2013 Bridges Implementation Assessment: Final Summary of Results

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Children and Community Services, County of Simcoe   **January 2014**

Overview

- **Background**

- **Methodology**

- **Results:**
  - Both groups
  - Group that has not received training
  - Group that has received training
    - Change of attitudes at agency
    - Changes in agency practice
    - Changes to own service delivery
    - Barriers
    - Additional supports
    - Other feedback

- **Next Steps**

Background of Bridges

- The CYFS Coalition endorsed the Bridges Out of Poverty framework as a community strategy in 2011.

- Trainers from a number of community agencies participated in a 3-day training session in 2012 to become certified Bridges trainers.

- Hundreds of staff at dozens of agencies throughout Simcoe County have participated in the Bridges Orientation sessions facilitated by local trainers.

Community Survey

- The purpose of the survey was **to measure the impact of exposure to Bridges Out of Poverty orientation information within individual agencies.**

Objectives:

- To determine changes in policy, structure or attitude at agencies with staff that have received an orientation to Bridges Out of Poverty information;

- To determine the interest of front-line staff in receiving further training on Bridges material and other poverty reduction initiatives;

- To determine the value of receiving Bridges information in the day-to-day work of front-line staff.
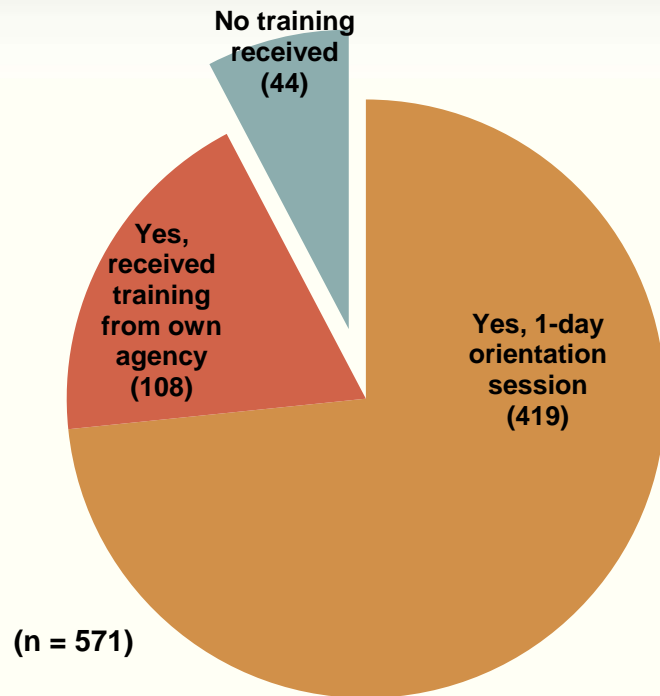
Survey Methodology

- Target sample: staff at community agencies that received Bridges Orientation information in 2012 and 2013.

- Convenience snowball sampling method of survey distribution:
  - The invitation to complete the online survey was emailed to staff from the Bridges Orientation registration lists, with instructions to forward the invitation to other staff within their agency.

- Distribution lists included:
  - Basic Needs Task Group members;
  - Bridges Leadership Council and Bridges Trainers;
  - Bridges orientation session registration lists through the Coalition, County of Simcoe, and SCDSB.
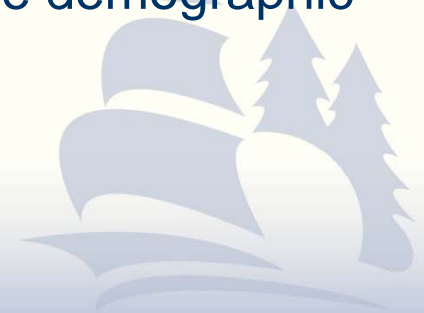
All respondents

No training received (44)

Yes, received training from own agency (108)

Yes, 1-day orientation session (419)

(n = 571)

- Of the 571 respondents, a total of 527 received Bridges Out of Poverty training, either from a 1-day orientation session or within their own agency.

- 44 respondents did not receive any Bridges training

- Respondents were asked a different set of questions based on their response to the question about training

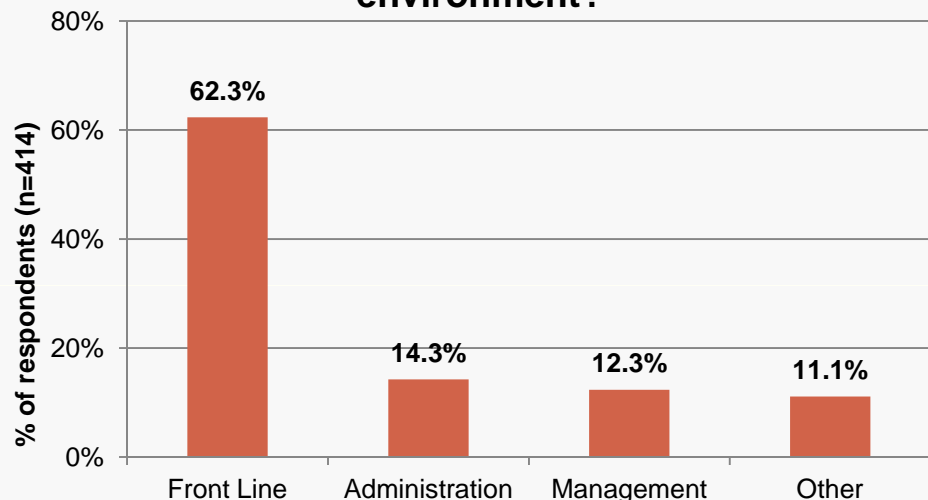 - However, all respondents completed the same demographic questions

COUNTY OF SIMCOE

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Respondent Demographics
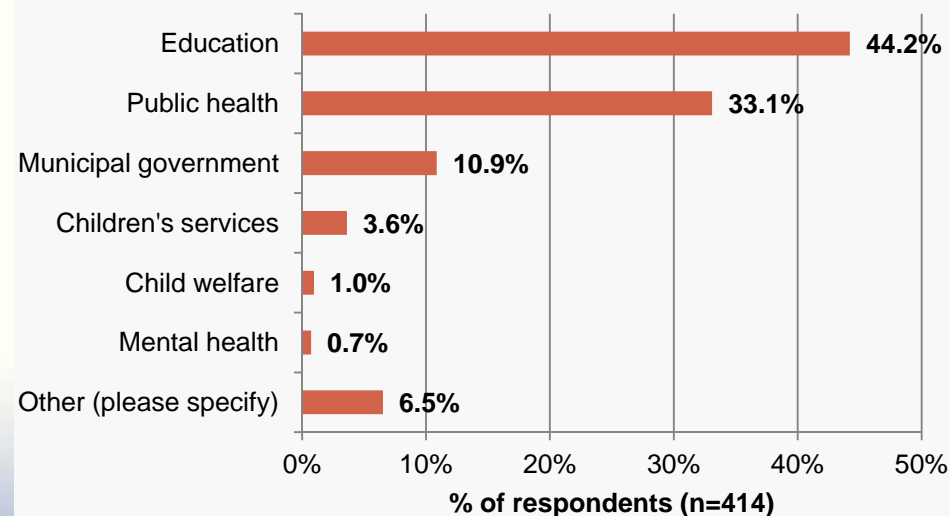
All respondents

What best describes your work environment?

- The majority of respondents (62%) were front-line.

- Responses in the other category included: teacher, educational assistant, foster parent, and specialized support staff in areas such as research, program planning and/or coordination, consultation.

- The majority of respondents were from the education sector, followed by public health, municipal government and children's services.

- Responses in the 'other' category included: social services, community services, housing, non-profit sector and family services.

Agency Sector

Why training was not received

- A total of 44 survey respondents have not received Bridges Out of Poverty training

- 34 respondents provided reasons which prevented them from receiving Bridges training:

  - 23.5% identified that no opportunities were available through their agency;

  - An additional 17.6% identified lack of time

  - Geographic accessibility was not a factor

What has prevented you from receiving training?
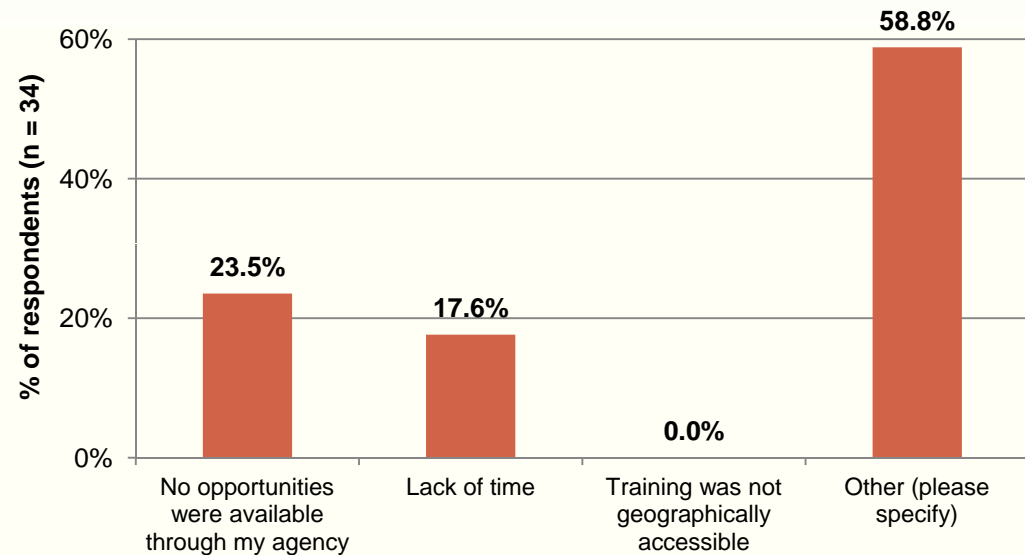
Some of the 'other' reasons provided included:

- Away or sick at time of training
- Not aware of the training opportunity
- New employee since the time the training was offered
- Training doesn't apply to the person's position
- One respondent indicated the training was only provided in English (however did not mention preferred language)

Results – No training received

- 28 of 33 (85%) respondents indicated they would be interested in receiving Bridges training in the future, while 5 (15%) indicated they would not be interested in receiving Bridges training

- Comments included:

Interested:
- Connections to community partners are important
- It would increase skills in working with the public
- Not sure what the training is about; would like more information

Not interested:
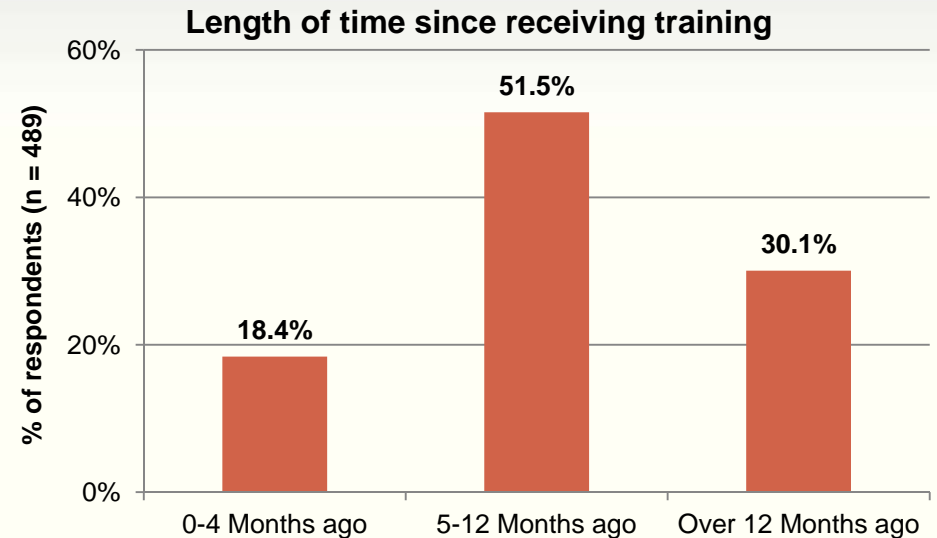- Felt to already have an understanding of where children from underprivileged homes are coming from

9

Bridges Out of Poverty Training

Trained group

- More than half (51.5%) of respondents received Bridges Out of Poverty training between 5-12 months prior to completing the survey.

- 30.1% received training more than a year before.

- 60.3% of the 489 respondents that received training indicated that their agency required them to do so, while 39.7% indicated they were not required by their agency to receive the training.
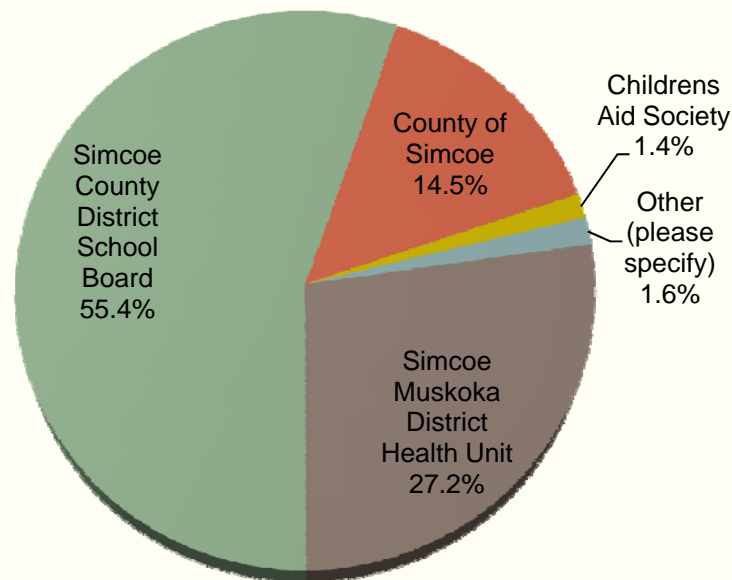
Length of time since receiving training

Bar chart showing % of respondents (n = 489):
- 0-4 Months ago: 18.4%
- 5-12 Months ago: 51.5%
- Over 12 Months ago: 30.1%

Host agency for training

Host agency for orientation training

n = 504

Simcoe County District School Board 55.4%

County of Simcoe 14.5%

Childrens Aid Society 1.4%

Other (please specify) 1.6%

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit 27.2%

- More than half of respondents (55.2%) attended training hosted by the Simcoe County District School Board, followed by 27.2% attending training hosted by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

- 'Other' locations included training hosted by Grey-Bruce and joint presentations with multiple agency host partners.
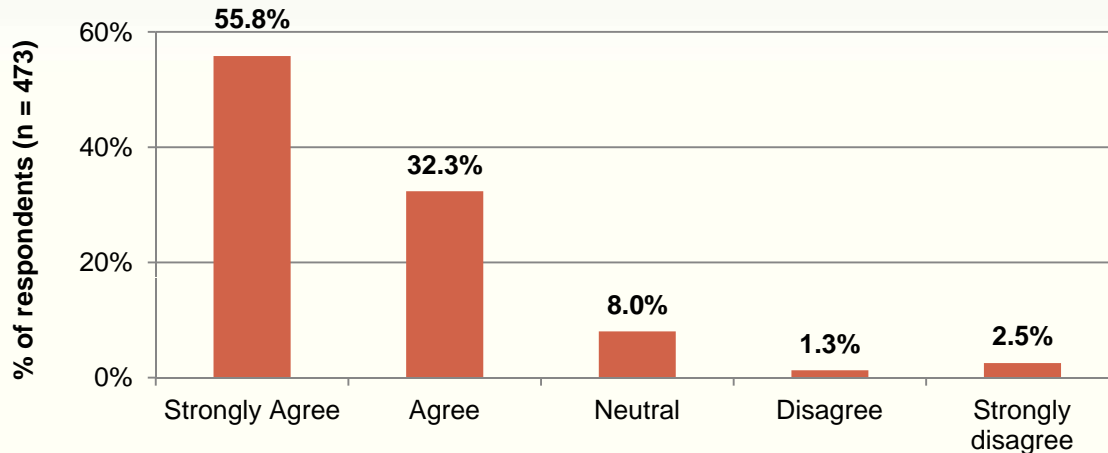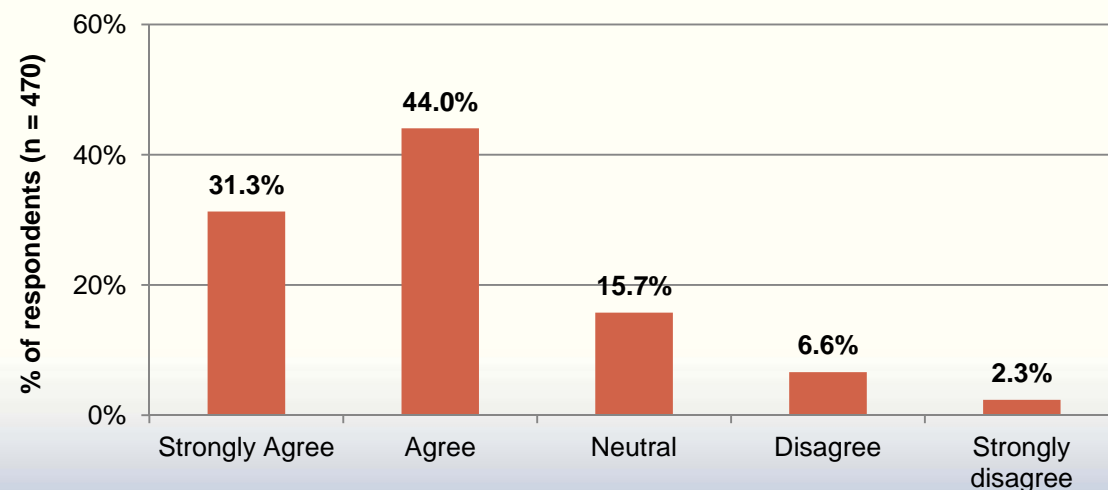
Impact of Bridges training

"The Bridges Out of Poverty training I received is relevant for my work."

The Bridges Out of Poverty training I received is relevant for my work chart:
- Strongly Agree: 55.8%
- Agree: 32.3%
- Neutral: 8.0%
- Disagree: 1.3%
- Strongly disagree: 2.5%

(% of respondents (n = 473))

- More than half of respondents (55.8%) strongly agreed that the Bridges training was relevant for their work, while an additional 32.3% agreed, resulting in a total of 88.2% of respondents in agreement.

"I learned new approaches to working with individuals and/or families with lived experience of poverty at the Bridges training."

I learned new approaches chart:
- Strongly Agree: 31.3%
- Agree: 44.0%
- Neutral: 15.7%
- Disagree: 6.6%
- Strongly disagree: 2.3%

(% of respondents (n = 470))

- 44% of respondents agreed that they learned new approaches to working with individuals and/or families with lived experience of poverty at the training, while an additional 31.3% strongly agreed.

Change of Attitude at Agency

- The majority of respondents noticed a change in attitude towards issues related to poverty at their place of work.
  - The majority noticed positive change.
  - Some did not notice any change at all (19%), and one respondent noted a negative change.
  - In some cases, the training reinforced attitudes and practices that were already established at the agency, so no change was noted.
  - Six respondents indicated this question was not applicable to them, either because of their role within the agency, or they had taken the training too recently to notice any changes yet.

Change of Attitude at Agency

1. **There is an increased awareness about the issues and barriers faced by people living in poverty.**

- Recognizing that poverty is not a choice.
- Staff are less judgmental, and more understanding, empathetic, and compassionate.
- Talking about the issues much more.

→ *"I have noticed changes not only in myself but in my staff members as well. I have observed a greater tolerance and understanding for decisions that these families may make that may be contrary to suggestion that we make. As a result an extra effort to dialogue with clients is made so that clients can make an informed decision."*

→ *"More understanding: greater tolerance and flexibility; greater awareness of issues: variety of approaches; more explicit teaching of the "hidden" skills; greater outreach services referrals and use.*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

14

Change of Attitude at Agency

→ *"A greater number seem to understand that it is often not a "choice" to live in poverty and that it can be more difficult than someone on the outside realizes to get out or change the 'cycle of poverty'."*

→ *"People are less judgmental. They often take a step back and think about situations from a different lens. Think twice about services provided before giving them and support those who can't afford things more to allow equal opportunity."*

→ *"People are much more educated about the topic, people are discussing it more, and when problem solving for a student, people are thinking about these issues."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Change of Attitude at Agency

2. Impact on service delivery

- Staff are more flexible and accommodating of client/student needs.

- Greater willingness to provide supports, and provide referrals to other community supports.

- Team discussions about how service delivery can be impacted.

- Staff are more cognizant of their own service delivery practices and attitudes.

- Celebrating the successes of clients/students.

→ *"a better understanding, more acceptance and greater supports to accommodate clients needs"*

→ *"50/50 split, some are making a more conscious effort to think about how we deliver service, others don't see how training applies to their work"*

→ *There is more awareness and acknowledgement of the challenges faced by many of our students and their incredible resilience in overcoming these challenges.*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Change of Attitude at Agency

3. Staff have become greater advocates

- Referencing information learned from Bridges on a regular basis.

- Getting involved in more initiatives (i.e. volunteering, going the extra mile).

- Would like to see more staff take the Bridges training – noticing a difference between staff that haven't taken the training.

→ *"I wish more people could go so that it could become an actual paradigm shift. It's hard to be the only person who attended and experiencing a paradigm shift and trying to pull colleagues along with me..."*

→ *"There are still staff who NEED the training that are quite strong in their opinions and easily influence those around them. It is imperative that everyone is trained and UNDERSTANDS what the training is all about. Some have had the training and still have such an awful attitude..."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Change of Attitude at Agency

Negative change from training

→ *"Some staff developed a harder edge to their attitude towards poverty and in fact became more strict around requirements for clients. Noticed some staff are saying that people are using poverty as an excuse. I have noticed many negative attitude changes among coworkers."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Note: The size of each word represents the frequency it was mentioned by respondents.
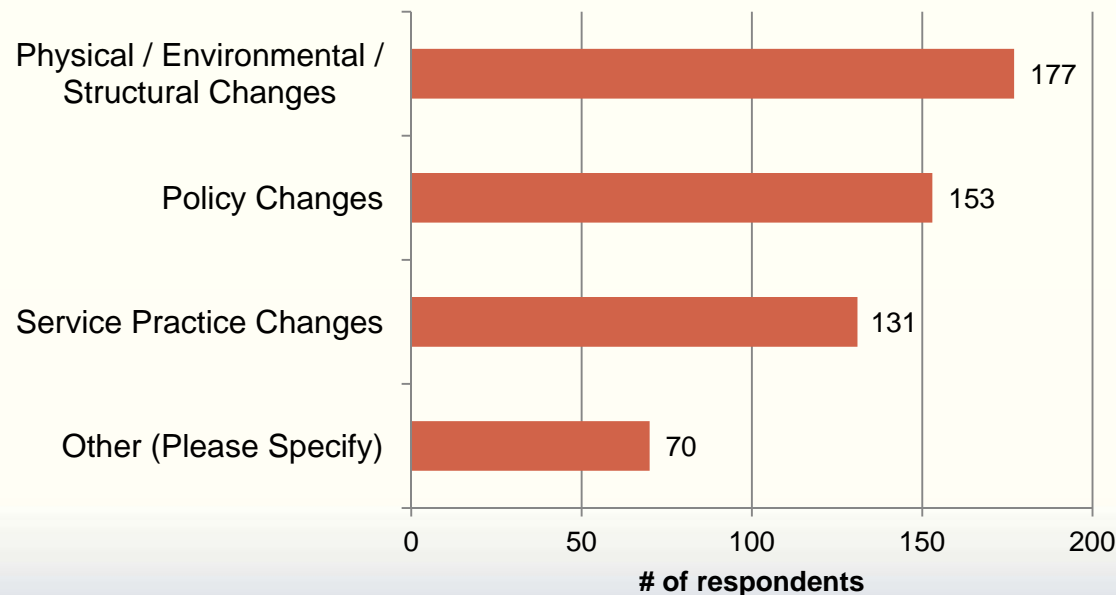
Reference: wordle.net

Changes in Agency Practices

Trained group

- 159 respondents provided an open-ended response describing changes that their agency has made following Bridges Out of Poverty training, for a total of 262 responses
  - However, 66 of those responses were "None/Don't Know/Unsure"

Respondents that indicated no change noted in agency practices following Bridges training

Category	# of respondents
Physical / Environmental / Structural Changes	177
Policy Changes	153
Service Practice Changes	131
Other (Please Specify)	70

# of respondents

Changes in Agency Practices

Physical / Environmental / Structural

- Changes to the reception area, such as:
  - Fewer plexiglass barriers; arrangements that are more conducive to client engagement; fewer pieces of literature.

- Considering geographical location and accessibility of offices/services that are more convenient for the client.

- Integrated service delivery:
  - On-site CAS; attendance counsellor; CYW; FNMI CYW; new Hub office.

- Additional comments included:
  - considerations to classroom structure; increasing accessibility with door ramps; and having more opportunities for students to access computers.

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Changes in Agency Practices

Policy

- Using innovative and/or strategic program planning
    - Health Equity Impact Assessment; Social Determinants of Health; Housing Retention Fund; poverty reduction strategy.

- More flexibility around policies and scheduling appointments
    - More leniency on forms and attendance; re-evaluated late policies; reviewing times for parent meetings; more cheque pickups in Midhurst.

- Joint planning for integrated service practice changes

- Incorporated into agency business practices
    - Operational planning; training program, discussion at team meetings.

- Identifying priority populations in program planning
    - *"Currently working on how to approach families of need and building rapport."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Changes in Agency Practices

Service Practice

- Raising awareness so staff can be more accommodating and sensitive to student/client needs; shift in attitude.
    - *"More free experiences (field trips) "*
    - *"Making bus passes available for job seeking"*
    - *"Changing the wording of recommending school supplies for students"*
    - *"There seems to be a bit of a change in attitudes from staff regarding poverty issues."*

- Providing refreshments, clothing and/or used items.
    - Eat Well to Excel; lunches; snack bins; clothing racks, clothing exchange.

- Enhancing customer service; better communication and building a rapport with the client/student
    - *"We build relationships prior to 'red tape' "*
    - *"More personal contact as opposed to written"*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Changes in Agency Practices

Service Practice con't

- Having more empathy and understanding with clients/students, giving consideration that they may be facing other issues
  - *"We are not being as strict with our rules and we are more aware of issues like addictions and mental health"*
  - *"Accommodate clients when they're late for appointments"*
  - *"Incorporating and assessing handouts for literacy levels"*
  - *"Don't assume parents have access to technology"*
- Referral information about other services
  - *"Have Food Bank information readily available"*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Changes to Own Service Delivery

- There were 275 responses from staff indicating changes to their own service delivery as a result of the Bridges Out of Poverty training
  - 50 responses indicated no change; however, some staff had taken the training too recently to make any significant changes.
  - Another 23 identified that the training was beneficial, and reinforced their current practices.

Changes to Own Service Delivery

1. Have an increased awareness and a better understanding of the needs and/or situations of clients/students/parents.

    - Have more empathy and understanding.

    - Use less judgment.

    - Make better connections and build better relationships with their clients/students/parents.

    - Have a better understanding of why clients/students make some of the decisions that they do.

    - Better understanding of their personal attitude and opinions.

    - Have food available *for clients/students.*

→ *"I have a better understanding of poverty issues and I believe that I am making more appropriate decisions about service delivery as a result."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

26

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Trained group

→ *"ABSOLUTELY!! The training has caused me to be more aware, more patient and more empathetic to the many challenges some of our families face everyday. My attitude has changed in many ways: I now welcome perpetually "late" students with a heart-felt smile and a "welcome"... I feel that I am now making more positive and constructive relationships with parents because (I think) I am better able to suspend my judgments, I now teach and give my students opportunities to learn and talk about differences, life stresses etc. I believe that I am a better teacher because of the Bridges training I have received."*

→ *"Ceasing to make a hasty conclusion before gathering more information from the client; more patience and time spent gathering the necessary information; assisting clients to provide the necessary information."*

→ *"More empathetic to students plights; much more awareness of the various situations; more willing to jump through hoops."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Changes to Own Service Delivery

2. Staff are more flexible.

- More lenient on some rules.
- Using flexibility within established policies.
- More flexible with appointment times, e.g. drop-ins.

→ *"It is far easier for me to understand student's perspectives now that I have had the Bridges training. I deal individually with students now, rather than having blanket policies."*

→ *"Greater commitment to providing options for meeting places - as well as a greater understanding of missed meetings and difficulty with follow-up."*

→ *I am much more understanding of students missing appointments, having different priorities, and the barriers they face. I've adapted my Outreach services to better suit their challenges. I also have more direct conversations with the students about these barriers and how we could work together to overcome some of them."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Changes to Own Service Delivery

3. Staff are providing better support

- Making more referrals to appropriate community services.
- Changing to more direct method of contact, e.g. less phone and more face-to-face.
- More accessible and available.
- Cognizant of language used, e.g. using more straight-forward and less administrative language.

→ *"I have become more knowledgeable about outside agency supports and share the information with families when they express a need."*

→ *"Reminder calls 2 days and day prior to appointment."*

→ *"Accessible and more accommodating to those presenting with immediate needs. Less telephone work, more direct service."*

→ *"Increase awareness of differences in language, sharing of ideas, speaking and relating to different lived experiences."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Changes to Own Service Delivery

4. Increased awareness in program and system planning

- More cognizant of marginalized populations in planning.
- Identifying gaps in community supports.
- Advocating for people living in low income.
- Advocating for more Bridges training.
- Tracking information differently.

→ *"More aware of importance of how to approach working with partners and planning related to service delivery."*

→ *"Renewed commitment to personally level the playing field for students who are living in poverty."*

→ *"Advocating for the inclusion of those living in poverty to be part of the decisions/process that could affect them, advocated for the need for all staff to attend Bridges out of Poverty training."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

COUNTY OF SIMCOE

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Trained group

5. No changes to service delivery

- No changes or not applicable (45 responses)

HOWEVER:

- Reinforced continued practice;
- Not yet (training was very recent).

→ *"No - although I am more aware of the issues - I do not deal directly with the public - I support my staff to consider poverty when planning initiatives - i.e. reducing barriers to accessing service."*

→ *"No. There were no strategies given for changes to service delivery at the training."*

→ *"Not at this point. Awaiting program planning and direction to come."*

→ *Already very familiar with the subject but was great to have the opportunity to step back and analyze it from the different view points. Great reinforcement of information I already use!"*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Trained group

6. Personal growth

- Staff have a better understanding of their own personal attitude and opinions.

→ *"I have become more aware of how much I take for granted in my life and have a new appreciation for how those less fortunate have been able to adapt. I also became more aware of how difficult it would be for a homeless person to hold onto their belongings and to carry bags of cans from a food bank. I knew these things before, but it was a good reminder."*

→ *"Having just taken the course two weeks ago, I would like to believe that my personal ethical values defines who I am and therefore reflects how I value and respect the students I work with, as well as my co-workers."*

→ *"Better understanding of client life cycles; better understanding of my own social location and experiences of poverty."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Staff Face Barriers

- More than one-third of respondents (37.8%) indicated that they have faced barriers that have prevented them from adopting new approaches to working with individuals and/or families with lived experience of poverty in their place of work, such as location, transportation, attitudes etc..

No
62.3%

+

Yes
37.8%

=

Face
Barriers
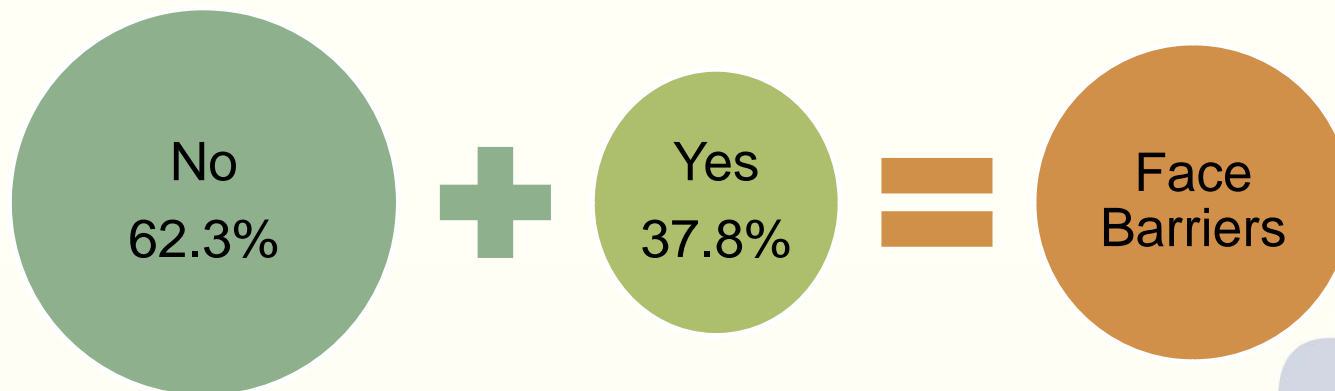
Barriers facing staff

1. **Service or information is not accessible for the needs of the clients/students/parents.**

    - **<u>Transportation</u>**, appropriate literacy levels, electronic resources, office hours and location.

    → *"Transportation is difficult within our large geographical area. It can make it impossible for clients to attend our services. Our service area does not go out into client homes as a rule."*

    → *"The lack of transportation is an issue. Also our office locations and hours can be difficult for clients."*

    → *"Lack of access to technology (expectations of school: students to be able to be on-line at home)."*

    → *""There is a lack of method(s) in place for instilling a sense of pride for a client, in regards to their accommodations, their abilities, skills, etc."*

    Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Barriers facing staff

2. Current policies, procedures, process and/or eligibility requirements are limiting.

- Service delivery is limited by agency, funding, or provincial guidelines;
- Staff lack the autonomy to make "out of the box" decisions to address the unique needs of their clients or students;
- Inter-agency bureaucracy is limiting and frustrating.

→ *"Certain curriculum expectations that teachers will not bend on."*

→ *"Need to continue with existing programming so opportunities to be more innovative are not always present*

→ *Existing organizational structures of programs have limits to their ability to address these concerns under current models."*

→ *"Internal policies related to sharing information and/or eliciting further assistance from caseworkers or other community coordinators."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Barriers facing staff

3. Financial and other resource shortages.

- To support more staff, training, physical resources (e.g. car seats), subsidies, programs, outreach, etc.

- Staff are "*spread thin*" with "*too much on their work plans*" and need "*more time to truly reflect and integrate*" Bridges into their work.

→ *"So busy all the time just do what can be done and sometimes have to go too fast."*

→ *"Limited resources as an agency which limits us being able to offer more services which would be ideal."*

→ *"More resources to give to children in need AND more staff (Teachers & EAs) to reduce staff student ratio & be available for the extra attention/caring needed for students."*

→ *"Workload and inability to explore, develop, and implement effective programming to support Bridges."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

4. Lack of understanding from colleagues or staff from other agencies who haven't taking the training.

-   Staff notice a shift in their own attitude and approach to working with clients/students after taking the training, and notice a difference in attitude from their colleague's and staff from other agencies that haven't participated in the training.

→ *"My own paradigm shifted, I feel I'm more forgiving of certain things (pick my battles) and colleagues don't always understand why... the workshop is so powerful you can't relay the information in the same way at work..."*

→ *"Attitudes of others who have not attended the training."*

→ *"Lack of understanding by some other community agencies and partners who have not received training."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Barriers facing staff

5. Clients/students have complex issues and needs that require in-depth and multifaceted support.

■ Staff require time, commitment, and resources to provide adequate and appropriate support.

■ Staff don't always know how to help or how to make a connection.

■ Often a lack of or long wait list for community service referrals.

→ *"Difficult reaching some parents/family members (various barriers)."*

→ *"I don't know what agencies or who to direct families to for low income housing. One of my student is living in a motel presently!"*

→ *We don't always know if a child is living in poverty. We don't really know what our options are beyond providing food at school.*

→ *Lack of services in Simcoe County to help families and all individuals involved dealing with not only poverty but struggling with drug, alcohol, and mental disease. And the amount of time it takes to get care and service in the area is way too long."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Trained group

6. Changes need to happen at the organizational and systemic levels - which will take a long time.

- Staff recognize that a change in attitude is not enough; noticeable changes need to occur broadly.

→ *"A shift in perception to embrace a more optimistic one from the department would assist our school in working with students and families who are financially disadvantaged."*

→ *"It is a cultural shift that will take many years to achieve."*

→ *"Slow pace of change within organization."*

→ *"The information alone does not change behaviour, other organizational supports and discussions must occur."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

7. Lack of integrated planning.

- Need more evidence and data to inform program planning and a better understanding of key issues.
- There is a disconnect between management/decision-makers and front-line service delivery.
- Need more direction about how to implement learned concepts.

→ *"Change takes time, need more evidence around how to implement programs. Need more evidence to support the need to take time to develop relationship and gather "lived experience" data in inform program planning."*

→ *"The attitudes of the decision-makers who don't really understand the urgency of needs for our clients."*

→ *"Level of readiness, lack of direction."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

1. More training and communication

- **Expand training to more staff, agencies, Boards, and the community**, and include more in the curriculum (anti-oppression, anti-racism, asset-based development).

- More communication: about Bridges, and how Bridges concepts have been implemented at other agencies.

- What are the next steps?

→ *"…additional training that covers putting words into action would be helpful…additional training just as a refresher… to continue change."*

→ *"If teams could share their program modifications since the workshops that would give others ideas for implementation."*

→ *"Increased staff capacity, knowledge exchange, direction or framework for action."*

→ *Monthly e-mails with updates or short stories about Bridges will help to keep poverty in the forefront of peoples mind."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Trained group

2. Service planning: agency and community

- Integrated service planning and delivery, e.g. co-location of services.

- Updating policies and procedures.

- Address issues of poverty broadly, e.g. child care, transportation, hunger.

- Create a reference guide of community agencies.

- Support the needs of the <u>client</u> more.

→ *"Lack of streamlined processes, still too many duplicate forms for clients to complete, and no clear definition for the clients on where/how to access resources."*

→ *"Need for capacity to allow for more staff time and letting go of other planned activities directed at either the general public or other sub populations. Need to engage with those agencies that are directly involved to better understand how to develop more inclusive access."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Trained group

3. More fiscal resources

- More funding, more staff, more time.

- Subsidies: field trips, bus passes.

- Funding to support programs to reach low-income and working poor people.

→ *"additional grants/funding through agencies to support student participation in activities/trips etc."*

→ *"more funding for programs which implement new approaches to reach individuals and families with lived experience of poverty."*

→ *"computers with internet access for all; lots of city bus passes."*

→ *"funding for professional support e.g. social workers, EAs, student advisors, FNMI supports, SERTs [Special Education Resource Teacher]."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

4. Operational Ideas

- Better accessibility of services e.g. transportation, appointment times that are more accommodating for people.

- Access to computers.

- Offering workshops for clients, building a sense of community.

- More drop-in services or community outreach.

→ *"I think we could review appointment times to be more accommodating for people."*

→ *"bus passes for students; public transportation around and out of Alcona."*

→ *"Connect with Good Food Box to be a pickup spot; make bus pass available to all OW clients instead of just for medical appointments"*

→ *"increasing the amount of drop in clinics and decreasing the amount of scheduled clinics."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Additional Supports/Resources

5. More support and acceptance of change

- Support from administration/management.

- Commitment.

→ *"They need an openness to change and to adapt our approach from a big agency approach to a small town approach. More personal adaptation according to the needs of the clients. I'm not sure what supports or recourses could be used to achieve this."*

→ *"staff need to be empowered to get families help...I think we need to be more pro active and less reactive…"*

→ *"Training also needs to be provided to Board of Directors to allow them to be more proactive in policy changes that may required and to understand why staff are or have made changes to the way they work with individuals and families living in poverty."*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Additional Feedback

- The vast majority of respondents expressed their appreciation of having the opportunity to engage in the training, and stressed its value, and the value of having a person with lived experience as part of the presentation panel.

- Many felt that the training should be offered more widely to staff at more agencies, and on a regular basis, i.e. refresher information.

- The few negative comments included:

→ *I found it very hard to buy into the message of this program. 1- not applicable to my job. 2- there were so many things that I just didn't agree with. Maybe 'coming out of poverty' myself I have a different perspective.*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Additional Feedback (con't)

→ *This training reinforced stereotypes of people living in poverty. There was a large feeling amongst the group that we left feeling an "us vs. them" mentality… I think the program is developed from a middle class mindset and needs to be enhanced to be more effective.*

→ *I was quite disappointed with the overall workshop. I was looking for strategies on how to work with students who are living in poverty…the entire day focused on discussing what the families living in poverty were going through…in the future, I recommend that there be more structure to the workshop with guest speakers or more knowledgeable and experienced people talking about the background and strategies of how us as educators can bridge the gap between those living in poverty and those who are able to live without social assistance.*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Trained group

→ *There needs to be a support based approach as to what services are available in our community and to whom they apply. Maybe even a training course for kids that live in poverty and a way to uplift them to potential possibilities that are available. Obviously it could not be called Bridges Out of Poverty, but maybe something more along the lines of Community Support Networks for Students. Just a thought.*

→ *I really enjoyed the program and found several parts of it informative and appreciated the insight and have modified how I react to situations throughout the school. I do however have a BIG problem with the facilitation/facilitators telling the audience that we should be ok and not be offended when a parent comes in swearing and being rude and disrespectful to staff. I fully understand the stress and strain that our families are under, but I do not see that as a reason or an excuse to allow that type of behaviour or abuse. As that is truly what it is. This is a great program but that would be the only thing negative I had to say about it. Thank you for allowing for my feedback.*

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Conclusions

- **Staff are GETTING IT: the training is raising their awareness and having an impact on their attitudes, and their service delivery.**

- **Staff want more training**
  - It should be broader and more inclusive.
  - Should include strategies of how to implement the concepts.

- **Change needs to be systemic, not just at the level of the individual staff person.**
  - Agency level
  - Community level
  - Staff are noticing the barriers their clients are facing (policy, gaps in community supports, waitlists).
  - Integrated planning and service delivery, when applicable.

Questionnaire *(p. 1-2)*

Bridges Implementation Assessment 2013

1. Have you received any Bridges Out of Poverty training?

☐ Yes, I attended a 1-day orientation training session.   If yes, proceed to Question 2 and Question 3

☐ Yes, I received training within my own agency.

☐ No, I have not received any Bridges Out of Poverty training.   If no, skip to Question 4 and Question 5

2. How long ago did you receive your training?

○ 0-4 Months ago

○ 5-12 Months ago

○ Over 12 Months ago

3. Did your agency require you to receive Bridges Out of Poverty training?

○ Yes

○ No

4. If not, what has prevented you from receiving Bridges Out of Poverty training?

☐ No opportunities were available through my agency

☐ Training was not geographically accessible

☐ Lack of time

☐ Other (please specify)

5. Would you be interested in receiving Bridges Out of Poverty training in the future?

○ Yes   skip to Question 15

○ No

(please explain why or why not)

Bridges Implementation Assessment 2013

6. Who hosted your orientation?

☐ Simcoe County District School Board

☐ Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

☐ Childrens Aid Society

☐ Social and Community Services, County of Simcoe

☐ Other (please specify)

7. Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Strongly disagree" and 5 being "Strongly agree"

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Bridges Out of Poverty training I received is relevant for my work.	○	○	○	○	○
I learned new approaches to working with individuals and/or families with lived experience of poverty at the Bridges training.	○	○	○	○	○

8. Please describe any changes that your agency has made in the following areas as a result of Bridges Out of Poverty training:

Physical/Environmental/Structural Changes:

Policy Changes:

Service Practice Changes:

Other (Please Specify)

9.

Check if there has been no change:

☐ Physical/Environmental/Structural Changes

☐ Policy Changes

☐ Service Practice Changes

☐ Other (Please Specify)

10. Have you made any changes in your own service delivery as a result of the Bridges Out of Poverty training? Please describe.

Bridges Implementation Assessment 2013

11. If you have noticed any change in the attitude of staff towards the issue of poverty at your place of work as a result of the Bridges Out of Poverty training, what changes have you observed?

12. Are there any barriers that have prevented you from adopting new approaches to working with individuals and/or families with lived experience of poverty in your place of work? (i.e Location, Transportation, Attitudes etc..)

○ Yes   if yes, proceed to Q13 and Q14, then proceed to Q15
○ No   if no, skip straight to Q15

13. What barriers have you experienced that have prevented you or your agency from adopting any new approaches to working with individuals and/or families with lived experience of poverty at your place of work?

14. Are there additional supports/resources that if available, would assist your organization to implement any new approaches to working with individuals and/or families with lived experience of poverty?

15. What best describes your work environment?

○ Front Line
○ Administration
○ Management
○ Other (please specify):

Bridges Implementation Assessment 2013

16. What best describes the sector of your agency?

○ Education
○ Public health
○ Mental health
○ Child welfare
○ Municipal government
○ Children's services
○ Other (please specify)

17. How interested are you in participating in further poverty reduction initiatives?

○ Very Interested
○ Moderately interested
○ Not at all interested

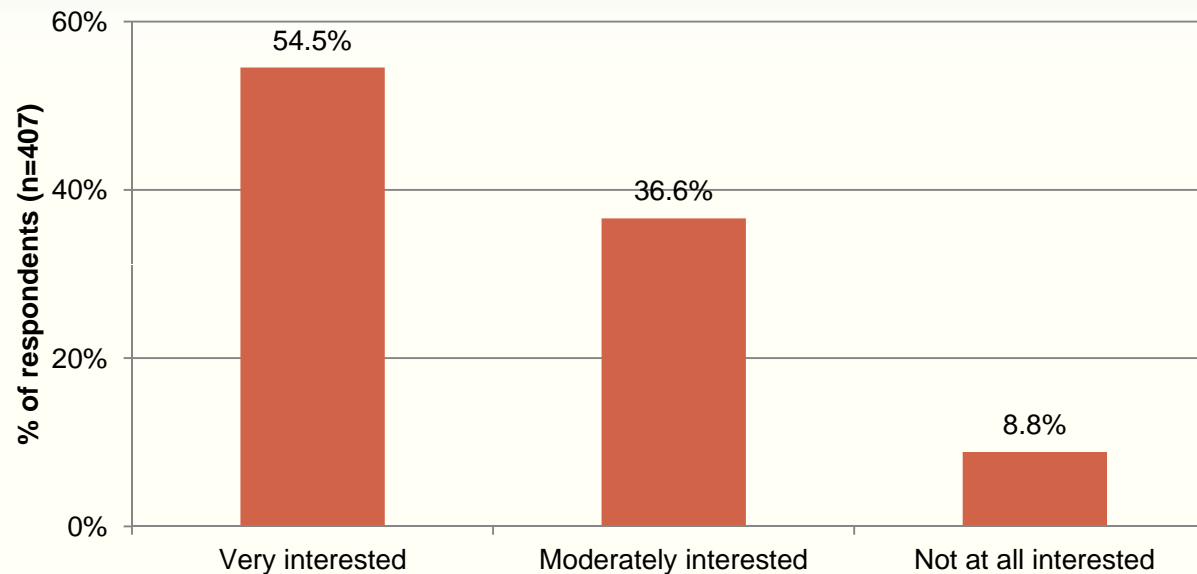**18. Is there any other feedback that you wish to provide about the Bridges Out of Poverty training?**

Thank you for completing our survey!

Further poverty reduction initiatives

How interested are you in participating in further poverty reduction initiatives?

- More than half of respondents (54.5%) were very interested in participating in further poverty reduction initiatives, while more than a third (36.6%) were moderately interested.

- Only 8.8% were not at all interested.

Next Steps

- **Present full findings to Basic Needs Task Group and Bridges Leadership Council**

- **Determine the appetite:**
  - For ongoing Bridges training within Coalition member agencies
  - For strategic investment in maintaining trainer competency

- **Bridges training has demonstrated impact at both service delivery and policy levels.**

Opportunity to capitalize on the momentum

achieved through the Bridges initiative

in support of poverty reduction

as a key strategic direction for the Coalition