Happiness Initiative

WELL-BEING CIRCLES

Building Better
Versions of Ourselves



REPORT

January 2024

In partnership with

MCCY
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

Every story told from the heart touches another heart.









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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the **pilot**, the **impact**, and the **scalability** of the Well-Being Circles.

1. The Well-Being Circles is a 12-session community well-being programme that brings people together in small groups, led by non-expert facilitators (known as Well-Being Leaders), to learn well-being skills so as to improve well-being and prosociality. Each group is kept to an intimate size of up to 6 participants and 2 leaders.

2. The study employed a Waitlist Randomised Controlled Trial to measure the impact of the programme. At the end of the 12-session intervention period, 142 Wave 1 participants (in the Intervention group) were measured against 163 Wave 2 participants (in the Control group).

3. All 11 measures of Well-Being Skills and all 9 measures of Well-Being Outcomes showed significant improvement in the Intervention group over the Control group after the 12-session intervention.

4. For example, pertaining to Well-Being Skills, participants expressed 27% increase in managing burnout skills and 19% increase in resilience skills. Pertaining to Well-Being Outcomes, participants expressed a 26% decrease in anxiety symptoms and 23% decrease in depressive symptoms. Other skills and outcomes showed similar significant improvement trends.

5. Such outcomes are significant especially against a global prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms, which the WHO estimated a 25% increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Singapore is not inoculated by this global phenomenon. Anxiety and depressive symptoms is costing Singapore S$16 billion a year, an equivalent of 2.9% of its gross domestic product.

6. This study suggests three secret ingredients and two cultures that make Well-Being Circles work, which may offer insights to other well-being circles. The three secret ingredients that characterises Well-Being Circles are anchoring on skills, internalising with stories, and experiencing social support. In addition, a culture of transformational change based on Theory U and a culture of feedback from Netflix bring these three secret ingredients together.

7. The Well-Being Circles works. It is highly scalable due to minimum logistics requirement - journals, a conducive space with table and chairs, and leaders to facilitate the session. For the cost that comes along with ill-being, Well-Being Circles is a tiny cost for a big impact.

WELL-BEING CIRCLES IMPACT

The Well-Being Circles works in increasing well-being skills, improving well-being outcomes, and promoting prosocial behaviours. It left a **life-changing and deep impact** for many participants and leaders.



*of the participants reported that they have **engaged in prosocial behaviours more** so now than when they started the programme.*



*of the parents reported that participating in the Well-Being Circles have **helped them to be better parents**.*



*of the working participants reported that participating in the Well-Being Circles have **nudged them to promote well-being at their workplace**.*

The most significant impact is that the positive effects in well-being skills and well-being outcomes are **sustained even 6 months after the programme ended.**

Well-Being Circles is what we need in Singapore. Its not just about the learning of principles and concepts, its about the space, time and people whom we met and shared our innermost thoughts and feelings through the activities that gave us comfort and clarity.

– Participant A*

**All stories have been anonymised to keep Well-Being Circles a safe space for sharing.*







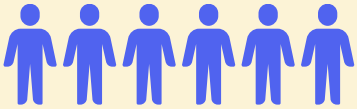



THE COST OF ILL-BEING

Singapore Mental Health Survey 2016



1 in 7 Singapore residents is likely to experience a diagnosable mental health condition in their lifetime[1].



However, 6 out of 7 remain free from experiencing a mental health condition, but may not be living their best possible lives.

2023 Study by Duke-NUS Medical School and Institute of Mental Health

Depressive and anxiety symptoms could be costing Singapore nearly

S$ 16 BILLION

per year or 2.9% of its gross domestic product (GDP)[2].

As a reference point, Singapore spent 2.8% of its GDP on education in 2021, according to the World Bank data[3].

The same amount of resources we spent on our education system could have been lost to the dysfunction of depressive and anxiety symptoms.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not made this phenomenon any easier. The World Health Organisation estimated a 25% increase in the prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms due to the pandemic.

The rising trend of ill-being - whether due to a diagnosable mental health condition or circumstantial depressive and anxiety symptoms - is taking a toll on self, family, and the society.

This inspires the big question: *Can we create a scalable well-being solution to build protective factors against the prevalence of mental health stresses, notably but not limited to depressive and anxiety symptoms?*

We are happy to report that we have a solution to offer - The Well-Being Circles.

> *This program has been a wonderful blessing for my mental and emotional wellbeing. It's been an eye-opening journey, helping me understand myself better and providing practical tools to manage anxiety and stress effectively. But it's not just about personal growth; the program's community has been a remarkable source of connection and support. Being part of a group of individuals all striving for improved wellbeing has been truly uplifting and inspiring.*
>
> ***— Participant B***

[1] *Retrieved from https://www.imh.com.sg/Newsroom/News-Releases/Documents/SMHS%202016_Media%20Release_FINAL_web%20upload.pdf*
[2] *Retrieved from https://www.duke-nus.edu.sg/allnews/cost-of-anxiety-and-depression-in-sg-runs-into-the-billions*
[3] *Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=SG*

THE WELL-BEING CIRCLE

Well-being is a journey. It begins when we learn skills to manage our own well-being. And once that journey begins, it has an impact on ourselves and everyone that we meet along the way.

To inspire us on that journey of well-being, there is no better way than through a time-honoured practice of coming together, and learning from the stories of each other. Whether it is during the prehistoric days of our caveman ancestors huddling in a circle to pass down wisdom or the modern day therapy intervention of Alcoholic Anonymous, there is efficacy in bringing people together to learn in a circle format.

This is the Well-Being Circles.

The Well-Being Circles bring people together in small groups, led by non-expert facilitators (known as Well-Being Leaders), to learn well-being skills so as to improve their well-being and prosociality. Each group is kept to an intimate size of up to 6 participants and 2 leaders.

The Well-Being Circles is conducted over 12 sessions - the first 8 focus on acquiring well-being skills and the last 4 focus on putting those well-being skills to practice.

We hypothesise that through the Well-Being Circles, partakers (whether as participants or as leaders) will experience a positive impact on self and others, hence setting forth a virtuous cycle of well-being.







> *If more people in the community can learn these well-being skills on how they can adopt a more positive mindset by reframing their thoughts, have self-compassion, handle their emotions better, live with gratitude and be kinder to one another, the world will certainly be a better place.*
>
> ***- Well-Being Leader A***

> *What had impacted me positively was as much the skills learnt in the programme, as the friendships forged with my group members through our 4 months together, sharing our personal stories, struggles, hopes and disappointments. I looked forward to each session to share in the friendly banter, looked forward to the emotional support and to learning from others' experiences. I was recovering from a painful break-up at the time, and also struggling with issues at work, and so being able to make friends outside of my previous relationship was something significant for me.*
>
> ***- Participant C***

THE WELL-BEING CIRCLES PILOT STUDY DESIGN

This study endeavoured to pilot a Community Well-being programme, known as the "Well-being Circles", measure its impact, and suggest scalable future iterations. In brief, the following three sections are guided by the following themes:

- The Pilot
- The Impact
- The Scalability

We employed a randomised waitlist controlled trial (RCT) study design where participants are randomised into Wave 1 and Wave 2.

Wave 1, known as the Intervention group, started the 12-session intervention first. Wave 1 was compared against Wave 2, known as the control group, at pre-intervention and post-intervention.

6 months after intervention, we collected data to check if the outcomes could be sustained. At post 6-month, Wave 1 will not have a control group to compare against as Wave 2 has already started intervention. A schematic diagram of this RCT can be found in Figure 1.

We conducted the following two types of comparison:

- Intervention Group versus Control Group at T0 and T1
- Pre versus Post Versus Post 6-month (Note: currently, only Wave 1 has completed Post 6-month)

WHAT DATA DID WE COLLECT?

11 Well-Being Skills
(at various time points)

9 Well-Being Outcomes
(at various time points)

Prosocial Behaviours
(at Post-intervention)

Impact on Parents
(at Post-intervention)

Impact on Workplace
(at Post-intervention)

Personal Stories
(at Post-intervention)

Session Checkout Survey
(at every session)

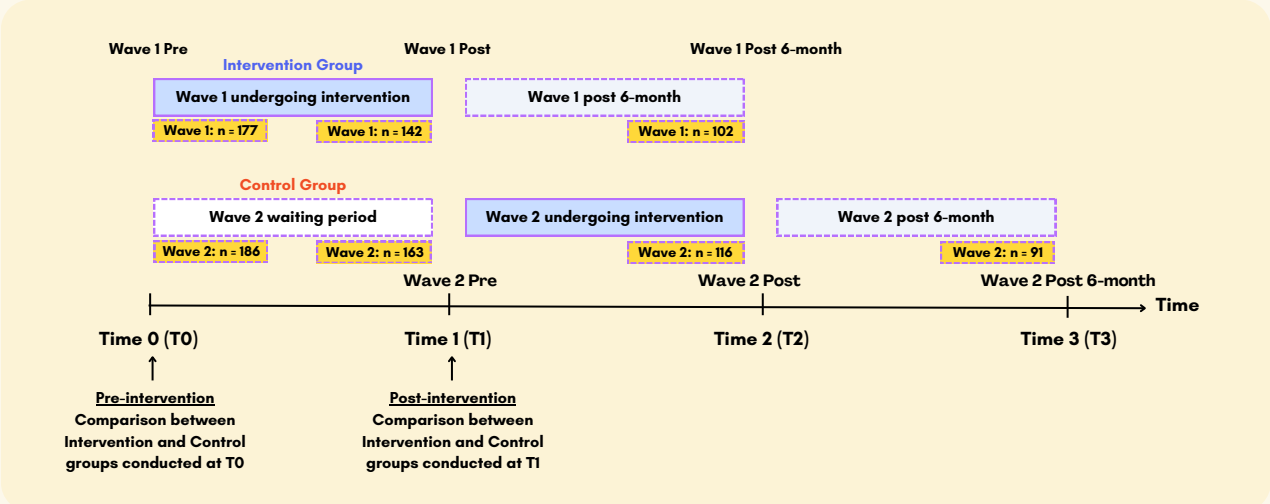


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the Well-Being Circles RCT study design.

THE PILOT

Piloting the Well-Being Circles is no small feat. The Well-Being Circles took two years to prepare and went through five smaller test runs before its current version, culminating in a 200-page participant's journal and a 400-page leader's handbook.

A SNAPSHOT

363

participants were recruited

258 **71%**

participants completed the 12-session programme

133

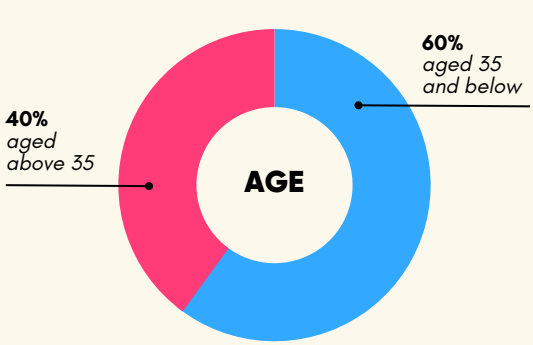
leaders were trained

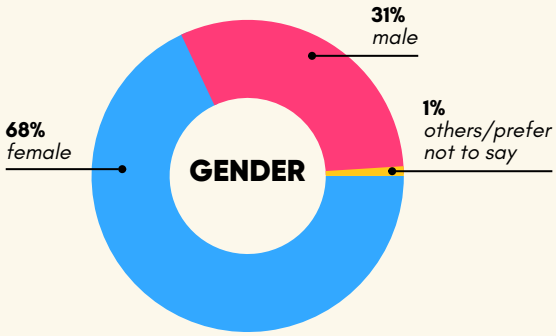
122 **92%**

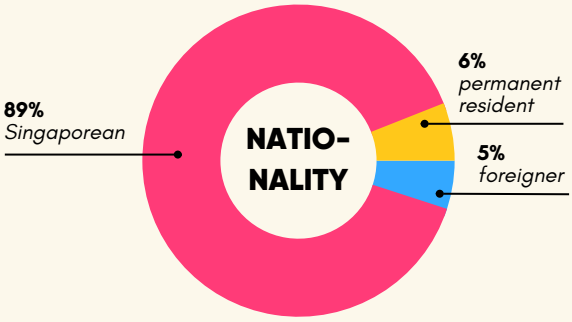
leaders completed the 12-session programme

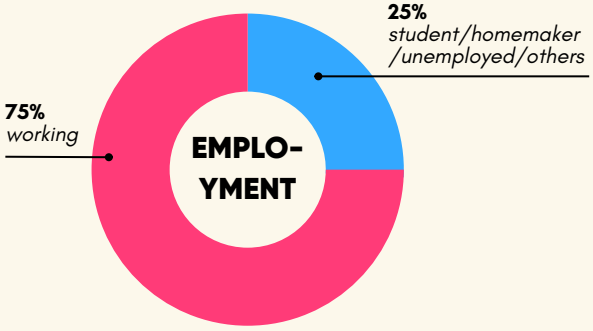


PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

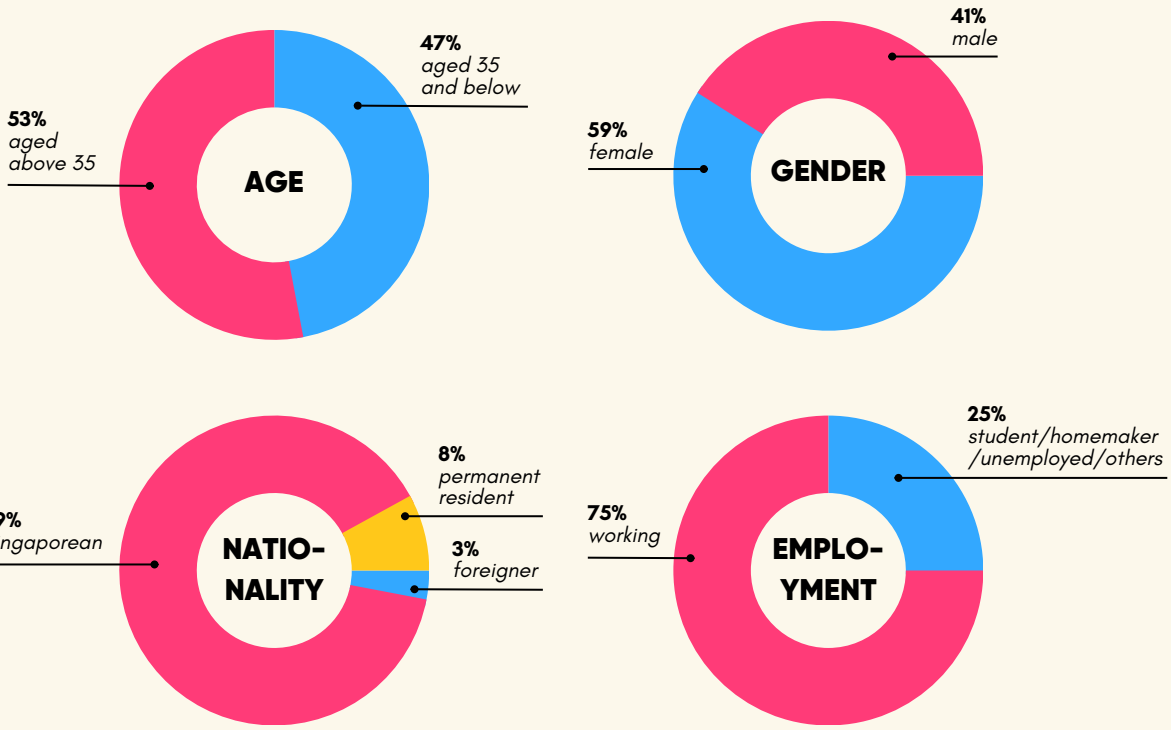








LEADER DEMOGRAPHICS



TIMELINE

JUN 2022 Start of recruitment of participants and leaders

JUL 2022 Wave 1 Well-Being Leaders (n = 56) completed 2-day training

AUG 2022
- 448 participants were recruited
- 363 acknowledged to participate in the programme
- Of the 363 participants, 177 were randomised into Wave 1 and 186 were randomised into Wave 2
- Measurements at T0 collected
- Wave 1 started intervention

NOV 2022
- Wave 1 participants (n = 142) completed intervention and the measurements at T1
- Wave 2 participants (n = 163) remained in the waiting period to complete the measurements at T1
- Wave 2 Well-Being Leaders (n = 77) completed 2-day training

JAN 2023 Wave 2 started intervention

APR 2023 Wave 2 participants (n = 116) completed intervention and the measurements at T2

MAY - JUL 2023 Wave 1 participants (n = 102) completed measurements at Post 6-month

OCT - DEC 2023 Wave 2 participants (n = 91) completed measurements at Post 6-month

THE IMPACT

The Well-Being Circles is impactful on the following three fronts:

1 **Well-Being Circles improves participants' well-being skills and well-being outcomes**

2 **Well-Being Circles' positive effects are sustained over 6 months after the programme ended**

3 **Well-Being Circles has a deep impact for self, which has a positive spill-over effect on community, family, and work**







> *I used to get anxiety and panic attacks whenever there's any human interaction. It's a result of trauma and the consequence is an involuntary fear that people will turn irrational and attack me. The solution is to have regular safe social contact to retrain my brain's auto-response, a form of exposure therapy, and well-being circles help provide that with their 4 months, 12 session format.*
>
> ***- Well-Being Leader B***

> *In August, one of my family members was hospitalised suddenly for more than a week due to a sudden sickness. I was at a lost but luckily I remember about reframing mindset. I tried to apply what I learn by shifting my What-Next Belief from the worst case scenario to best case scenario and then to the likely case scenario. My downward spiral thoughts were immediately broken and I started feeling better emotionally thereafter. It is so amazing that a simple shift of mindset (which can be done within a few minutes) can do such wonders!! My relationship with my younger daughter has also improved after identifying my underlying negative belief, during the discussion on the ABC model.*
>
> ***- Well-Being Leader C***

WELL-BEING SKILLS

There are 11 Well-Being Skills that were measured. At pre-intervention, there is no statistical difference between Intervention group and Control group except for one of the Well-Being Skills measured – "Non-Violent Communication skills".

At post-intervention, the Intervention group is significantly higher than Control group on all 11 measures of Well-Being Skills. Figures 2A to 2K show the Intervention group's percentage improvement over the Control group.

CHANGE IN WELL-BEING SKILLS BETWEEN INTERVENTION AND CONTROL GROUPS

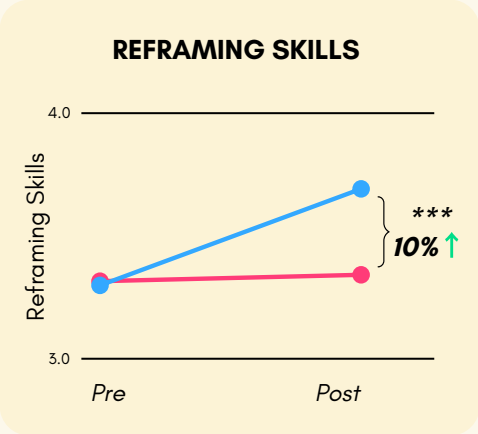




Figure 2A - Improvement in Reframing Skills

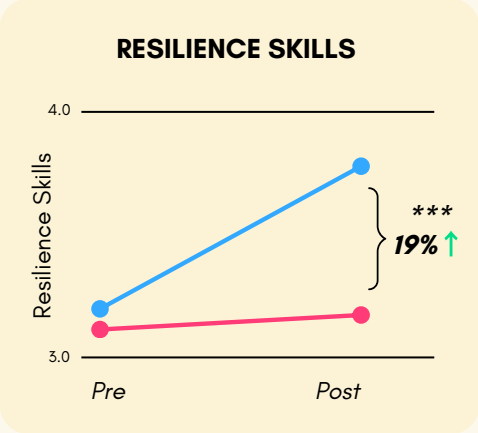


Figure 2B - Improvement in Resilience Skills

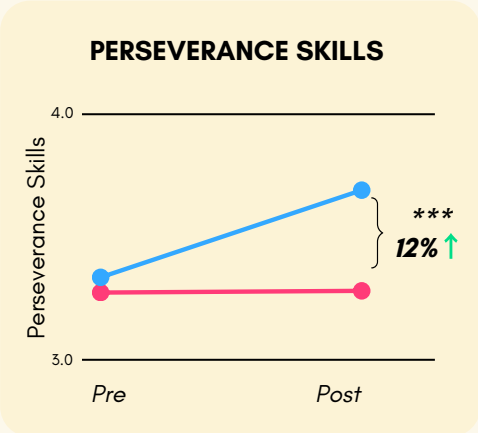


Figure 2C - Improvement in Perseverance Skills

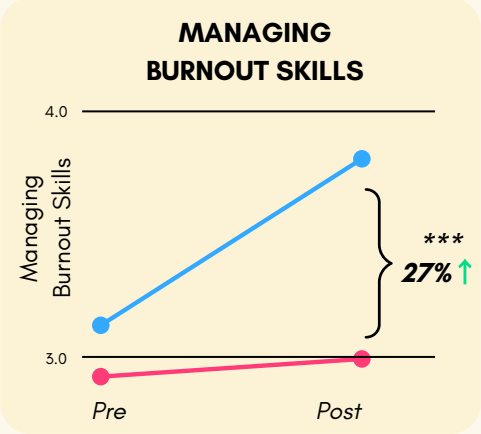


Figure 2D - Improvement in Managing Burnout Skills

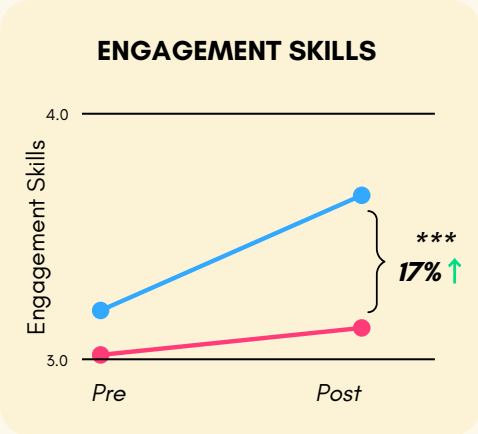


Figure 2E - Improvement in Engagement Skills

CHANGE IN WELL-BEING SKILLS BETWEEN INTERVENTION AND CONTROL GROUPS

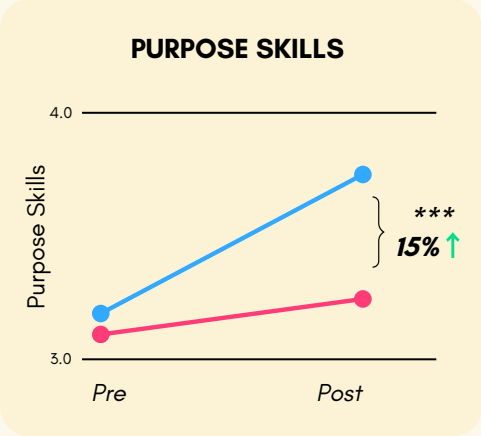


Figure 2F - Improvement in Purpose Skills

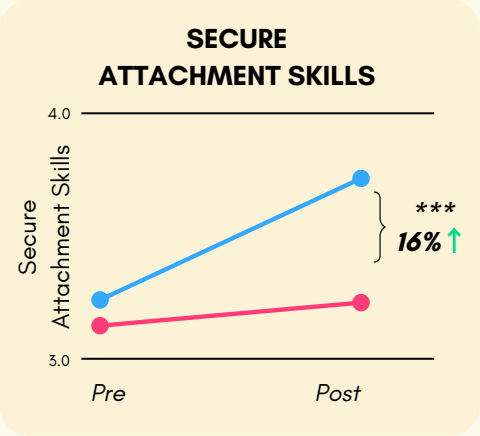


Figure 2G - Improvement in Secure Attachment Skills

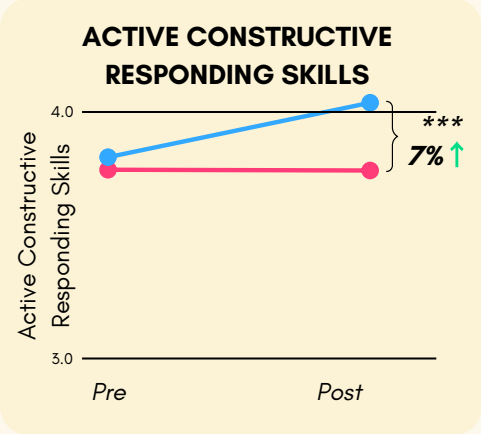


Figure 2H - Improvement in Active Constr. Resp. Skills

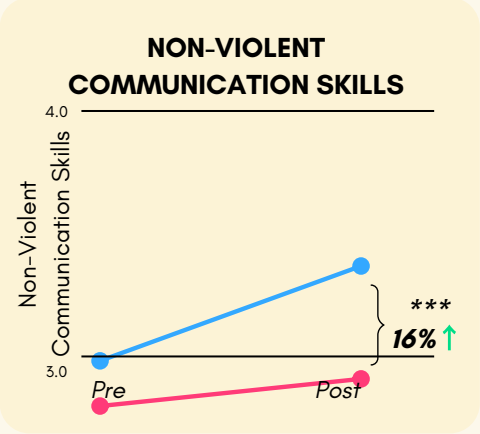


Figure 2I - Improvement in Non-Violent Comm. Skills

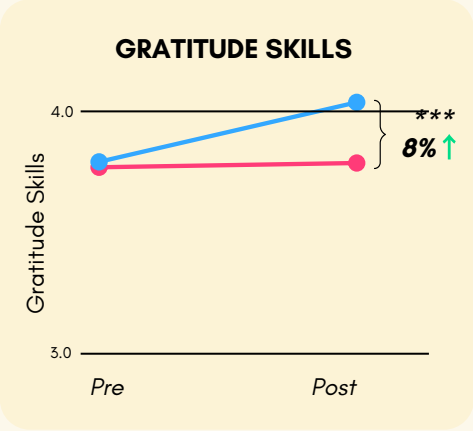


Figure 2J - Improvement in Gratitude Skills

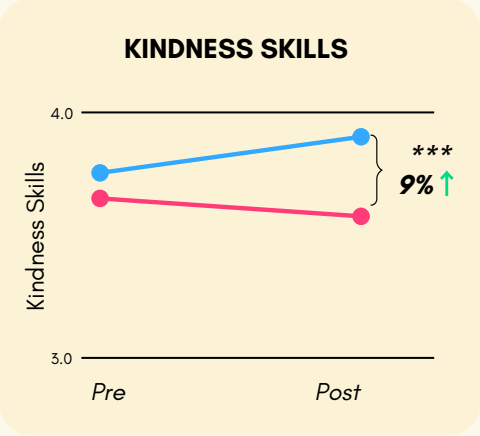


Figure 2K - Improvement in Kindness Skills

WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

There are 9 Well-Being Outcomes that were measured. At pre-intervention, there is no statistical difference between Intervention group and Control group.

At post-intervention, the Intervention group is significantly higher than Control group on all 9 measures of Well-Being Outcomes. Figure 3A to 3I show the Intervention group's percentage improvement over the Control group.

CONTROL GROUP

INTERVENTION GROUP

Significance Legend

n.s *not significant*	**#** *p < .10*
* *p < .05*	** *p < .01*	*** *p<.001*

CHANGE IN WELL-BEING OUTCOMES BETWEEN INTERVENTION AND CONTROL GROUPS

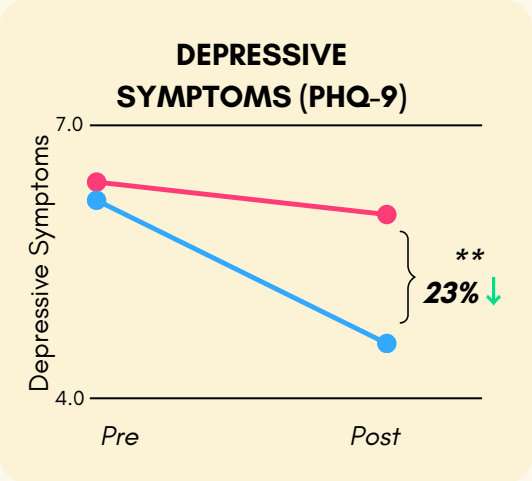


Figure 3A - Improvement in Depressive Symptoms

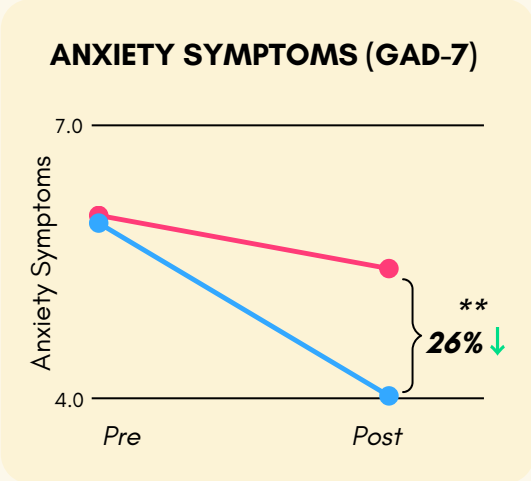


Figure 3B - Improvement in Anxiety Symptoms

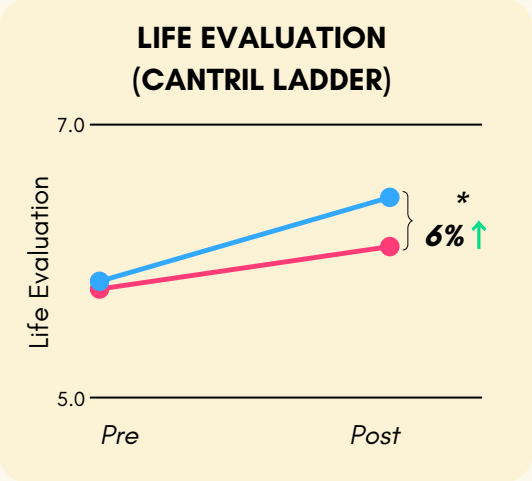


Figure 3C - Improvement in Life Evaluation

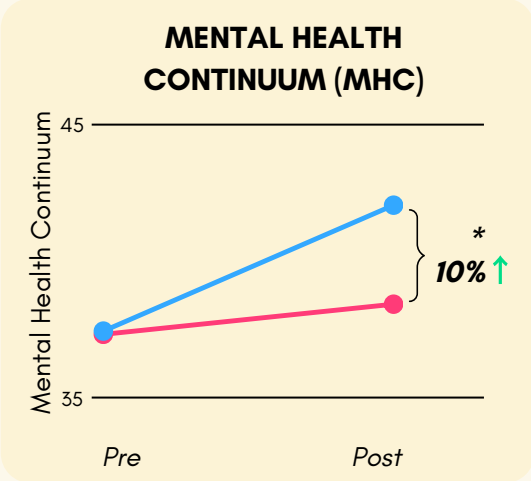


Figure 3D - Improvement in Mental Health Continuum

CHANGE IN WELL-BEING OUTCOMES BETWEEN INTERVENTION AND CONTROL GROUPS

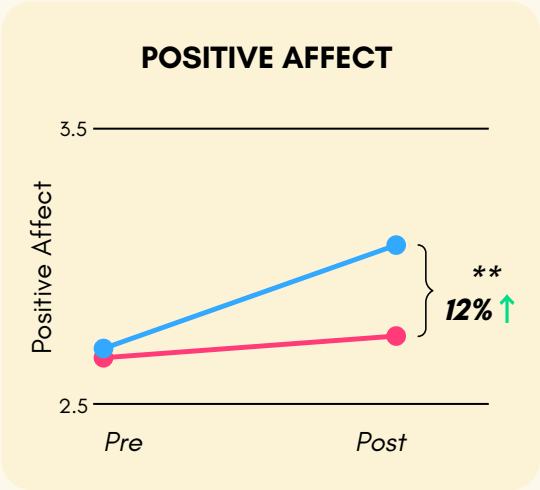


Figure 3E - Improvement in Positive Affect

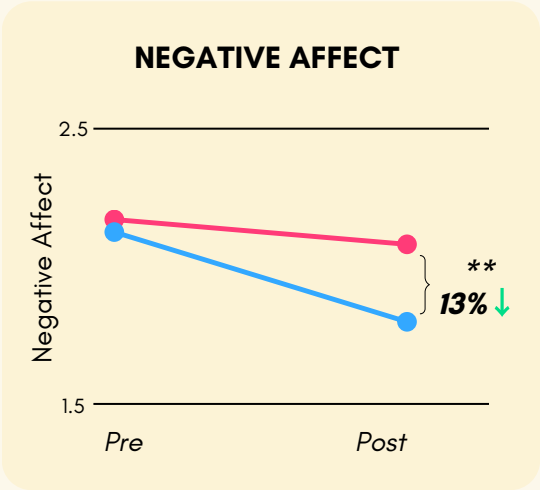


Figure 3F - Improvement in Negative Affect

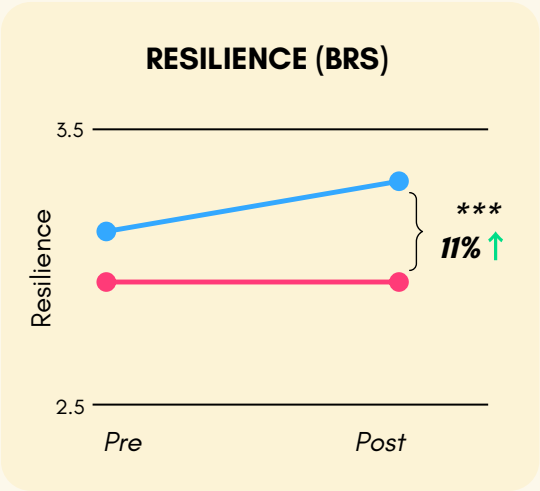


Figure 3G - Improvement in Resilience

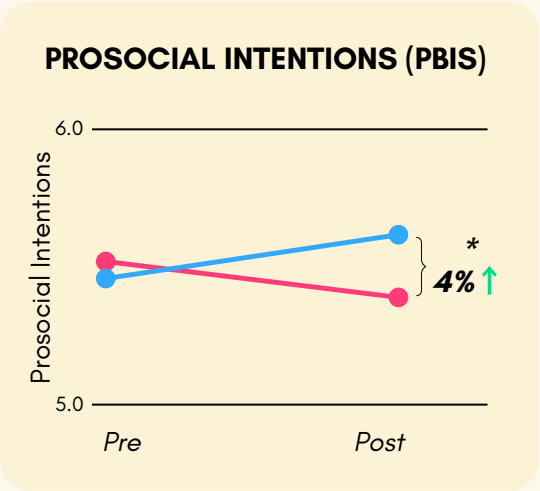


Figure 3H - Improvement in Prosocial Intentions

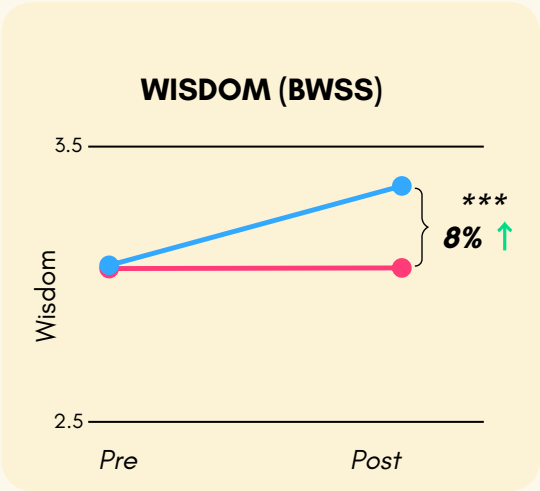


Figure 3I - Improvement in Wisdom

POSITIVE EFFECTS SUSTAINED MORE THAN 6 MONTHS LATER

Well-being Skills

193 participants - 102 from Wave 1 and 91 from Wave 2 - completed surveys at three time points - pre, post, and post-6-month. All 11 measures of Well-Being Skills are sustained 6 months after the programme has ended. The 11 measures of Well-Being Skills remained significantly better than before the programme started (refer to Figure 4).

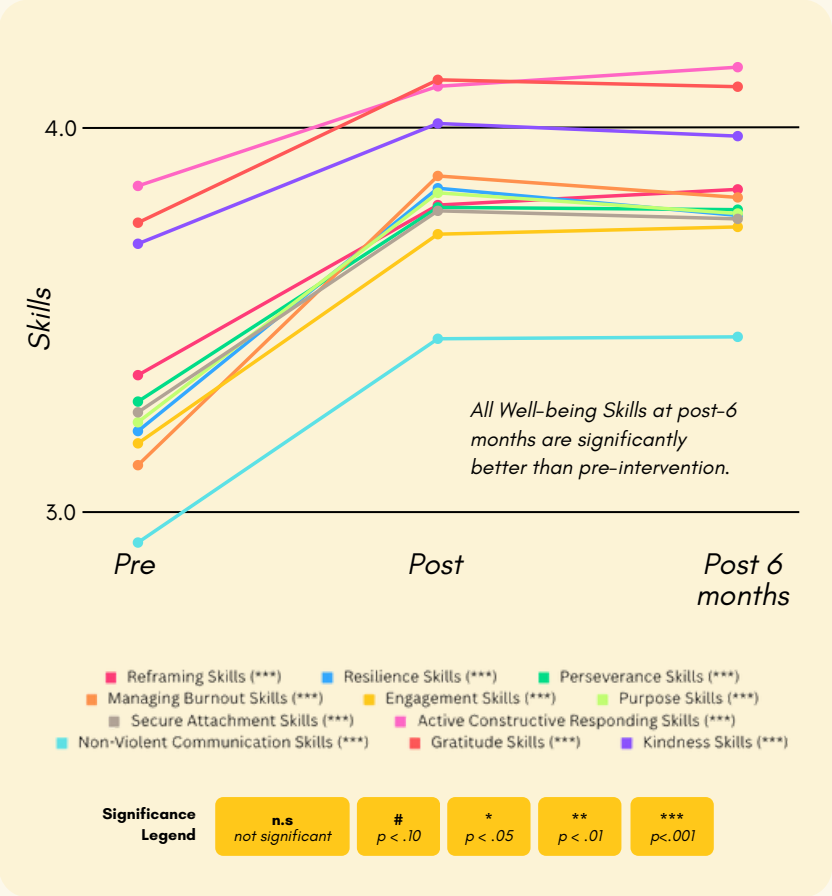


Figure 4 - Participants' Well-Being Skills at Pre & Post Intervention, and Post-6-month



> *From this experience, I have learned strategies, such as reframing and non-violent communication, that have honestly changed my life for the better. During and post Covid, I was struggling. These lessons were better than therapy. I learned skills that I have implemented that have actually made significant change in my life! I highly, highly recommend this course.*
>
> ***- Participant D***

> *Being a part of the circle, where personal stories were shared freely, I was exposed to a variety of perspectives on the struggles we may face in life. The diversity of backgrounds and experiences among participants transformed the circles into a living library of human experiences, a treasury of collective wisdom. Listening to their stories and perspectives, I found myself gaining new insights into life's challenges, often seeing my own struggles through a different lens. Their varied experiences helped to broaden my understanding of well-being and resilience, adding a new dimension to the way I approach my own life challenges.*
>
> ***- Well-Being Leader D***

Well-being Outcome

193 participants - 102 from Wave 1 and 91 from Wave 2 - completed surveys at three time points - pre, post, and post-6-month. All 9 measures of Well-Being Outcomes are sustained 6 months after the programme has ended (refer to Figure 5A to 5F). The 9 measures of Well-Being Outcomes remained significantly better than before the programme started, with one exception - "Prosocial Intentions" that only reached moderate significance ($p < 0.10$).

Significance Legend	n.s *not significant*	# *p < .10*	* *p < .05*	** *p < .01*	*** *p<.001*

While post 6-month "Prosocial Intentions" is sustained from when the programme just ended, it is statistically less significant from baseline.

This could be due to the construct of "Prosocial Intentions" because it measures intentions and at 6 months after programme has ended, intentions may not be as pronounced because actions have been taken. In the section that follows, the prosocial actions that have been recorded support this possibility.

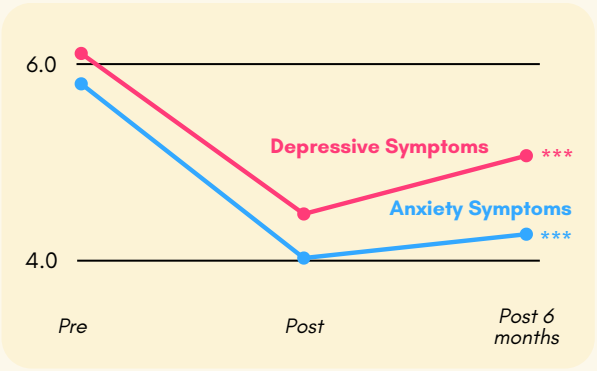


Figure 5A - Depression & Anxiety Symptoms at Pre & Post Intervention, and Post-6-month

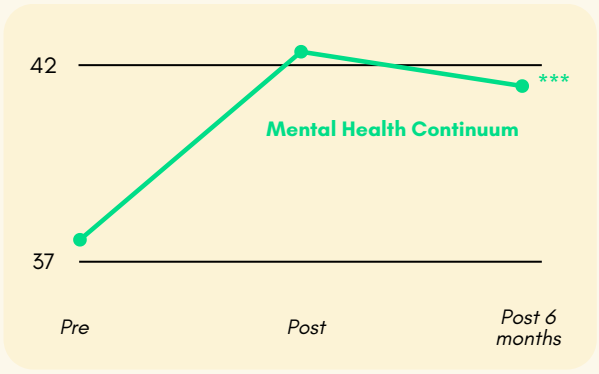


Figure 5B - Mental Health Continuum at Pre & Post Intervention, and Post-6-month

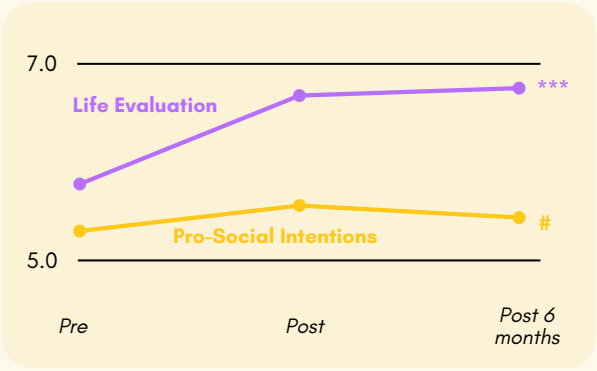


Figure 5C - Life Evaluation & Pro-social Intentions at Pre & Post Intervention, and Post-6-month

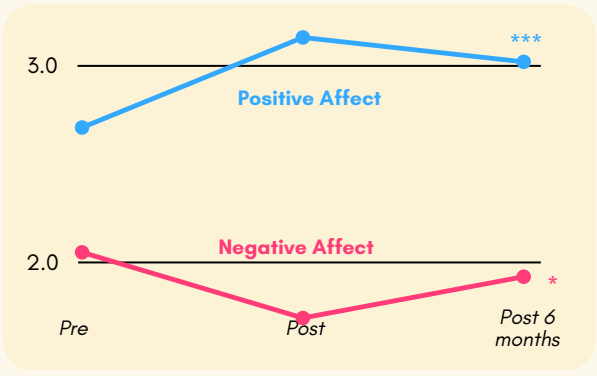


Figure 5D - Positive & Negative Affect at Pre & Post Intervention, and Post-6-month

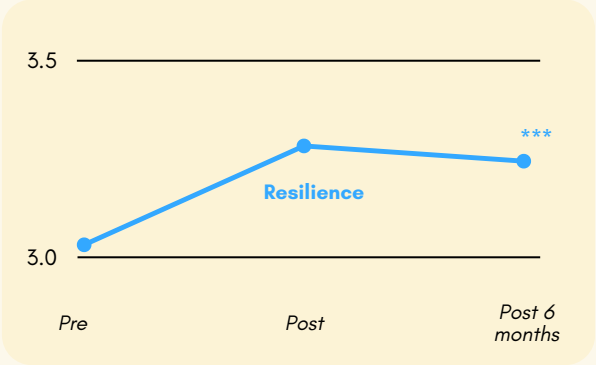


Figure 5E - Resilience at Pre & Post Intervention, and Post-6-month

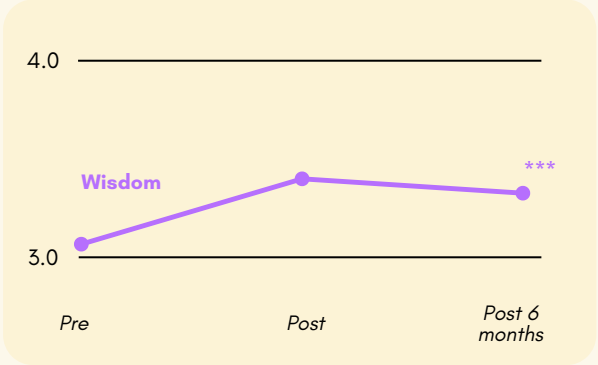


Figure 5F - Wisdom at Pre & Post Intervention, and Post-6-month

All Well-being Outcomes at post-6 months are significantly better than pre-intervention.

A LIFE-CHANGING AND DEEP IMPACT

The Well-Being Circles left a life-changing and deep impact for many participants and leaders. At the end of the programme, we openly invited participants and leaders to write a short paragraph on how they have personally benefited from the Well-Being Circles.

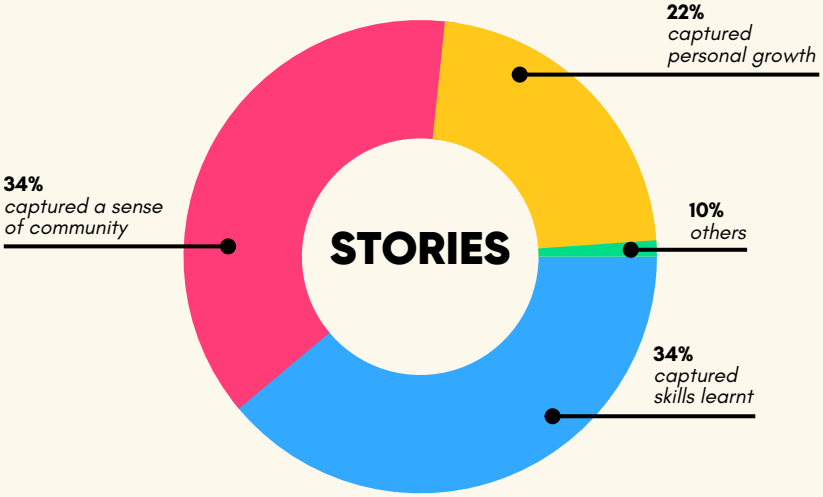




We have informed everyone that their personal stories would be shared in our report and they can contribute only if they are comfortable in sharing. 49 participants and 43 leaders were open to sharing their personal stories with us.

The 92 stories collected reflects the life-changing and deep impact that Well-Being Circles have on participants and leaders. A number of these stories have been shared within this report. We broadly tag each story with a general theme.

Of the 92 personal stories collected:

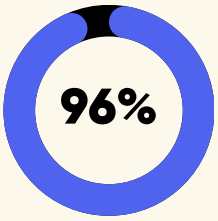


> *One of my biggest takeaways from the Well-Being Circles was the practice of Non-Violent Communication. In preparing for that particular session, I did a lot of reflection on my own relationships and the ways that I communicate violently. During the session itself, I focused on my relationship with my mother and made it my goal to actively use NVC with her. I found that writing down that goal in my journal and sharing it with my group made me more inclined to follow through with it - and I did!*
>
> ***- Well-Being Leader E***

> *Every Saturday became a precious opportunity for me to first "escape" from the hard reality of the week but also a safe space for me to express myself and to be supported fully by my peers. As i looked back on the content structure, i came to realise how simple yet important each topic had an impact on my healing journey, in so many ways.*
>
> ***— Participant E***

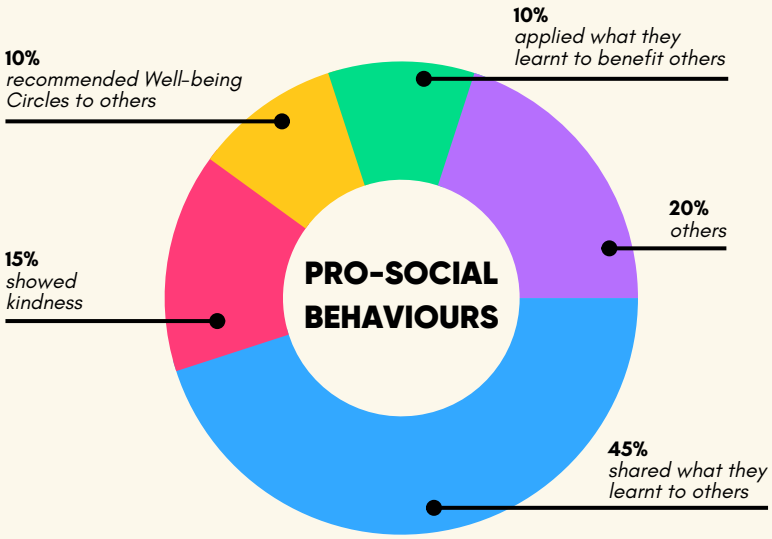
THE SPILL-OVER EFFECTS OF WELL-BEING CIRCLES

IMPACT ON COMMUNITY
More Prosocial Behaviours Than Before Programme



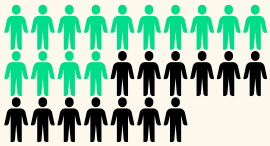
of the participants reported that they have engaged in prosocial behaviours more so now than when they started the programme.

When asked to elaborate on the type of prosocial behaviour they have engaged in or will be engaging in, 226 open-ended responses were recorded and classified into broad categories.



Contributing Back to Well-Being Circles

The Well-Being Circles is a 12-session programme, conducted over 4 months. Despite it being a high commitment programme, a number of Wave 1 participants and leaders volunteered to continue to contribute to Wave 2.



27 Wave 1 Participants applied to become Wave 2 Well-Being Leaders, of which 14 were selected



4 Wave 1 Well-Being Leaders volunteered as Wave 2 Well-Being Leaders again



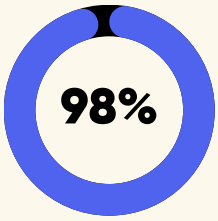
6 Wave 1 Well-Being Leaders volunteered as mentors to Wave 2 Well-Being Leaders Training

This important experience inspires us to create a tiered model of involvement which will be shared in the Scalability section - where participants can go on to become leaders, and mentors.

> *I have benefitted greatly from all the open sharing for each sessions by each member. There is always a joyous air of participation whenever our group comes together despite a long day of work or study. I am thankful and grateful for the team leaders availing their time to lead each session. I know they must have spent even more time preparing in prior and also staying back for each debrief session. Our team leaders are generous not only with their time but also their pockets by getting each of us a snack each session.*
>
> ***- Participant F***

> *The content and coverage is comprehensive yet simple to understand. I particularly like the sharing session. It not only allow me to share my feelings and thoughts, without any judgement by the group, but also allow me to reflect mine (as well as others) sharing. Due to my busy work schedule and other commitments, this 2 hours is a productive "time-out" for me to better understand myself (through the reflection), which I really appreciate. To ensure that I continue to practice and remember what I have learnt, I have enrolled myself as a WBL - for further self development and also to contribute back.*
>
> ***- Participant G***

IMPACT ON PARENTS
Becoming Better Parents



of the parents reported that participating in the Well-Being Circles have helped them to be better parents.

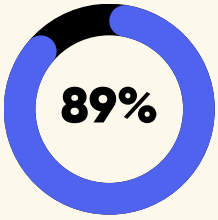
This is what I truly benefited from WBC, being human and being with human. I realised the social support is so important that it is the reason why I make a point to go back and enjoy every session. Knowing this crucial point, I also implemented this structure on every Sat/ Sun night for my family, which my 11 year old called it the WBP - P for pentagon because I'm a family of 5. We created our Life Goals and NVC, shared it within the group so that we can discuss them every pentagon time, the progress and needs.

- Well-Being Leader F

One of most noticeable changes I had was my relationship with my family members. There are more laughter than before. I'm more willing to be open and talk about things.

- Participant H

IMPACT ON WORKPLACE
Promoting Well-Being at Workplace



of the working participants reported that participating in the Well-Being Circles have nudged them to promote well-being at their workplace.

WBC gave me greater clarity on how I wanted to develop personally & professionally. Through the 12 weeks I reflected on how I wanted to grow my skills/knowledge as a DEI professional and volunteered for related new roles & upskilling workshops at work. I also set aside more time to engage in active, passive and social leisure to recharge my batteries, preventing myself from reaching a point of burnout.

- Well-Being Leader G

I learnt a few things that were useful, such as to spot signs of burn out. I work in healthcare, and it was a norm to me that everyone is tired. Eventually I realize it was a sign of burn out, and I was able to share with my colleagues a bit more about what it is, and how we should cope with it. As a team leader, I think this was particularly useful for me as I take care of my people.

- Participant I

THE THREE SECRET INGREDIENTS OF WELL-BEING CIRCLES

The three secret ingredients that make the programme work - Skills, Stories, and Social Support.

SKILLS

The Well-Being Circles is anchored on well-being skills. In doing so, it allows participants to practise the skills, share the skills with others, and track the skills for progress.

Having clearly identifiable skills, it enables the participants (and leaders) to contextualise them in their own way.



STORIES

The well-being skills are being internalised through the sharing of personal stories. Each circle comprises of up to 6 participants and 2 leaders, creating an intimate size for personal stories to be shared and responded to.

Participants and leaders can share their own personal stories on how they have connected with the well-being skills. This makes the skills more relatable and inspires others with new insights and motivations.





SOCIAL SUPPORT

Sharing personal stories in a psychologically safe environment fosters social bonds and promotes a sense of social support.

The psychological safe space for everyone to connect the session's learning with their own reflections and stories generate a sense of shared and collective wisdom.

As the Well-Being Circles progresses, group members have to envision their Best Possible Self in life, work, and the community.

The sense of social support fostered provides a conducive space for everyone to share and support each other in their journey towards their Best Possible Self.

When participants can share authentically their struggles, goals, and progress, they experience an even stronger sense of social support often not found in other settings.

This social support often extends beyond the programme, with groups meeting up regularly to catch up.

THE TWO CULTURES

For all great dishes, besides great ingredients, you need great chefs and appreciative people to enjoy the dishes.

As with the Well-Being Circles, we need leaders to make the best out of the three secret ingredients - by sharing the skills, holding the space for personal stories, and fostering a sense of social support for each other.

Participants also need to contribute proactively to the whole experience, by savouring these three secret ingredients - through connecting openly with the skills, sharing authentically their personal stories, and offering generously their social support.

In order to bring the best out of these three special ingredients - we foster two defining cultures - the culture of transformational change and the culture of feedback.

Culture of Transformational Change

Otto Scharmer, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, shares in his book Theory U[4], that in order for transformational change in self and organisation to happen, one would need three openness:



OPEN MIND

Openness to new perspectives



OPEN HEART

Openness to loving-kindness towards self and others



OPEN WILL

Openness to take action

These three openness are promoted to both leaders and participants.

As a Well-Being Leader, one will meet with different participants from all walks of life. When one has an openness to learn from others, to foster an atmosphere of loving-kindness to all, and to encourage others to take action, the leader can facilitate growth within oneself and the group.

As a participant, an openness to explore one's deeply held beliefs, to practise compassion for self and others, and to take action to develop new well-being habits often brings about transformational growth.

> *Beyond WBC, I have continued to keep the friendships made with my group members, to celebrate one another's birthdays and nudge everyone to head out once in awhile. I feel happier and more grateful with the life I have build for myself and will continue towards leading a happy and meaningful life*!
>
> ***- Participant J***

> *I'm really glad there's a programme that supports community well-being. I'm fortunate to be in a group of very supportive ladies who are open to share without judgement. I enjoyed the sessions and always looking forward to see everyone in my group every week.*
>
> ***- Participant K***

[4] *Scharmer, C.O. (2007) Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges. The Society for Organizational Learning, Inc., Cambridge.*

Culture of Feedback

The interaction in every group is a dynamic process, each with a life of its own. Participants and leaders often experience personal growth as they progress through the programme.

To help the Well-Being Leaders to become better facilitators and to experience their own leadership growth, we consolidated personal feedback from the participants in each group for the leader once every 2-3 sessions.

We adopted and shared the Netflix's 4A Feedback Model[5] where the givers give feedback with the aim to assist and offer an actionable feedback.

As a receiver of the feedback, one has to appreciate that time and effort has gone into the feedback and can choose to either accept or discard the feedback.

To apply the 4A feedback model to our context, when the leaders receive the feedback, they are encouraged to do the following:

1 **Aim to Assist**

Take the perspective that feedback is given to assist them to be better

2 **Actionable**

Find an action to be taken

3 **Appreciate**

Appreciate the feedback

4 **Accept or Reject**

Choose to accept or discard the feedback

At the end of each session, every participant completed a session check-out survey. They rated how much they have benefitted from the session (Session Benefit Score), the quality of the facilitators (Facilitator Quality Score), and offered feedback to each of their facilitators.

Each leader experienced up to 5 feedback sessions through the programme and during each session received at least 10 anonymous feedback responses from participants.

The Session Benefit Score offers us insight on the improvement needed for specific sessions. The Facilitator Quality Score, made up of three questions from National Youth Council Facilitator Teaching Effectiveness and two questions from National Youth Council Managing Group Dynamics, enable us to offer timely and pre-emptive coaching support to any leaders who may need it.

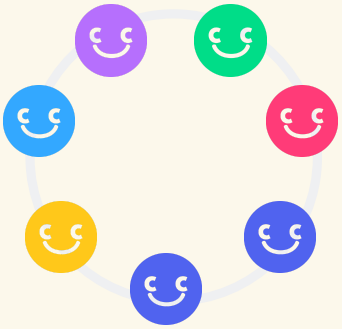
> *Apart from the new concepts and frameworks that I've learned from the circle, I thought what really set it apart was the perspectives shared by different individuals, from different seasons and walks of life. I really enjoyed the conversations throughout the sessions and that's the collective wisdom I've gained from the circle*!
>
> ***- Participant L***

> *WBC is truly a community that fosters growth through encouragement. This is not a blind faith, however, as we all strive to reach our aspirations in realistic means that are within our reach. The value of WBC comes from a shared wisdom among all participants. Every person's life experience is unique in some way, and when pooled together for a common good, it takes us all further.*
>
> ***- Well-Being Leader H***

[5] *Hastings & Meyer (2020) No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention. Penguin Press.*

THE SCALABILITY

The Well-Being Circles is highly scalable because there are only three things that are required for each circle take place:



1. *Well-Being Leaders (serving as group facilitators)*
2. *Participant's journal and Leader's handbook*
3. *A conducive space with chairs and a table*

Such minimal logistics requirement, without the need for audio media support, makes it easy for Well-Being Circles to take place.

The Well-Being Circles fosters engagement through a tiered model - participants can become leaders; leaders can become mentors. Participants who have completed the Well-Being Circles can apply to become Well-Being Leaders and be selected for a 2-day training. In addition, Well-Being Leaders who have completed their facilitation stint can be invited to serve as mentors during the 2-day Well-Being Leader training, imparting their experiences to other leaders-to-be.

Paying it forward, mentors can train leaders, and leaders can facilitate the circles for participants. Figure 6 shows this tiered model of engagement.

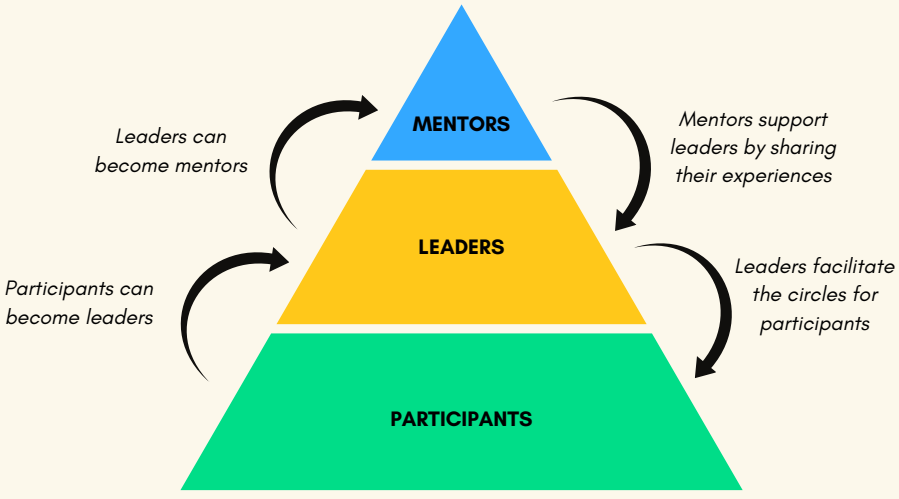


Figure 6 - Tiered model of engagement

> *The group setting also provided a space for participants to share freely, and through this social setting, it helped us to feel more connected to fellow human beings/ Singaporeans and understanding that we are not alone in going through negative experiences in life. It also allowed us to be accountable to each other in terms of setting goals to be a better self.*
>
> ***- Participant M***

> *Through the Well-being Circles, I have discovered that I have limiting beliefs that were holding me back from becoming the best version of myself. After reflecting on this and practicing reframing my beliefs to a more positive perspective, I became more aware of my thoughts and emotions, and which helps me to lead a more positive life. I also learnt alot from the authentic sharing of experiences and support from the Well-being Circle in my group. I felt emotionally-supported and heard by my group members. It was amazing.*
>
> ***- Participant N***

A TINY COST FOR A BIG IMPACT

Well-Being Circles works.

Well-Being Circles have the potential to improve well-being and kickstart a virtuous cycle of prosocial behaviours.

In Singapore, the annual direct cost per capita due to depression and/or anxiety is estimated at an average of S$1,050 and the annual indirect cost per capita is estimated at S$4,980 due to absenteeism for the employed.

In addition, due to less productivity at work, it is estimated a further annual economic loss of S$28,720 per worker[6]. This amounts to close to S$35,000 of annual cost and economic loss.

Well-being skills and well-being outcomes can improve by up to 27%. Almost everyone that participated in the Well-Being Circles are more prosocial than before. Parents become better parents. Workers play their part in promoting a culture of well-being at their workplace.

Well-Being Circles have the potential to strengthen the fabric of our nation and the world. For the cost that comes along with ill-being, Well-Being Circles is a tiny cost for a big impact.







Can there be too much of a good thing? According to me when it comes to WBL, NO. After having had the privilege to be a Well-being Leader as part of Wave 1, I simply had to sign-up again for Wave 2. I can't quite put a finger to what makes it so meaningful, is it the human connection?

Or is it the fact that the safe space provided allows people to voice their deepest fears and really truly voice out their emotions and in doing so connect with them and in doing so heal from past hurt and trauma by processing those unprocessed feelings and emotions.

Or is it the research backed content and key skills that we learn throughout the 8 sessions? For me personally what I took away apart from some truly deep human connections was the activity about best possible self.

Something I even took home and tried with my family including children with very insightful results.

I cannot thank Happiness Initiative and MCCY enough for this wonderful initiative and the opportunity to be part of the two research phases.

- Well-Being Leader I

[6] *Retrieved from https://:bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-023-04581-7#MOESM1*

CREDITS

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE!

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