

The Wellbeing in Young People Project

Evaluation of the impact of participation in Reach courses
and camps

A Reach Foundation Research Project



Reach

- Emphasizes the development of confidence and self-esteem in young people by providing a safe and trusting environment, promoting openness and creative expression.
- Provided experiential workshops and weekend camps to more than 300,000 young people since its inception in 1994.
- Aims to promote mental health and well being in young people.

Project Details

- **AIM:** The Well-Being in Young People Project aimed to investigate the impact of Reach courses and camps on participants.
- **PROCEDURE:** Young people attending Reach programs between October 2002 - March 2004 completed a questionnaire booklet containing measures of depression and well-being (self-esteem, optimism, control of internal states and mastery).
- Questionnaires were completed at the start of a course/camp, at the completion of the course/camp, and 6 and 12 months afterwards.
- Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Monash University Ethics Committee.

Scales

- **Depression**
 - Measured using the Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1992).
- **Self-Esteem**
 - Measured using the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).
- **Optimism**
 - Tendency to believe that one will generally experience good rather than bad outcomes in life.
 - Measured using the Revised Life Orientation Test (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994).
- **Control of Internal States**
 - Extent to which a person feels able to control their emotions, thoughts and physical reactions to what is happening in their lives.
 - Measured using the Perceived Control of Internal States scale (Pallant, 2000)
- **Mastery**
 - Extent to which a person regards their life-chances as being under their control, in contrast to being ruled by fate (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978).
 - Measured using the Mastery Scale (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978)

Sample

- Participants

- 182 young people assessed at start and completion of Reach course or camp (45 newly recruited Reach Crew also assessed & analysed separately)
- 112 (non Crew) participants followed up 6 months later
- 77 (non Crew) participants followed up 12 months later

- Average age: 15.6 years (12 - 21years)

- Male: 45.6% (N=83)

- Female: 54.4% (N=99)

Summary – Results

Depression

- Statistically significant decrease in depression scores

Well-Being

- Scores on other wellbeing measures showed statistically significant improvements

Longitudinal Results

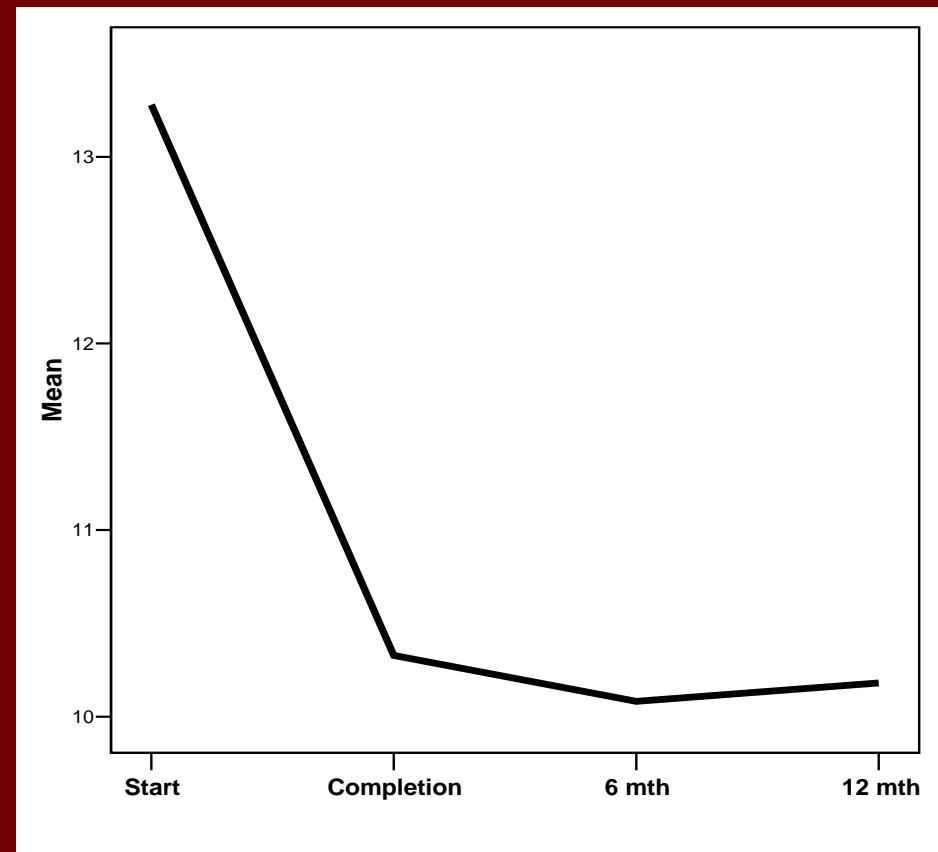
- Majority of young people had maintained their improvement in wellbeing after 6 and 12 months

Depression

- The prevalence of depression at Reach is almost double that reported for a community sample of adolescents (Boyd et. al., 2000)
- Average female score at start higher than male
 - Female 16.15 vs Male 12.45
- Higher % of females depressed at start
 - Female 62.2% vs Male 48.6%

Depression

- Decrease in average depression score at start (14.43) and completion (11.76) of program
- Decrease in number of young people classified as depressed at start (55.9%) and completion (41.7%) of program
- Of those 55.9% classified as depressed at start:
 - 76% showed a decrease in depression scores at completion
 - 36% were no longer classified as depressed at completion

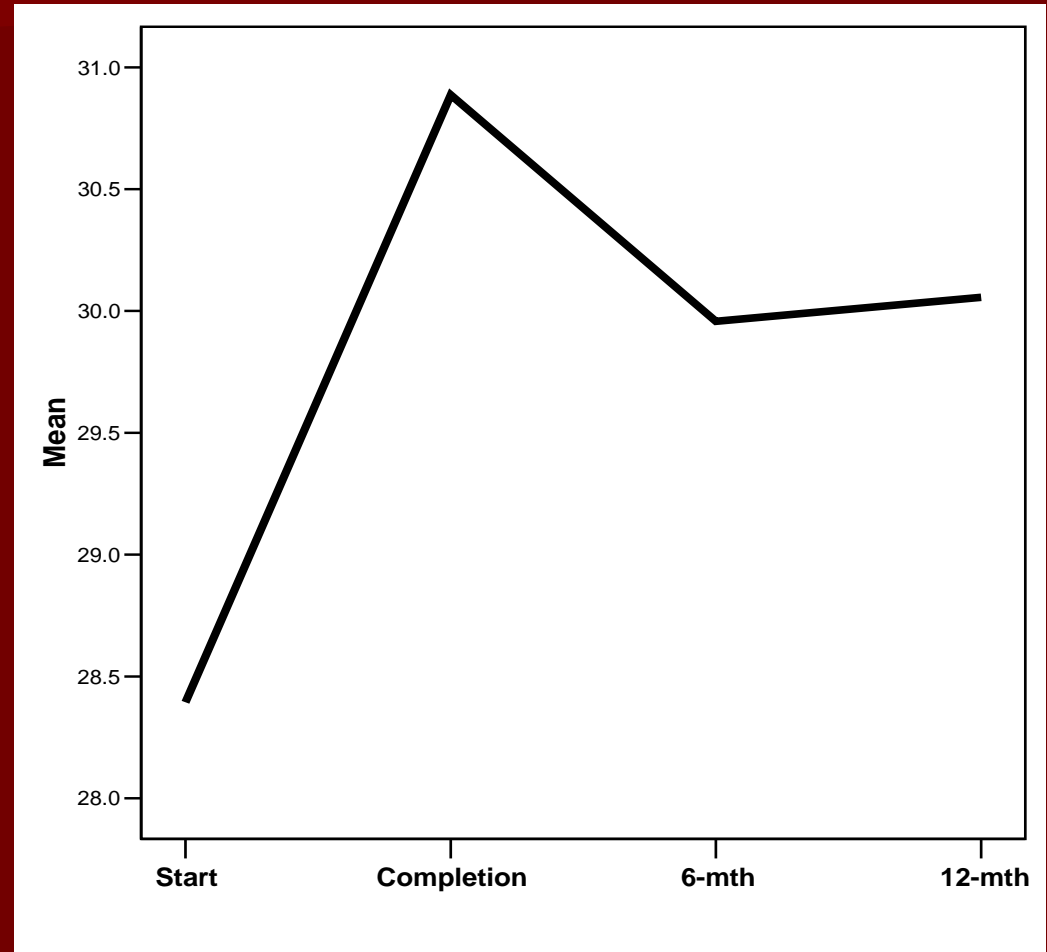


Depression

- Impact of Reach programs equally positive for males and females
- Impact of courses same as impact of camps
- CDI Subscales also showed statistically significant improvements in:
 - Negative Mood (e.g. feeling sad)
 - Interpersonal Problems (e.g. trouble getting along with people)
 - Ineffectiveness (e.g. negative evaluation of their ability)
 - Anhedonia (e.g. unable to experience a sense of enjoyment)
 - Negative Self Esteem (e.g. self-dislike)

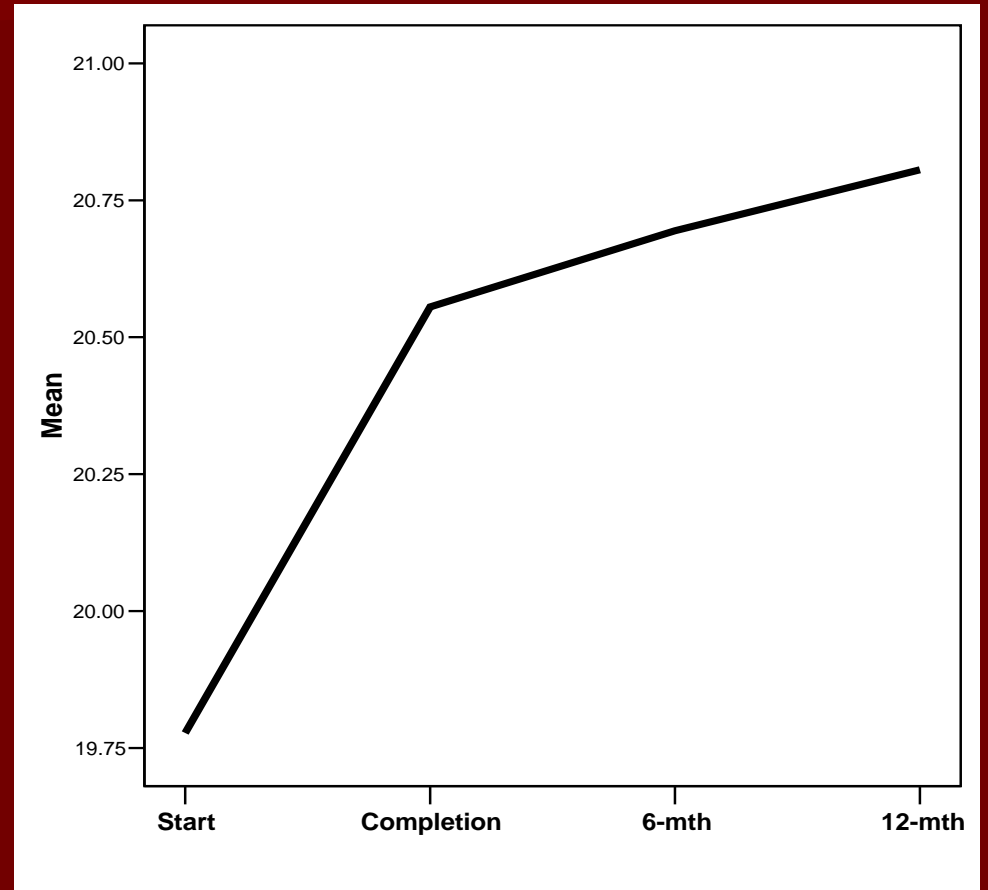
Self Esteem

- A more positive attitude towards themselves



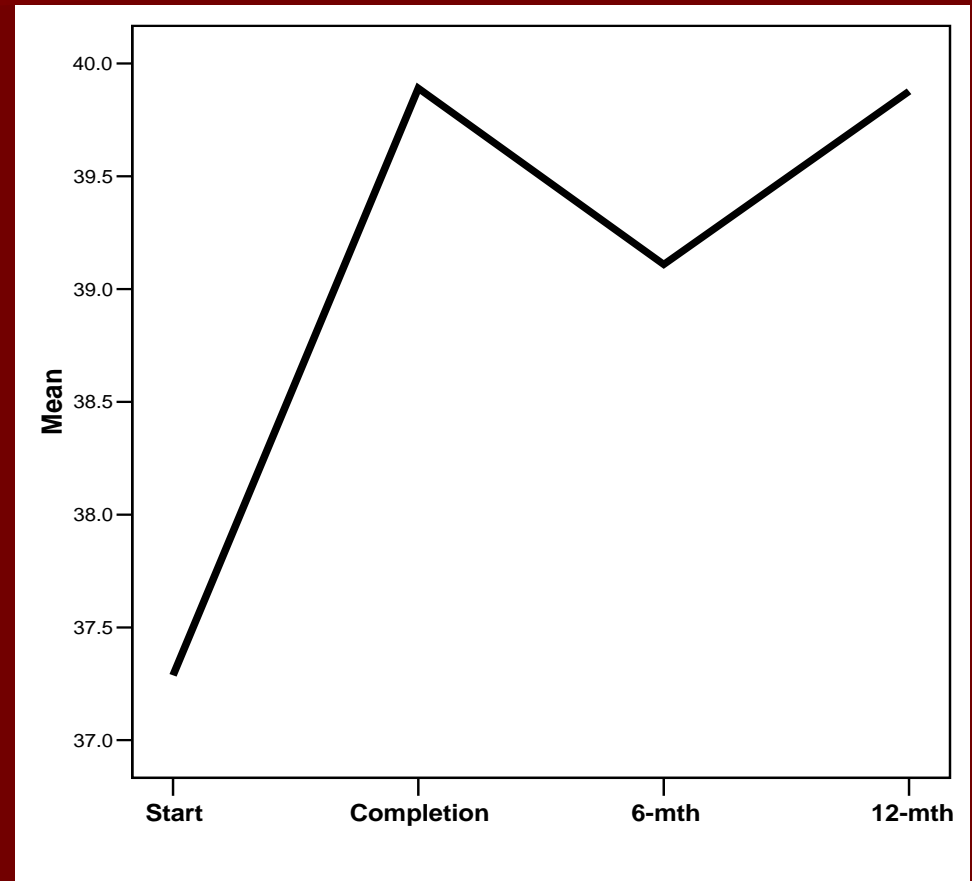
Optimism

- A greater belief that they would experience good outcomes rather than bad



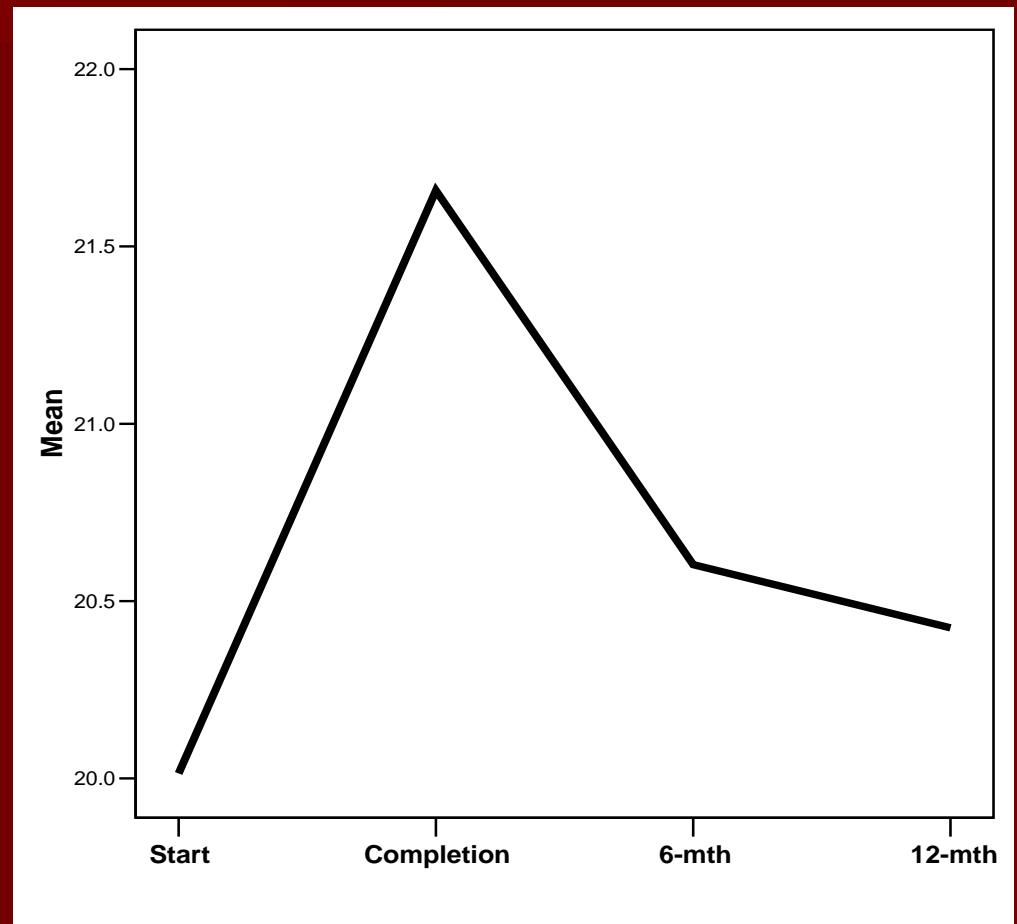
Control of Internal States

- Increased levels of perceived control over their emotions, thoughts and physical reactions



Mastery

- An increased belief that their life-chances were under their control



Young People's Ratings of Reach Programs

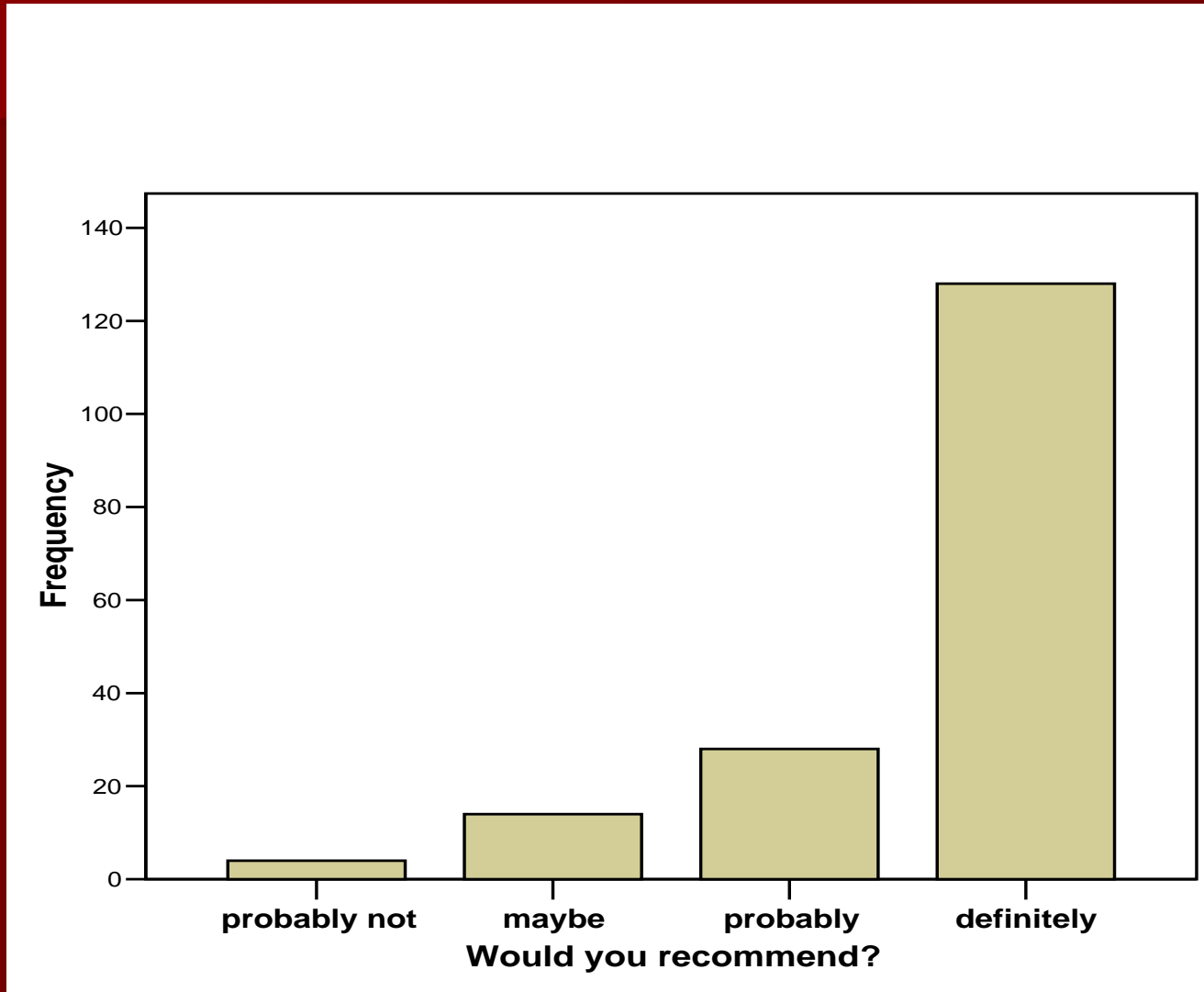
Program Ratings

- Average scores:
 - Program experience = 8.8 / 10 (scale of 1-10)
 - Program leaders = 9.5 / 10 (scale of 1-10)
 - Impact = 3.9 / 5 (scale of -5 to +5)
- Ratings of program experience and program leaders same for courses and camps
- Rating of impact higher for camps
 - (4.2 for camps vs 3.6 for courses)

Repeat participation

- 40% of young people had returned to participate in a second Reach activity

Recommending Reach to Friends



Interpretation

- The prevalence of depression at Reach is almost double that reported for a community sample of adolescents (Boyd et. al., 2000)
 - Supports need for this service and for continued employment of qualified psychologists and social workers for additional support
- Literature indicates that many adolescents do not seek help for mental health concerns
 - Supports need for Reach's low/no cost programs, peer run programs and reduced stigma re engaging in "treatment"

Interpretation

- Reach programs provide a non-clinical approach in reducing adolescent depression and increasing factors that are associated with coping and positive adjustment.
- The benefits of such programs extend to clinically and moderately depressed adolescents whose self-reported symptoms of depression were significantly reduced or were no longer present at the conclusion of the program.
- The group environment at Reach encourages:
 - a sense of belonging, self-development
 - opportunity to establish supportive social networks
 - acquire greater skill in interpersonal interaction.

Interpretation

Findings provide support for the effectiveness of a non-clinical program in reducing clinical levels of depression and increasing mastery, self-esteem, optimism and control of internal states in young people.

The findings indicate that Reach programs play a significant positive role in impacting upon the mental health of participants.

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Well-Being

Males vs Females

- Females recorded slightly lower levels of mastery than males.
- Females recorded statistically significantly lower levels of self-esteem and control of internal states than males.
- There was no statistically significant difference in the level of optimism reported by males and females.

New Crew vs Participants

- Comparing newly recruited Reach Crew (young leaders) with program participants
 - Lower levels of depression (9.4 vs 14.4)
 - Higher levels of:
 - Mastery (22.0 vs 19.6)
 - Self Esteem (32.7 vs 27.7)
 - Optimism (22.3 vs 18.7)
 - Self Control (40.0 vs 36.7)