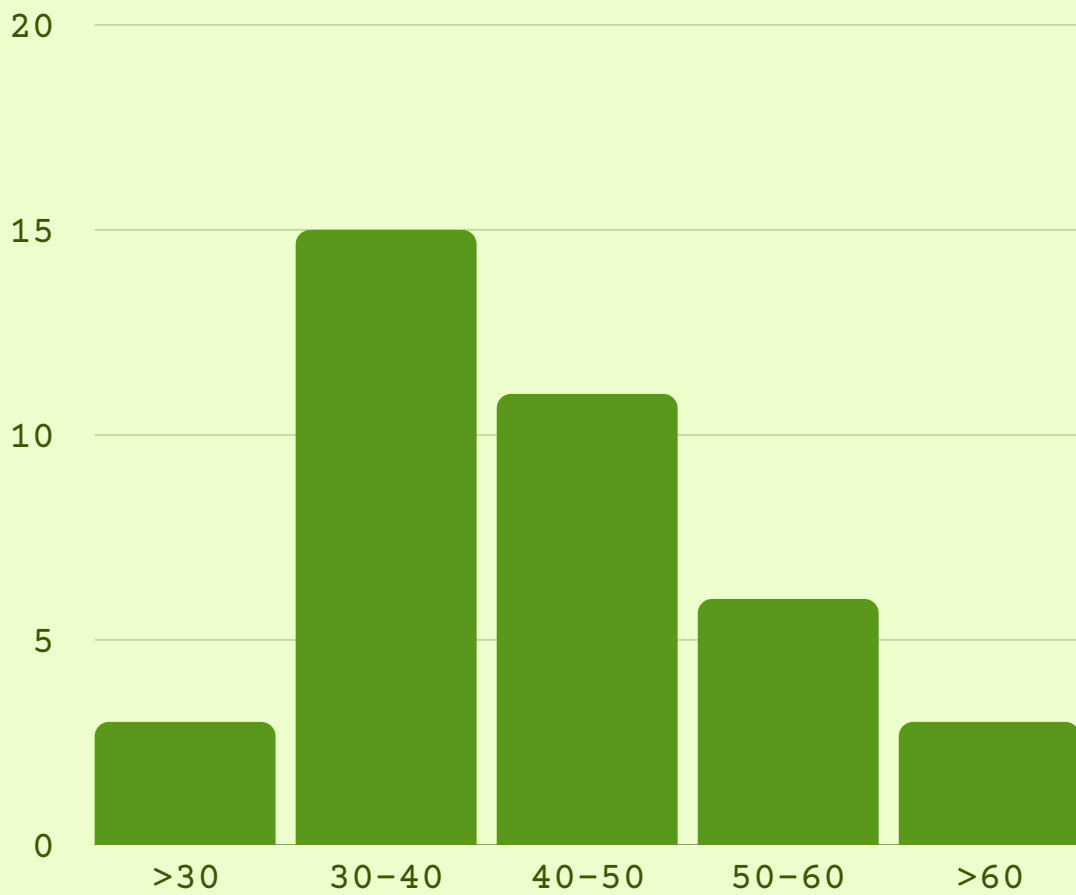
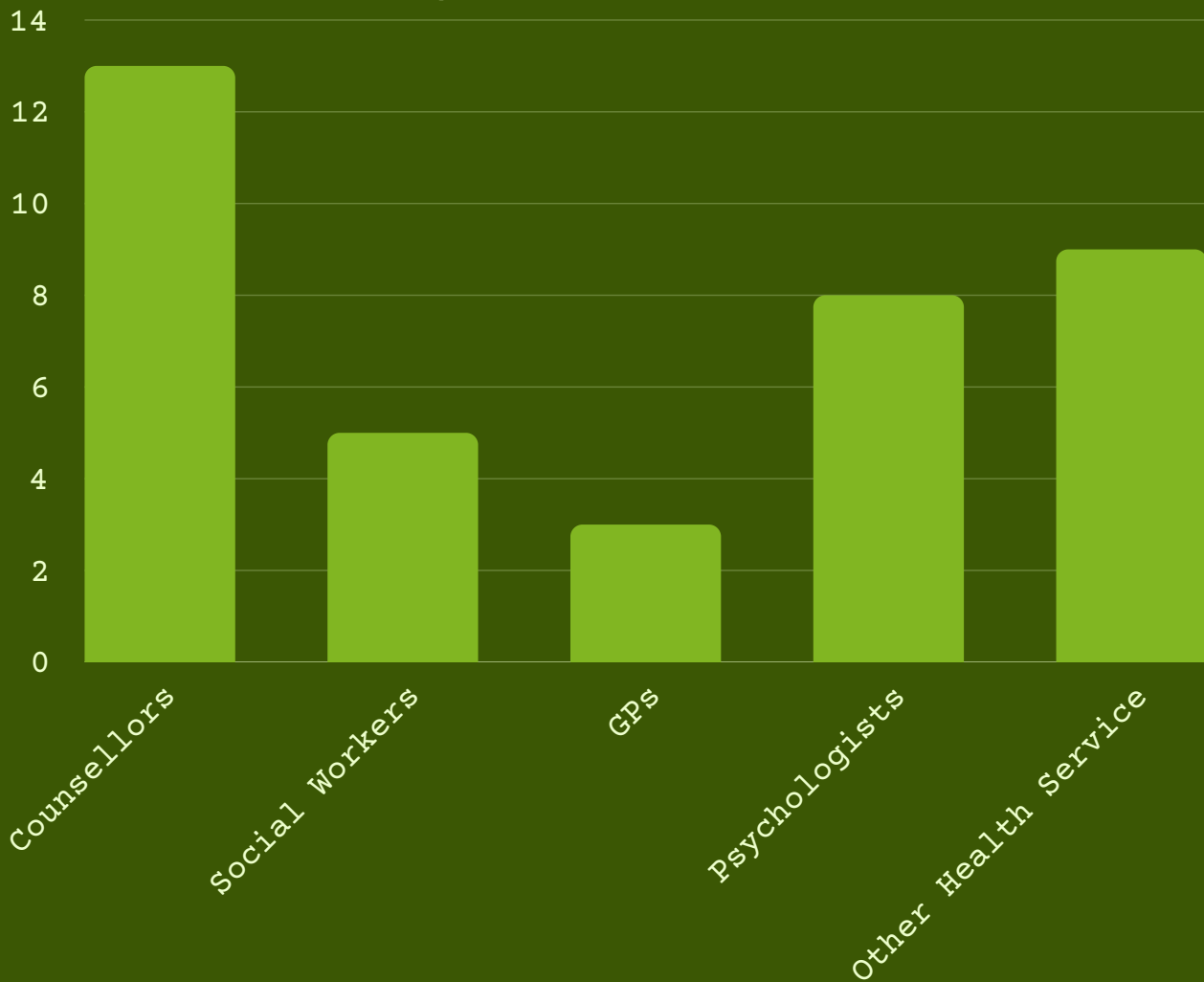


FIG.3 2024/2025 RETREAT PARTICIPANTS' AGE

FIG.4 2024/2025 SOURCE OF REFERRALS



REFERRALS

Counsellors remain the main source of referrals for participants, however, there is a growing awareness in the health sector of the retreats, and more referrals are coming from Health Practices through GPs, nurses and health coaches. Referrals are accepted from the wider Bay of Plenty as well as southern Waikato (Taupō, Tokoroa, Turangi).

In the first six months in 2024, there were 44 referrals, 20 were accepted onto retreats (45%), and 9 applicants withdrew from selection (20%). Many of the referred women need to be very determined to take the time away for their own growth due to the difficulties they experience in daily life.

New referrers are followed up by the Trust Coordinator and Facilitators to support their understanding of the selection criteria and nature of the retreat.



FACILITATORS

The team consisted of three experienced facilitators, with one also working in a full time counselling role. The team saw the need to find a fourth facilitator to create a pathway for the increase of offered retreats from four to six throughout the year, as well as succession planning, when the need to replace facilitators comes about. There is a strong sense within the team that understanding the kaupapa of Life A Plenty retreats and the knowledge around their effectiveness needs to be passed on.

A new facilitator audited the May 2024 retreat with two Life A Plenty facilitators, as an induction to what the facilitation role requires. The new facilitator was brought onto the Facilitator team and worked on two subsequent retreats for 2024.

“I WILL ALWAYS LOVE AND APPRECIATE YOU BOTH!”

“THANK YOU, JEANETTE AND BARB, FOR YOUR LOVE AND SUPPORT. I WALKED INTO THIS RETREAT STRESSED, FEELING LONELY AND SAD, AND NOT KNOWING HOW TO GET MYSELF OUT OF THE BLACK HOLE.

THIS RETREAT HAS TAUGHT ME SO MANY THINGS THAT I DID NOT KNOW BEFORE. THE KINDNESS FROM THE STAFF AND ALSO THE OTHER LADIES HAS BEEN SO AMAZING.

I FEEL HAPPY, MUCH STRONGER WITHIN MYSELF. I HAVE LEARNT HOW TO COPE WITH MY STRESS AND MY GRIEF. THIS I WILL TAKE WITH ME THROUGH THE REST OF MY LIFE.

I AM TRULY GRATEFUL FOR THIS TIME THAT I HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO WORK ON MYSELF AND HEAL MYSELF. IF ONLY YOU KNEW HOW MUCH YOU HAVE TRULY HELPED ME. I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL. MY HEART IS FULL OF LOVE AGAIN. I AM STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE.”

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

All participating women filled out questionnaires on the first and last day of the retreat indicating how often they were feeling:

- exhausted and often tired
- hopeless about some aspects of their life
- plagued by negative thoughts
- nervous and often worrying
- everything seems just too much

Figure 5 and 6 contrast the perceived frequency of these feelings on the first day compared to the last day of the retreat. There are significant and positive shifts in every category for every participant.

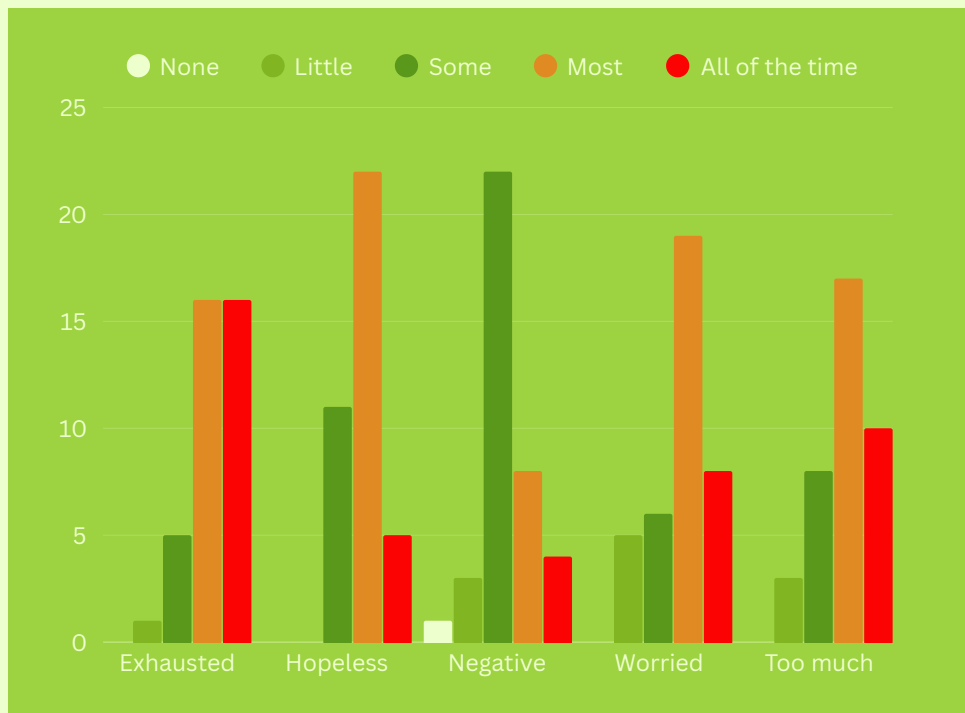
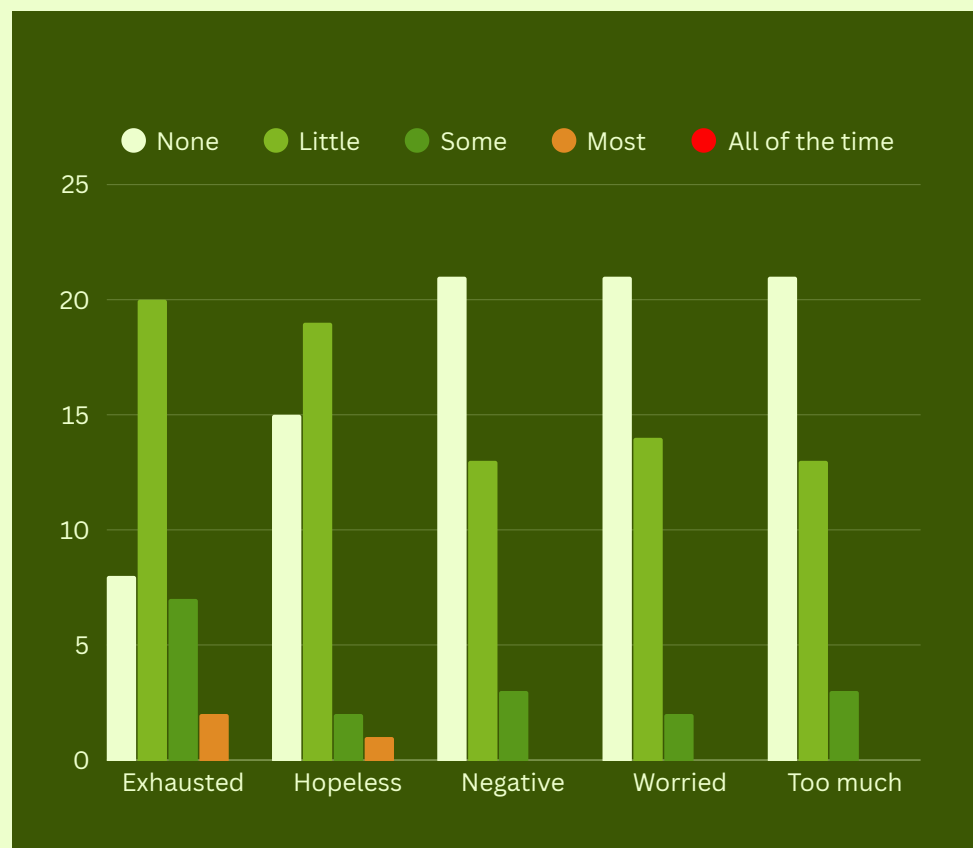


Fig. 5 First day of the retreat

Fig. 6 Last day of the retreat



THREE MONTH EVALUATION

All participating women are contacted by their facilitators three months after their retreat to gather their perspective on any lasting change. Overall they perceive negative feelings to a lesser extent in their daily lives.

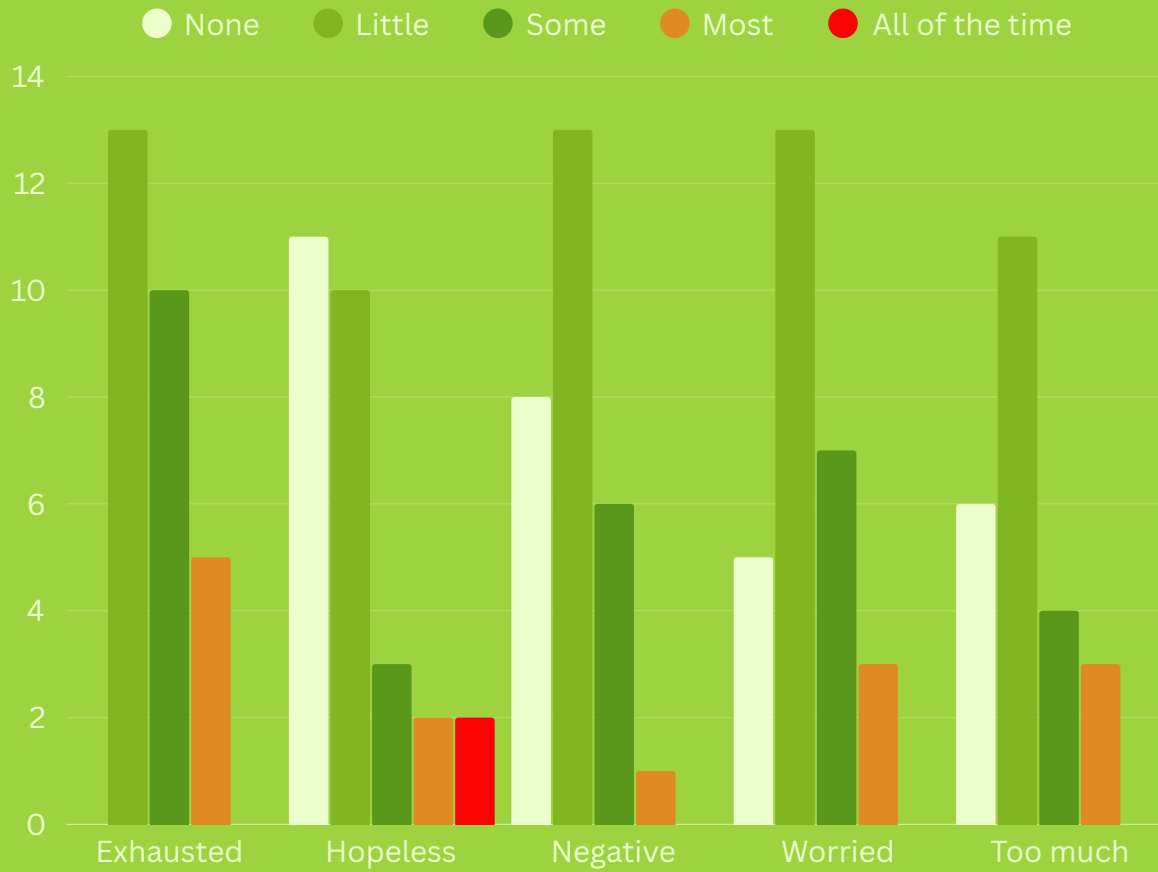
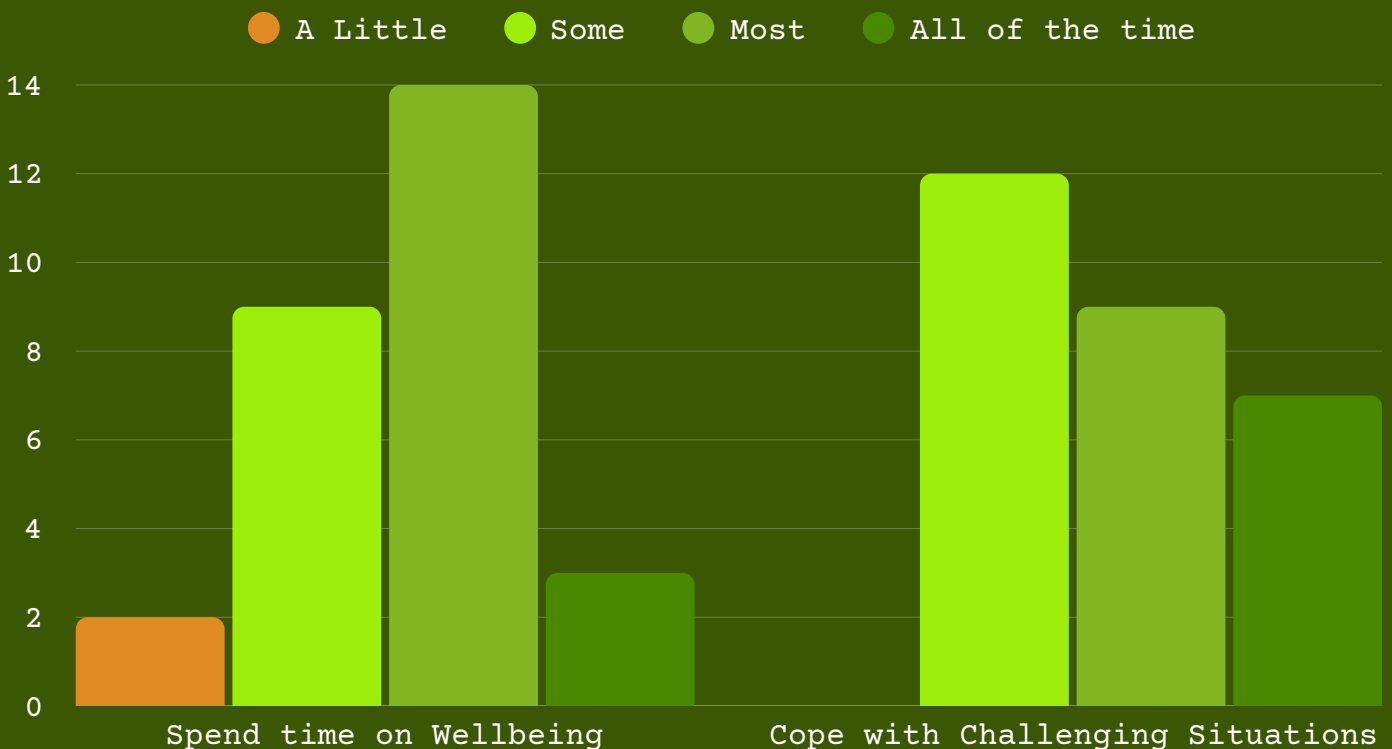


Fig. 7 Perceived feelings (three months post retreat)

Fig. 8 Signs of resilience (Three months post retreat)



WIDER IMPACT

Three months after going on retreat, participants were asked how these changes had affected their family and wider whānau. Below are the percentage of comments in the various relationship categories.

There were 32 respondents. Only two past participants reported there had been little change (orange). All other past participants reported positive change in various relationships, with the parent-child relationship benefitting the most. Common perceptions of the change were that home life was calmer and participants were less negatively responsive to challenges. Note that many of the past participants were single parents and unpartnered.

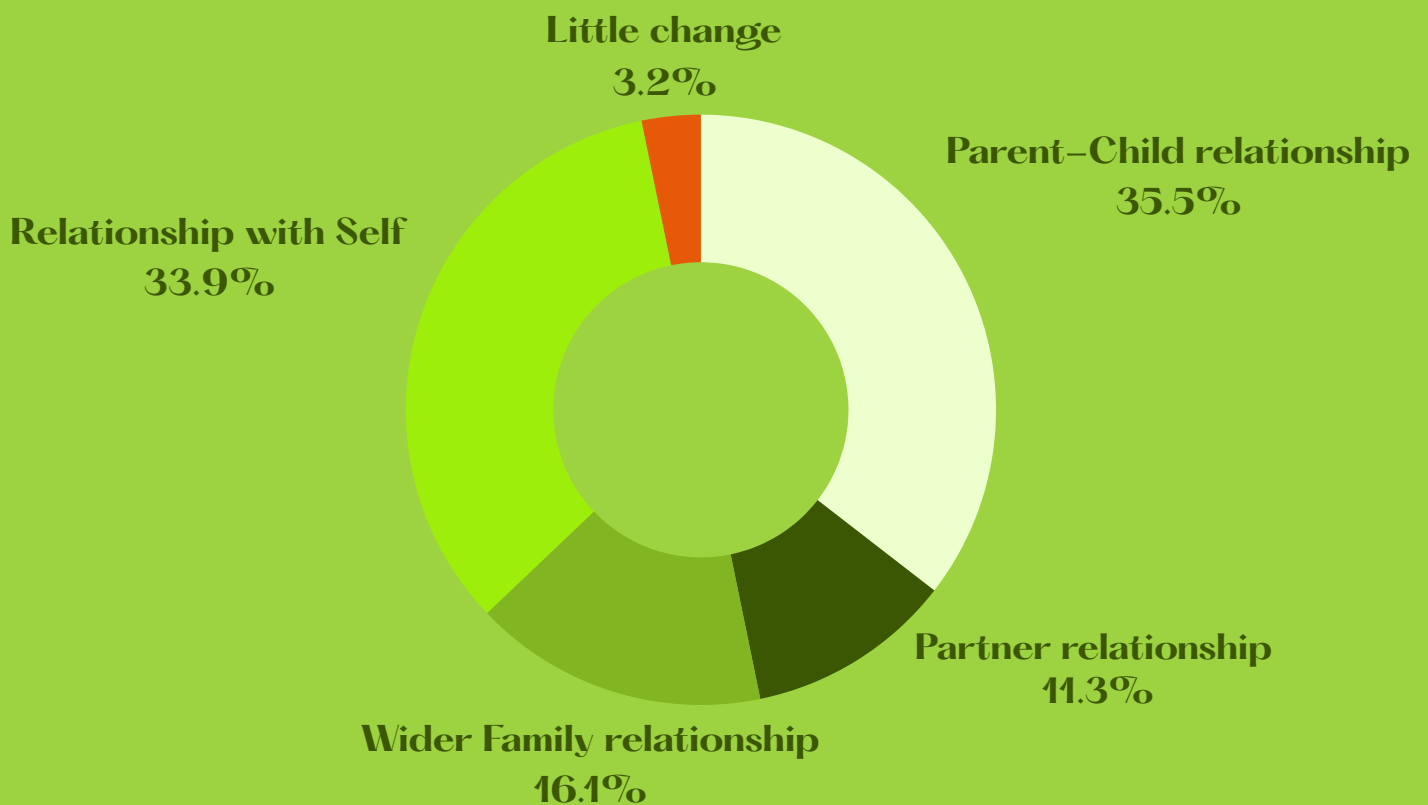


Fig. 9 Percentage of reported positive impact on relationships three months on



THERAPEUTIC INPUT

All participating women acknowledged the usefulness of the therapeutic input provided during the retreat. They ranked the helpfulness of all workshops on a scale from "not helpful" (1) to "very helpful" (5). Figure 3 illustrates that most input was considered helpful (green) or very helpful (dark green) with the red/orange colours indicating less helpful content. Grey refers to a neutral stance (3).

The workshops outlined here are the ones that evaluation data was gathered at every retreat (except Stress and Core Beliefs). The facilitators do adjust workshops to suit the needs of the 8 participating women, and may not fully run a workshop on some topics. On the whole, these workshops were considered helpful and very helpful.

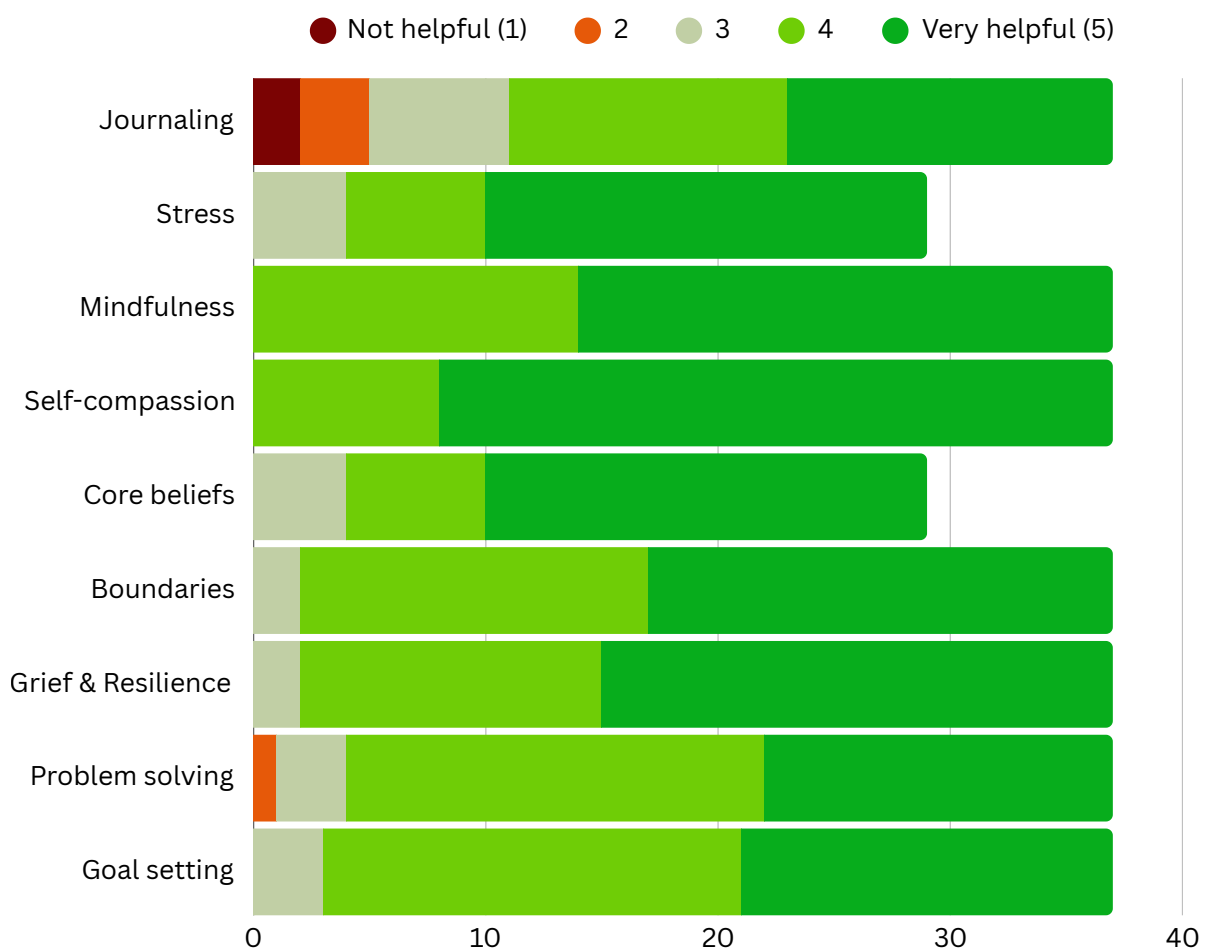


Fig. 9 Feedback on the therapeutic input

THERAPEUTIC INPUT: THREE MONTHS ON

We wanted to know if the workshops that participants experience on retreat hold a lasting effect and asked for past participant feedback.

Overall, the input was considered useful to very useful for the most part. Journaling was the least well received, Where there was a lack of engagement with what they had learnt it was more to do with being unsure of the effect or not trying out the tools. However, this feedback three months on was consistent to feedback given at the end of retreat and indicates a lasting impact.

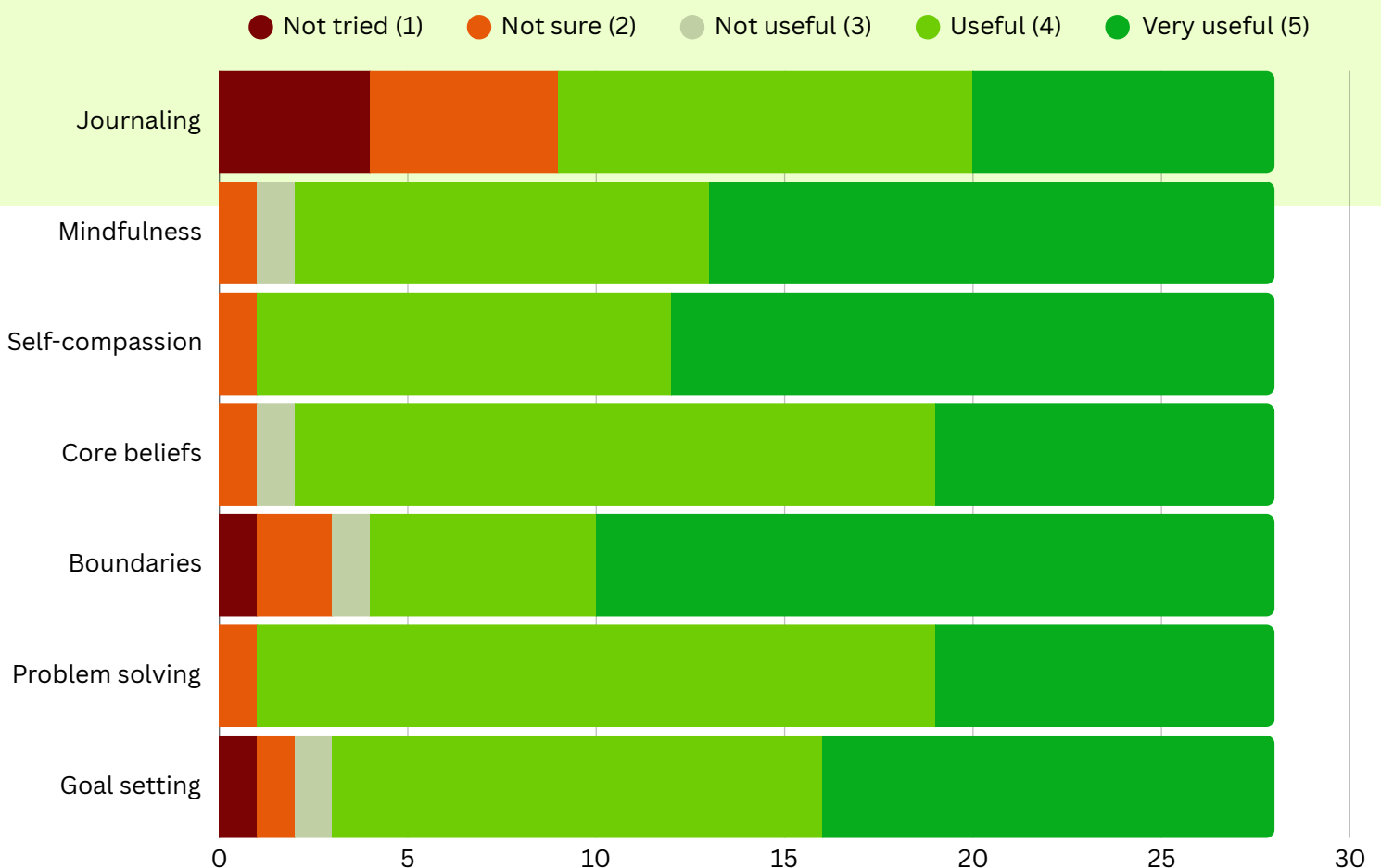


Fig. 10 Feedback on the therapeutic input - three months on



Testimonials

"I came to this retreat carrying years of unprocessed grief and exhaustion. Since 2018, I have lost my mother, father, stepfather, aunties, cousins, (brothers to suicide), and my beloved uncle and aunt who raised and loved me when life was unstable. Their passing left me feeling like an orphan in adulthood - full of love for them, but also guilt and regret for not being able to be there overseas in the final years.

Alongside this grief, I have been living with mental fatigue - the kind that makes even breathing feel heavy. I have reached points where I thought, "Why am I still trying?" "Nothing is working." "No one sees me." I have not lost hope, but I have been surviving rather than living - running on fumes while keeping up a brave face.

I came here, not because I am weak. I came here because I have been strong for too long without rest. I want to release the guilt, soften the self-judgement, and learn how to be as kind to myself as I am to everyone else. I am ready to heal - not to forget my loved ones, but to honour them by choosing peace and life again."

"I came to this retreat feeling nervous and, quite honestly, depressed. I had no drive for life anymore, and it's been like that for a while. But WOW, what an amazing FIVE days it's been. I feel like I can finally breathe again, feel so grounded, and the amazing women here have made me laugh so much; I have found my silly side again. Thank you for everything you have done to give us those tools to take home. For the women here, it has felt like we have all been friends for years. I will miss this place."

"I came into this retreat as a stressed-out mum of two young kids, juggling too many balls that I didn't know where I started and where I ended.

Between my children, husband, work, hating where we live, moving a lot, and grieving my dad, everything was too much. I think I not only had stress and grief, but also postpartum depression.

The past five days I have learned so much about myself. I am strong and capable, but I also need to slow down my expectations and tackle things in more realistic chunks.

I have been able to sleep, nourish my mind and body with yummy food. Taking care of me first is now a priority, so I can continue taking care of my family.

I have made some amazing friends. I feel relaxed and rejuvenated, ready to go home and see my family."

"WHAT A WEEK IT HAS BEEN!"

"There is so much about myself that I have never even considered. I have done a lot of self-reflecting and healing while I have been here, and I now feel that I can move forward and start living my best life. It is now time to focus on me and my kids. I am leaving this retreat today feeling lighter and more positive with seven amazing friendships. I will forever be grateful for this positive change in my life because of you ladies."

"I came to the retreat feeling lost, overwhelmed, and I thought that the happy times in my life were behind me with the death of my husband. I didn't know what to expect from this retreat and that it could, in fact, help me find peace and happiness in life once more.

My time here has taught me so much; the knowledge, skills, and experiences shared have enabled me to step back into truly living again. I feel lighter, more peaceful, and joy, laughter, and happiness are returning."

