The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC
in partnership with Together Drug & Alcohol services

Time to Shine Together

Creative Recovery Programme

Presented By:
Melissa Noble

The Pilot Project
Sept - Dec 2025

2025

www.wideheartedlivingcom

Time to Shine Together

Executive Summary

Overview of the Pilot Project

Time to Shine Together is a creative recovery programme offered to adults in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. Based in Exeter, Devon, the programme is a partnership between The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC and Together Drug and Alcohol services.

The programme aims to help service users connect with their creativity so they can use it to make life better - to improve their confidence, self-esteem and optimism for the future. Sessions ran for 12 weeks, in-person, in Exeter.

Time to Shine has enabled me to have something positive to focus on and draw on creativity to help change the way I may feel when bored, distressed or struggling. It also gives me an outlet to meet recovery-focused people in a safe and guided way.

Time to Shine Together

Project Overview

Summary of the project

We offered a taster session and 12 x 2 hour sessions, exploring creativity as a tool for emotional regulation, self-expression, and personal growth.

Grounded in trauma-informed practice, the programme offers a safe, supportive space where participants can explore identity, rebuild confidence, and reconnect with themselves, with others, and with their wider communities.

Sessions are guided by the NHS 5 Ways to Wellbeing, providing an holistic framework that encourages participants to care for their mental, emotional, and physical health. This integrated approach fosters resilience, connection, and purpose; key protective factors in sustaining recovery and reducing the risk of relapse.

It took time to settle. To develop trust. To find our flow. Some people came and found it wasn't for them. The ones who stayed are now forming the foundation of an enduring community.

Time to Shine Together

Organisational Overview

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC

The Academy's mission is to support "Changemakers" - people who want to make a positive difference in the world, including those currently held back by personal circumstances such as addiction, trauma, or poor mental health.

Organisation's aim and experience:

The Academy's aims are to improve wellbeing, foster connection, and increase joy through creative, inclusive programming.

In 2023, Melissa designed and delivered the Wellbeing for Changemakers programme in partnership with the Network of Wellbeing. Participants praised the variety of activities, the quality of resources, and the supportive structure that encouraged personal growth and creative risk-taking.

Organisational Overview

Together Drug and Alcohol Services (Waythrough)

Together Drug and Alcohol Services currently supports 976 service users across Exeter, East, and Mid Devon. This figure includes over 200 individuals recently released from prison or on community criminal justice orders.

In 2024, Together Drug and Alcohol Services surveyed their service users to understand what would help them in recovery. Of those who responded:

- 79% had never engaged in community activities
- Over half expressed interest in art and creativity to support long-term wellbeing
- They identified ‘anxiety’ as the biggest barrier to them engaging with services

Time to Shine Together

Facilitator's credentials

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC

This programme was led by Melissa Noble, founder of The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC. Melissa is a creative facilitator with extensive experience in trauma-informed practice, wellbeing-focused programme design, and community engagement.

Qualifications

2024: CMI Coaching and Mentoring
2019: BACP Counselling Skills (Level 3)
2017: City & Guilds Creative Techniques (Level 2)
2008: CIPD Certificate in Training Practice (Level 3)
1993: BSc Applied Social Science (Health Studies), 2:1

Time to Shine Together

Impact

What 3 Words

Each week, participants share three words describing how they feel at the start and end of a session. The shift is often striking:

Before	After
achy, tired, curious	content, grateful, excited
energized, irritable, unwell	happy, alive, content
hot, strange, imbalanced	reinvigorated, honoured, happy
tired, flat, tempted	grateful, happy, thoughtful
rough, grumpy and huffy	happy, hopeful, wistful

Time to Shine Together

Impact

It's been mind-opening and very helpful to be around people with similar problems

Feeling proud to have completed the course and to have gotten to know everyone

I have loved the Time to Shine idea, and the way we get lost in the activities and all feel better afterwards

This has been a very interesting and helpful group – an inspiring journey, meeting like-minded souls and making friends

Time to Shine has been really helpful – it is one of the first group-style that I have attended. It has helped me feel integrated and not so alone.

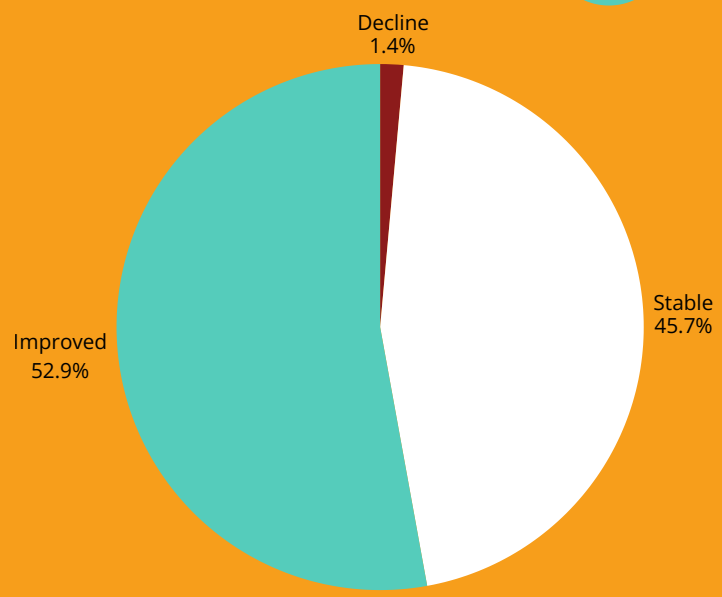
It has provided me with ideas and skills I can use to help me and I have felt safe and accepted within the group

Time to Shine Together

Impact

End of project: results

Six people journeyed through the programme. We used the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to assess their wellbeing at the beginning, mid-point and end of the programme*
Stats available for 5/6



This chart depicts the change in participants responses from beginnig to end of the project.
14 questions. 5 people. 70 responses.
We found 1 point where the mark had declined.
32 remained stable. 37 improved.

Time to Shine Together

Risk Management & Challenges

Key Risks Identified

Together Drug and Alcohols services carried out a risk assessment of participants as part of the on-boarding process. We had a member of staff in the room for some sessions, and a volunteer present throughout.

Challenges

The biggest challenge came with establishing some stability within the group. Attendance was variiable for some participants. Some people arrived without a clear understanding of the programme. Some people tried to join at a late stage when the group had already begun to settle.

Lessons learned

The next phase of the project will be a closed group. We will co-create resources so that future participants will have a much clearer understanding of the programme's format.

Time to Shine Together

Future Outlook & Strategic Plan

Upcoming projects and the long-term plan

We have been allocated further funding from Devon Community Foundation to build upon this success. We will continue to work with the existing cohort for a further 12 weeks, then co-design resources for staff and future participants.

Our long-term vision is to nurture a vibrant, peer-led creative recovery community. We aim to support individuals who have journeyed through recovery to become mentors, facilitators, and changemakers; people who not only support others on their path but also contribute to the wellbeing of their local communities through creative placemaking and public art.

This is just the beginning. Exciting times ahead.

Melissa

www.wideheartedliving.com

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

Enquiries regarding this project, its methodology, or potential collaborative opportunities are warmly welcomed.

WWW.WIDEHEARTEDLIVING.COM

MELISSA@WIDEHEARTEDLIVING.COM

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WIDEHEARTEDLIVING/

WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/MELISSA-NOBLE-AWHL

Huge thanks to Lauren Smith and the team at Together Drug & Alcohol Recovery, in supporting me and the participants as we brought this project to life.

Appendix

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

Results of the Warwick-Edinburgh survey

1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Often	Often	Often	Often	Some of the time
End	Some of the time	Often	Often	Often	Some of the time

2. I've been feeling useful

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time
End	Some of the time	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time	Some of the time

3. I've been feeling relaxed

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely Some of	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Rarely	the time Some of	Some of the time	Some of the time
End	Some of the time	Rarely	the time	Often	Some of the time

Appendix

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

4. I've been feeling interested in other people

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Some of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time	Some of the time	Rarely
End	Often	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time	Some of the time

5. I've had energy to spare

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	None of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Rarely Some of	Some of the time
Mid-point	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time	the time Some of	Some of the time
End	Often	Some of the time	Often	the time	Some of the time

6. I've been dealing with problems well

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Often	Some of the time	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time
End	Some of the time	Rarely	Often	Some of the time	Often

Appendix

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

7. I've been thinking clearly

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time	Often Often
End	Some of the time	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time	Often

8. I've been feeling good about myself

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Rarely	Rarely Rarely	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time
End	Often		Often	Some of the time	Some of the time

9. I've been feeling close to other people

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Rarely	Some of the time	Rarely	Rarely Some of	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time	the time Some of	Some of the time
End	Often	Often	Often	the time	Some of the time

Appendix

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

10. I've been feeling confident

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Rarely	Some of the time	Rarely	Rarely Some of	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	the time Some of	Some of the time
End	Often	Some of the time	Often	the time	Some of the time

11. I've been able to make up my own mind about things

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Some of the time	Some of the time	Often	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Often	Often	Often	Some of the time
End	Often	Some of the time	All of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time

12. I've been feeling loved

	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Some of the time	None of the time	Rarely	Rarely	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time	None of the time
End	Often	Rarely	Often	Often	Some of the time

Appendix

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

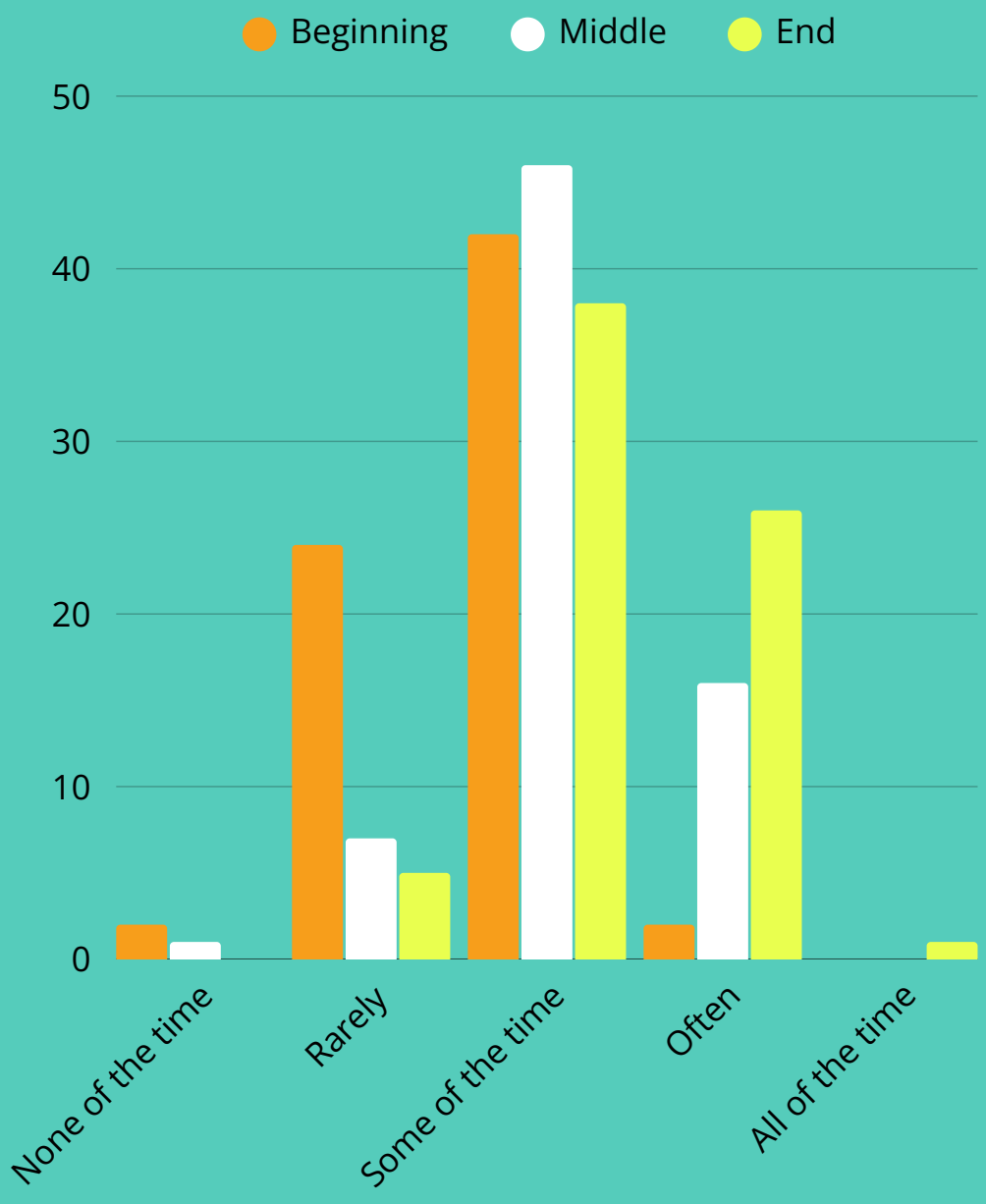
13. I've been interested in new things

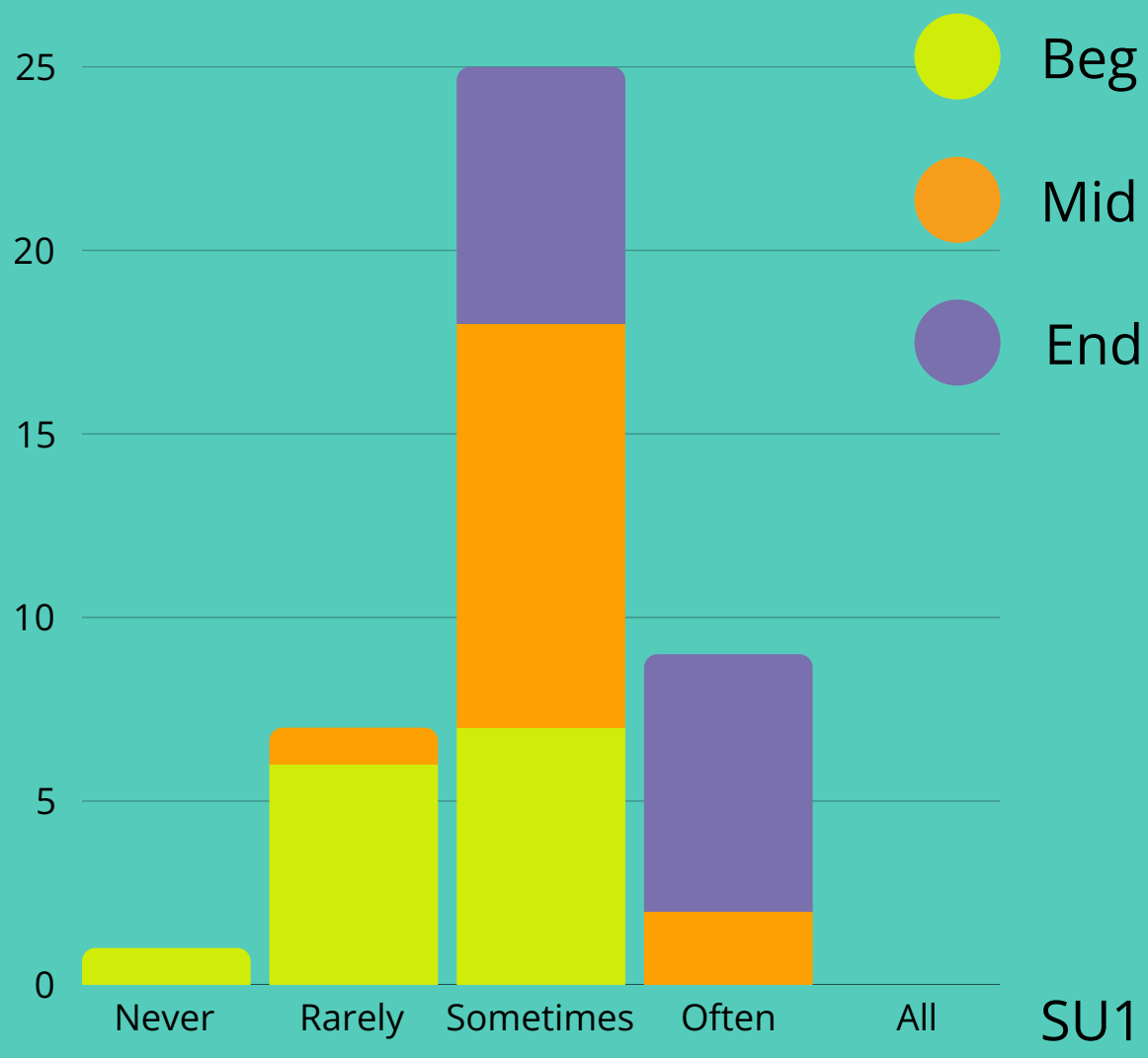
	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Rarely	Often	Rarely Some of	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Often	the time Some of	Often	Some of the time
End	Some of the time	Often	the time	Some of the time	Some of the time

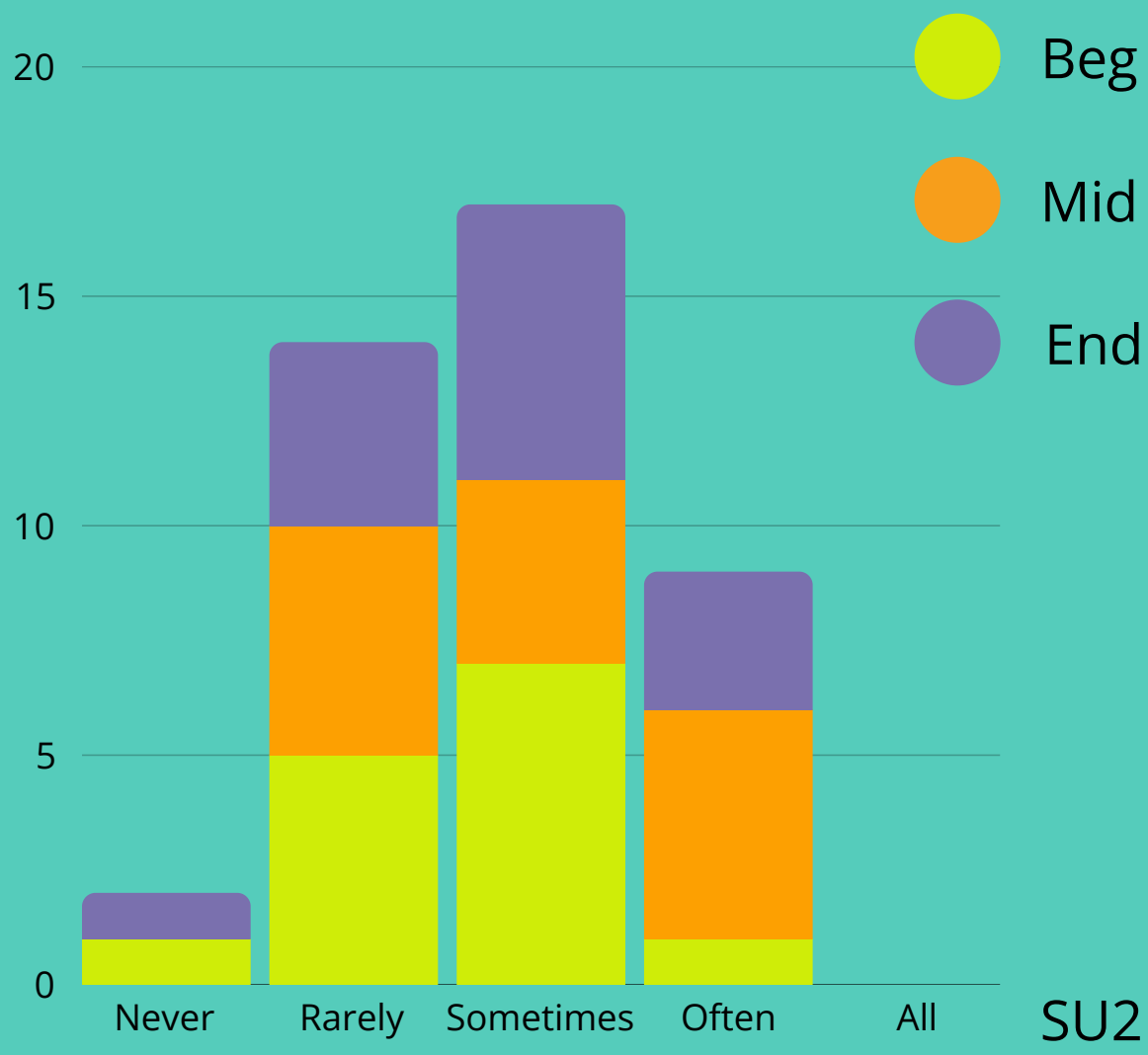
14. I've been feeling cheerful

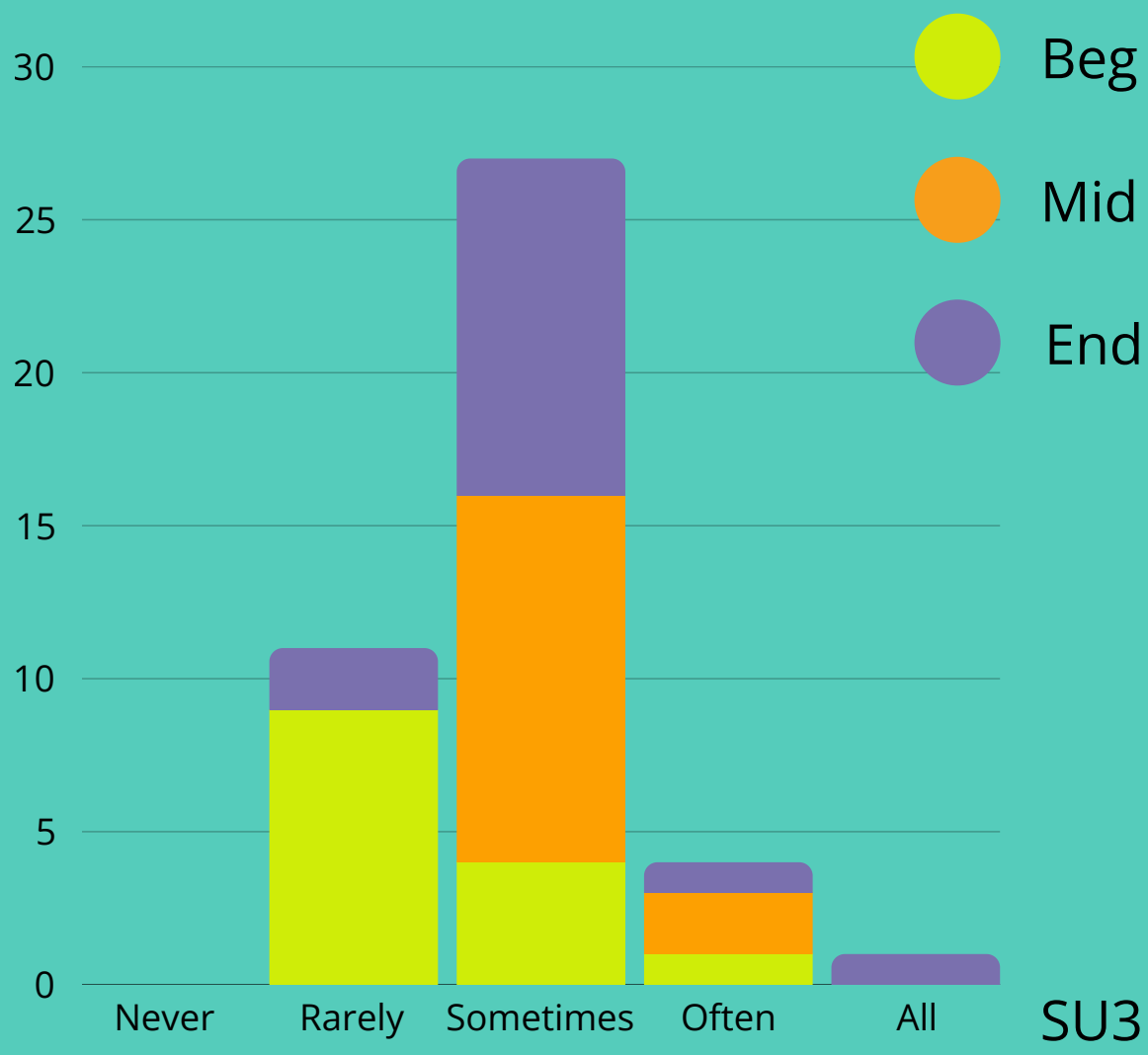
	Service User 1	Service User 2	Service User 3	Service User 4	Service User 5
Beginning	Some of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Some of the time
Mid-point	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time	Some of the time
End	Some of the time	Rarely	Often	Some of the time	Some of the time

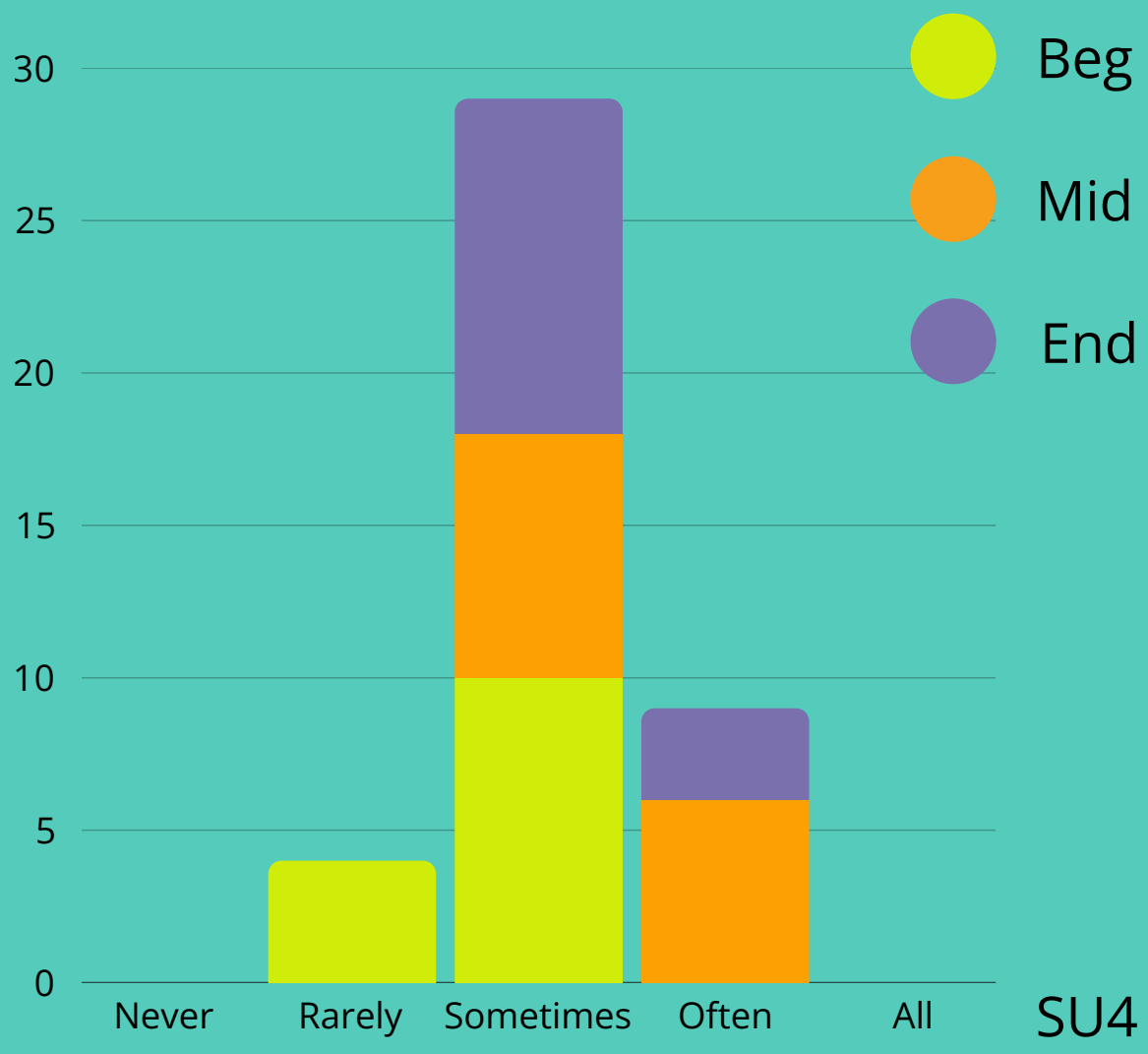
Results of WEMBS analysis

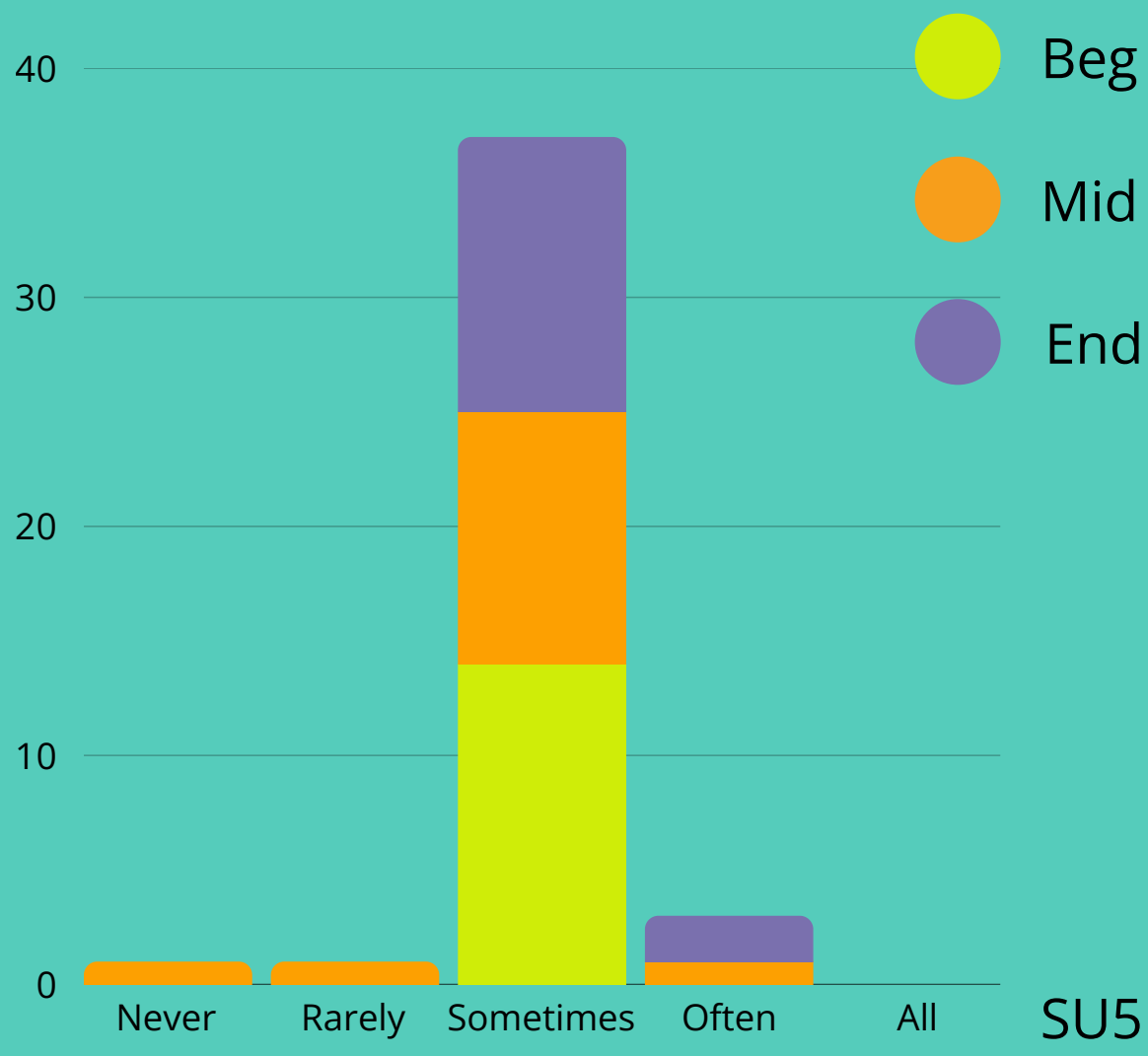



25
20
15
10
5
0
Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Often
All
Beg
Mid
End
SU1


20
15
10
5
0
Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Often
All
Beg
Mid
End
SU2


30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Often
All
Beg
Mid
End
SU3


30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Often
All
Beg
Mid
End
SU4


40
30
20
10
0
Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Often
All
Beg
Mid
End
SU5