

*De-stigmatizing Mental Health --
Keep Talking: End the Stigma*

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University of Colorado **Denver**

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Presentation Overview

- Research
 - Event prep
 - Inspiration
 - Considerations
 - Logistics
 - Event day-of
 - Evaluation & Assessment
 - Reflections
 - Discussion
-

Stigma & Help -Seeking

- 46% of college students measured reported both perceived and personal stigma. **1/3 most people think less of a person who has received mental health treatment.** (American Psychiatric Association)
- Mental health stigma is negatively associated with **self reports of suicidal ideation, medication use, counseling and therapy visits, and informal support.** (1)
- Random sample of 5,555 from 13 universities found re: help seeking:
(a) **perceived public stigma** was considerably higher than personal stigma;
(b) personal stigma was higher among students identified as **male, younger, Asian, international, more religious, or from a poor family.** (2)
- **Storytelling** can act as a method of personal healing and meaning constructing activity. (3)

1- Gaddis, S. M., Ramirez, D., & Hernandez, E. L. (2018). Contextualizing public stigma: Endorsed mental health treatment stigma on college and university campuses *Social Science & Medicine*, 197, 183-191.

2- Eisenberg, D., Downs, M. F., Golberstein, E., & Zivin, K. (2009). Stigma and help seeking for mental health among college students. *Medical Care Research and Review*, 66(5), 522-541.

3- Gu, Y. (2018). Narrative, life writing, and healing: The therapeutic functions of storytelling. *Neohelicon*, 45(2), 479-489.

CU Denver at a Glance

POPULATION

- 15,232 students
- Commuter campus
- 47% of undergraduates are students of color
- 52% of newly enrolled students are of color
- 51% of freshmen first generation
- 7% international students
- 51% transfer students

NCHA DATA

within the last 12 months:

- 55.3% felt things were hopeless
 - 61.1% felt very lonely
 - 45.8% felt so depressed that it was difficult to function
 - 63.8% felt overwhelming anxiety
 - 15.7% seriously considered suicide
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The Beginning

- *That's What She Said* - CU Women and Gender Center
 - Keep Talking Overview
 - Intentions:
 - Engage
 - Open conversations
 - Reduce mental health stigma
 - Increase help-seeking behaviors
 - Narrative Therapy
 - Storytelling as healing
-

DEI Focus & Considerations

- Inclusivity through multiple outlets
 - Consultation
 - Submission screenings
 - Volunteer speakers
 - Students voiced need for diversity
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Planning & Buy -In

- Buy-In: 6 months
 - Planning Committee: 6 months
 - Flyers/Marketing: 4 months
 - Submission Advertising: 2 months. Deadline: 2 weeks out
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Advertising

- Advertising: on the ground, word of mouth, email newsletters, email blasts, emonitors, student newspaper, social media
 - Our commuter campus vs. others
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Logistics

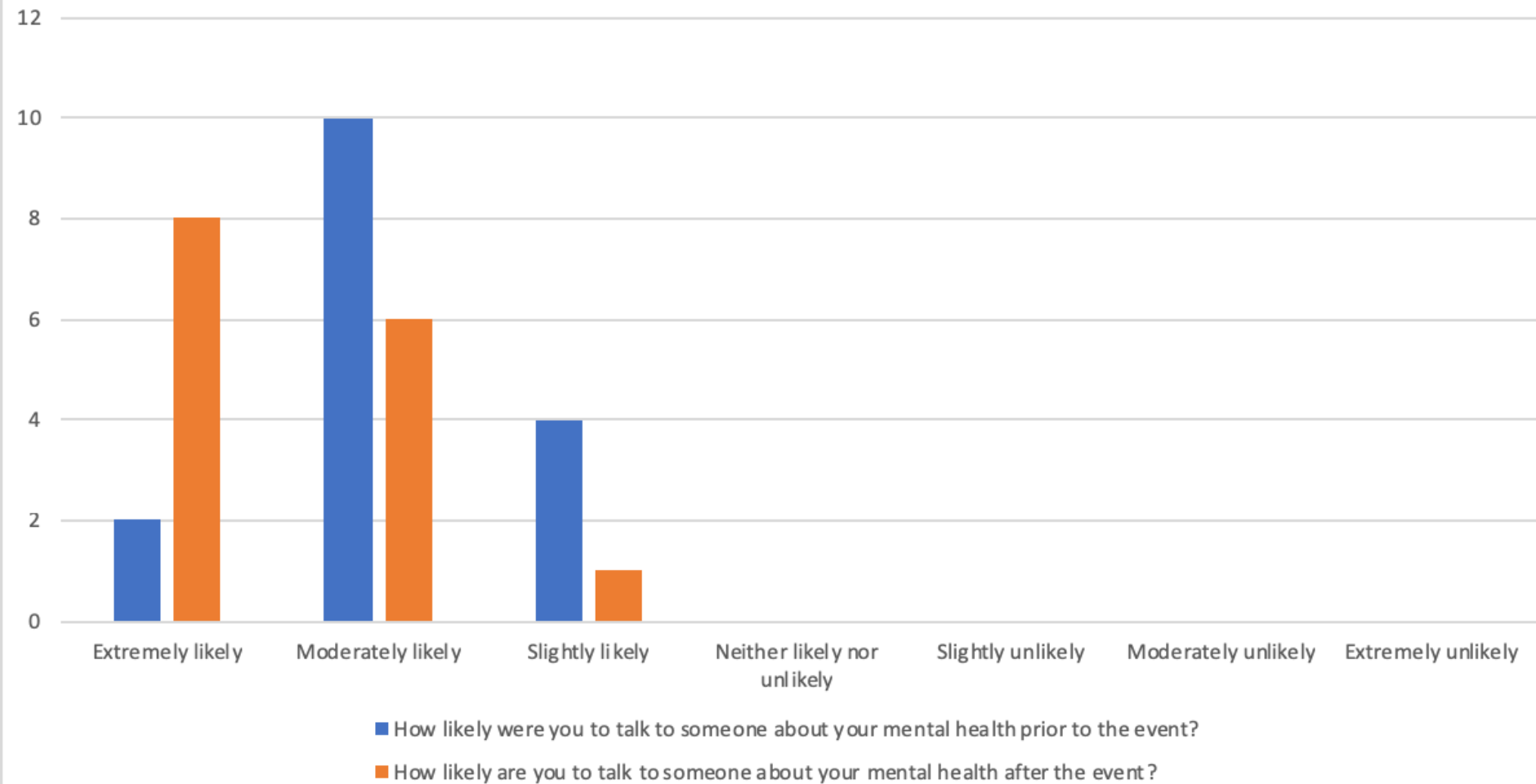
- Counseling support
 - Catering
 - Resource tabling
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Show Time!

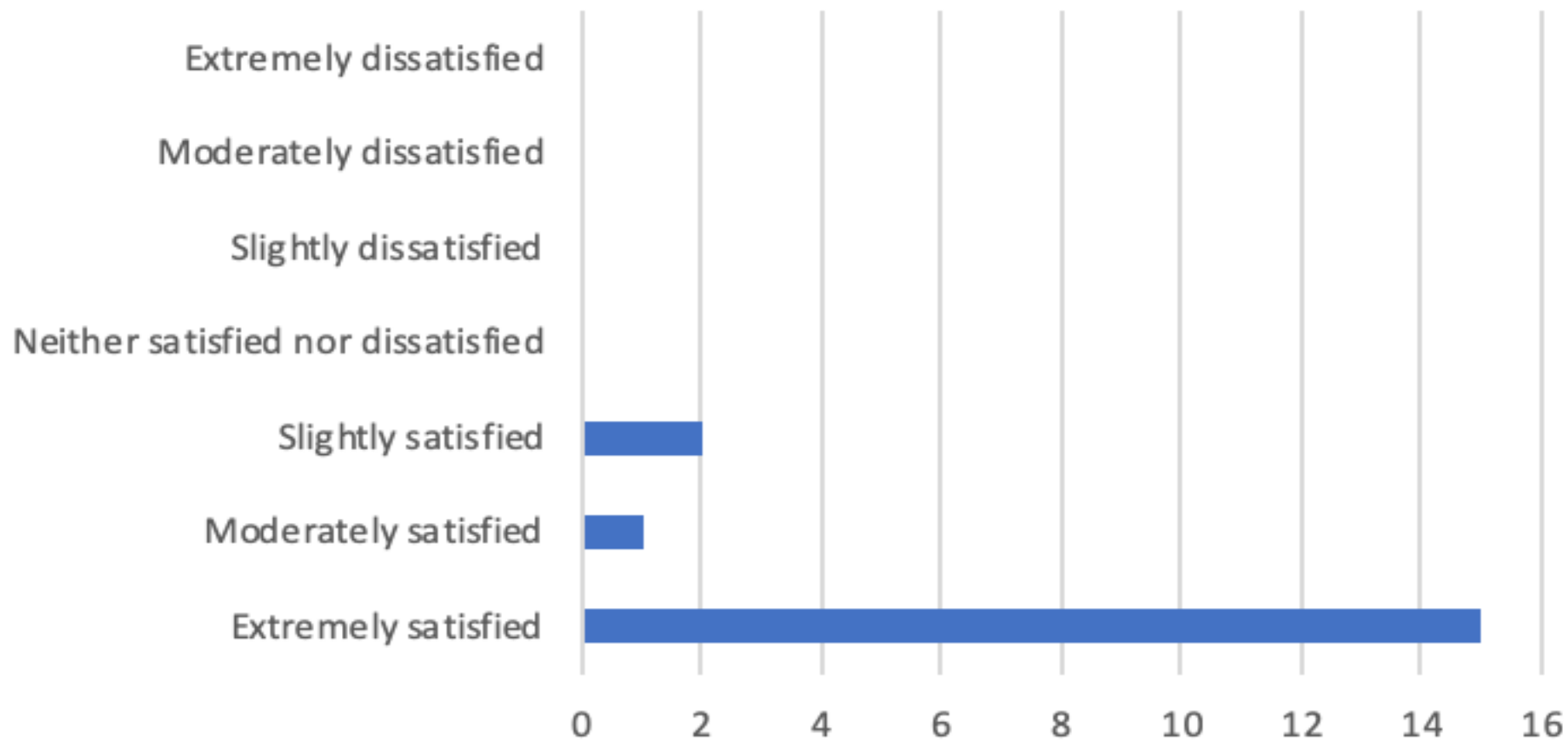
- Days before
 - Reminder logistics emails to storytellers
 - Volunteer job assigning
 - Day of
 - Advertising
 - Specific coordinators for:
 - Check-in table
 - Storyteller/speaker liaisons
 - Welcome speaker, MC/Announcer
 - Sound/media-check
 - Days after
 - Thank yous
 - Feedback
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Evaluation & Assessment Participants

Help-Seeking Attitudes

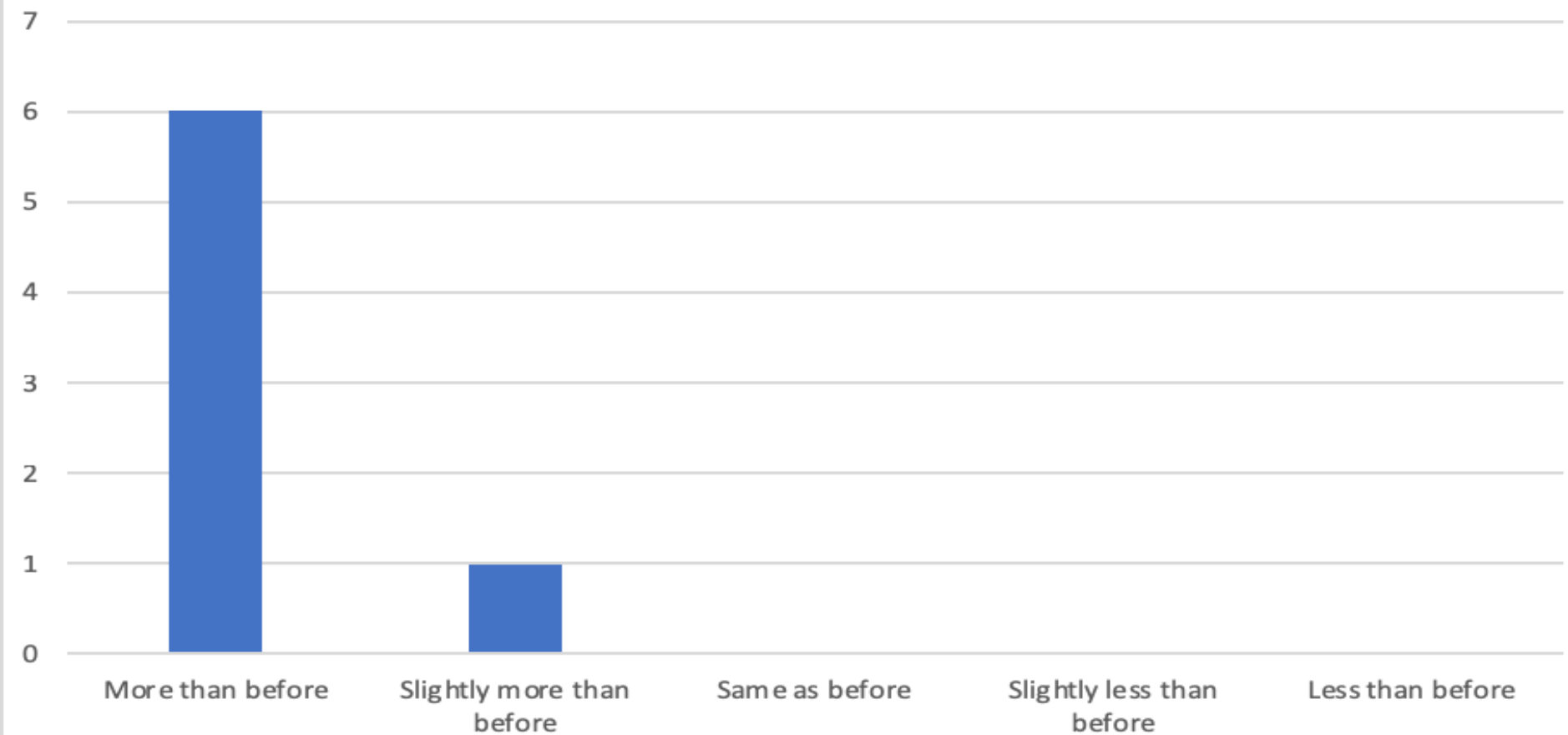


How satisfied are you with the event?

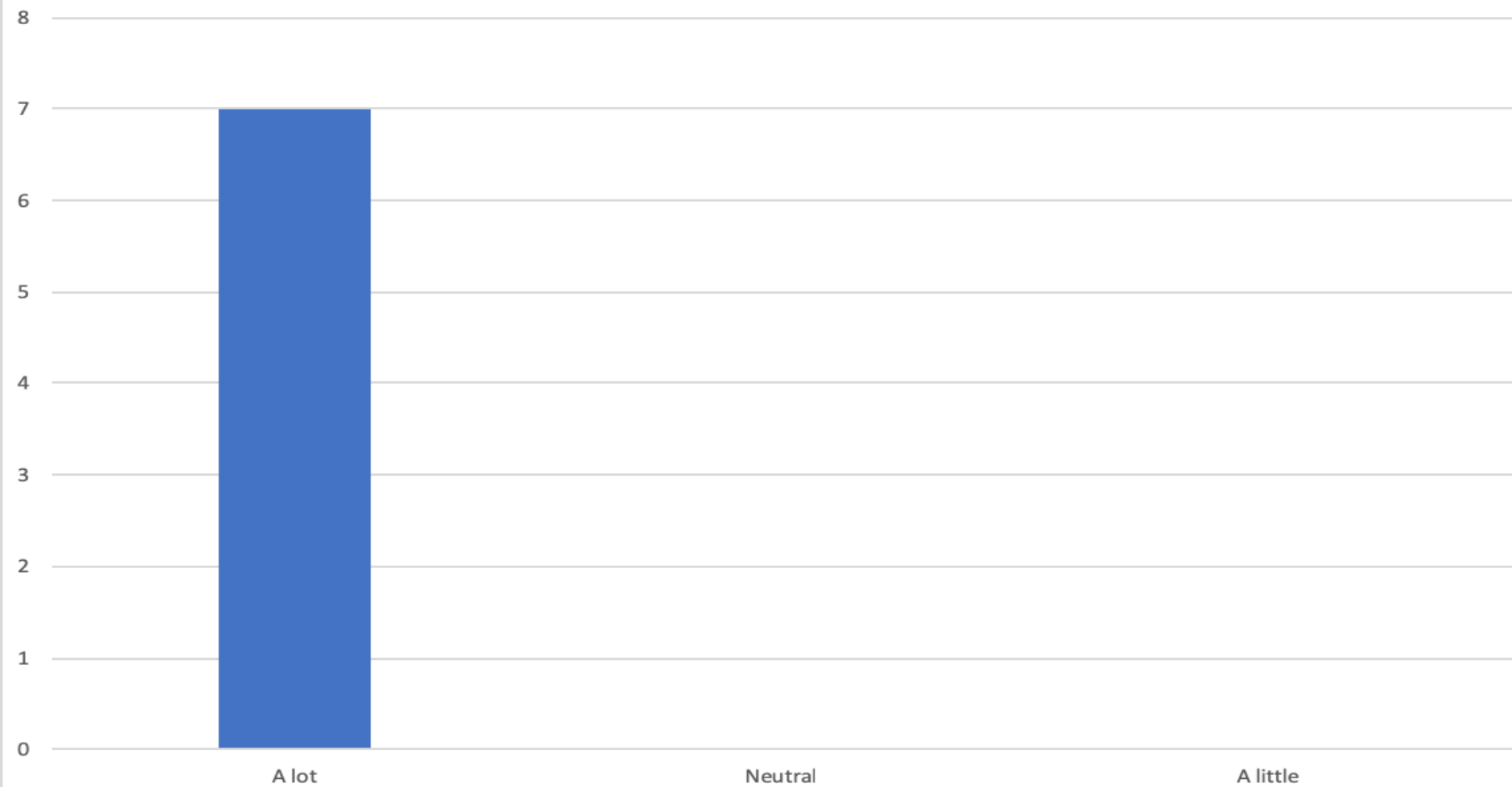


Evaluation & Assessment Storytellers

Do you feel more connected to people going through similar experiences after the event?



How empowered do you feel after sharing your story?



Did you feel safe sharing your story?



How likely are you to share your story again?





Successes

100+ participants! - tabling & show

Evening event success

High marks in feedback

Diverse show and audience

Media coverage

Campus effort

Reflections for Future

- Emotional drain:
1.5 hours, 13 stories.
>Add unique breaks (dance, therapy dogs).
>Offer containing speech/wording.
>Consider choosing variety of emotional intensity.
 - Schedule voluntary meeting before the event for staffers and story sharers.
 - Logistics: increase planning timeframe
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Discussion

- Let's Keep Talking!-
 - Sparked ideas?
 - Similar for your campus?
 - Prior experience?
 - Want to recreate? Let us know!
 - Logo
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