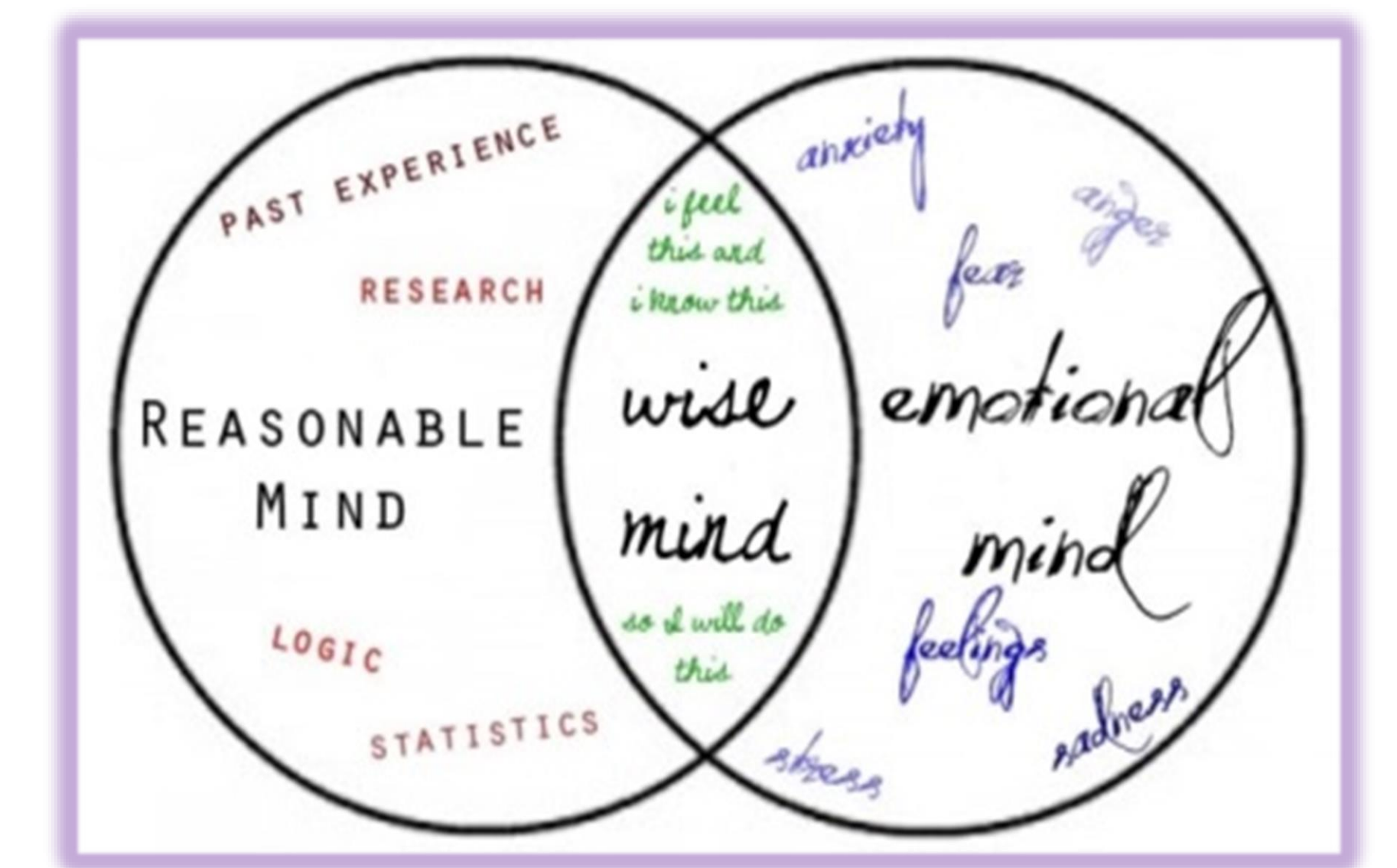


# Revising Nurse-Led Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Group Curriculum on a Child and Adolescent Inpatient Unit

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## Introduction

- ❖ Providing child and adolescent patients on 4-9000 (ages 8-18) with strategies to help manage intense emotions is a beneficial component to treatment on the unit.
- ❖ Specifically, **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)** skills, including *distress tolerance*, *mindfulness*, *emotion regulation*, and *interpersonal effectiveness*, which patients can learn and apply within a group setting.
- ❖ The goal of this project was to revise the DBT skills group curriculum with hopes of improving patient engagement through interactive and age-appropriate activities.

## Methods

### Needs Assessment:

- ❖ An informal focus group consisting of one charge nurse and two nursing staff was conducted to inform an initial needs assessment. Concerns about the current group curriculum included:
  - Managing challenging behaviors
  - Lack of age-appropriate material
  - Lack of patient interest in worksheets
- ❖ A brief survey was administered to nursing staff ( $N = 9$ ; >1 year experience leading DBT groups on the unit) to learn more about their perceptions of leading DBT groups, including strengths of the group and areas that require improvement.
  - 75% indicated most beneficial changes to curriculum would include:
    - Updated worksheets
    - Activities organized by level of difficulty or attention required for patient engagement
  - Biggest challenges of leading DBT groups included:
    - "Finding a way to present the materials in a way that will be engaging & interesting."
    - "Engaging multiple ages and multiple learning abilities, [and having] up to 15 patients at one time [in group]."
    - "Keeping patients' attention and focus."

### Pilot-Testing Activities:

- ❖ Staff and patients completed a brief survey after group activity; 3 questions each, 5-point rating scale (i.e., *Not at All* to *Very Much*)
- ❖ 8 activities (2 from each DBT topic) were pilot-tested on 4-9000 to assess both patient and staff perceptions and satisfaction:
  - **Distress Tolerance:** *Finding the DBT Words*, *DBT Jeopardy!*
  - **Mindfulness:** *Mindfulness Practice*, *Mindfulness Coloring*
  - **Emotion Regulation:** *Emotion Education*, *The Way Emotions Work*
  - **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** *DEAR MAN Role-Plays*, *GIVE to Others*

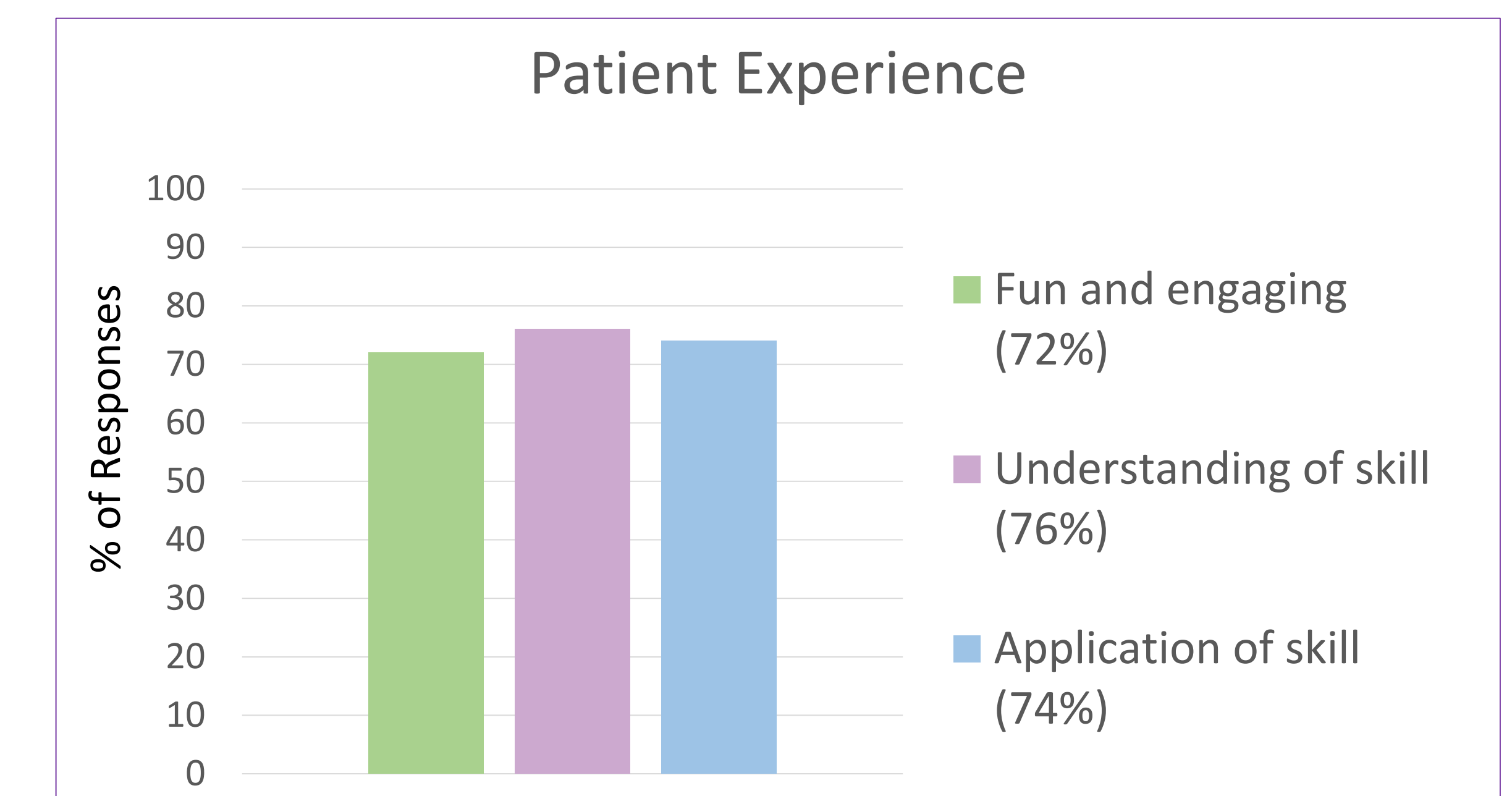
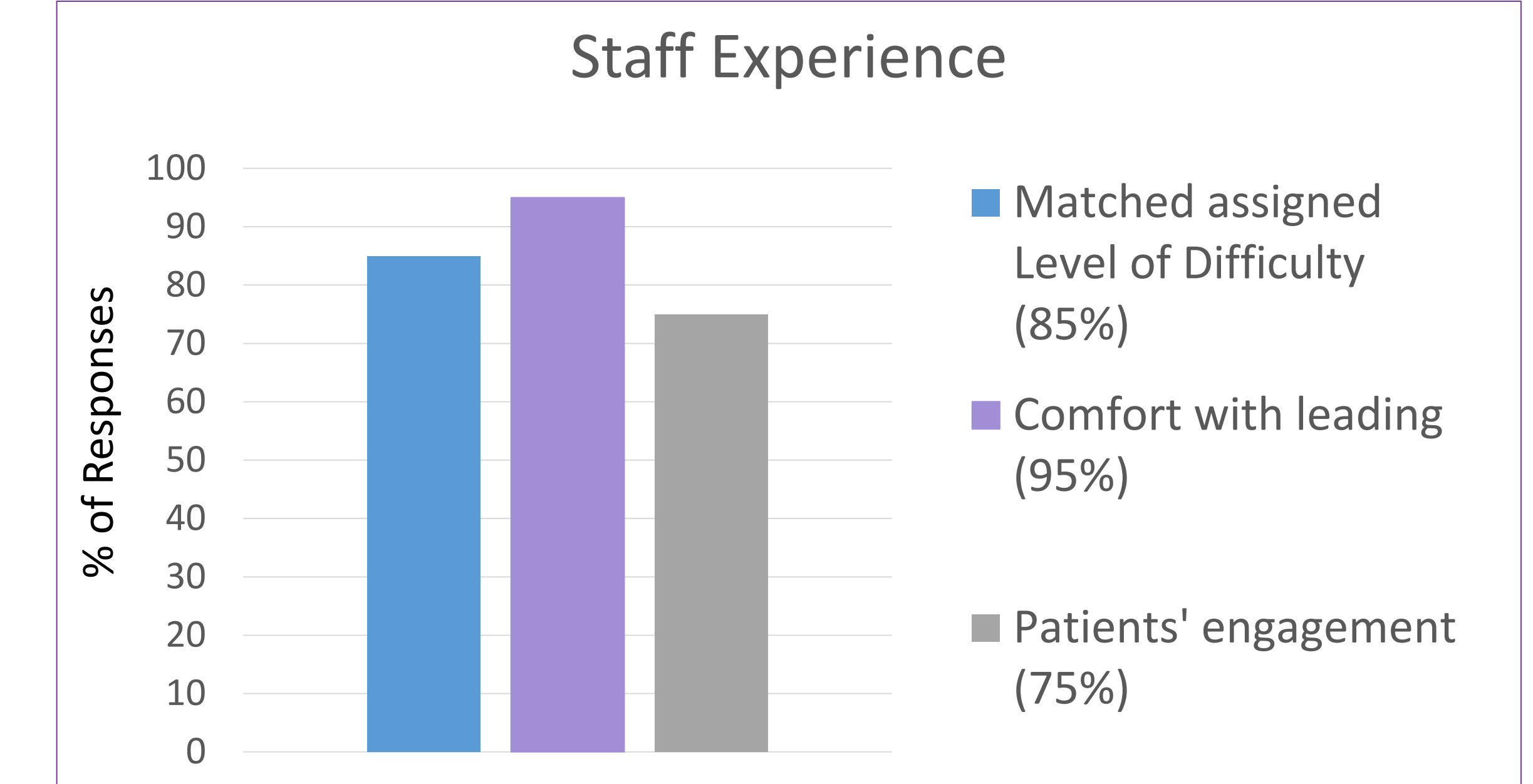
## Results

### Pilot-Testing Activities

- ❖ 5 nursing staff led groups
- ❖ 28 patients participated in DBT groups
- ❖ Over 8 group sessions, nursing staff reported they frequently felt comfortable with leading activity (95%) and its difficulty level accurately reflected their experience in group (85%), with patients seeming to be engaged 75% of the time
- ❖ At least 70% of patients perceived group activities as fun and engaging, easy to understand, and intended to use skills in the future.

### Comments from surveys:

- ❖ "Allowed patients to actively participate, led to good group discussion. Definitely useful for anger management." – Staff, *Emotion Education*
- ❖ "Good stuff." – Patient, *GIVE to Others*



## Discussion

- ❖ The revised DBT Skills Group curriculum includes:

- Updated materials and worksheets
- Increased selection of group and art activities
- Ideas for presenting topics in an engaging manner
- Links to videos, songs, and other media content
- Organized by both level of behavioral difficulty presenting in group and appropriate age level (children 8-12 and teens 13-18)

- ❖ *Limitations:* Convenience sampling method for pilot-testing activities.

- ❖ *Future Directions:* Continued feedback from patients (e.g., interest, engagement, application of skills) will be helpful for future revisions and updated materials for groups. Expand to other inpatient units, including revised engaging group activities for adults.

### Revised Manual Structure:

- ❖ 10 activities per DBT unit, including activity instructions, prompts
- ❖ DBT Resources for Staff
- ❖ Resources for Managing Challenging Behavior

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