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Effective Group Leadership:
More than Tea, Biccies and a Chat
Wendy Melia: Alzheimer's Australia NSW

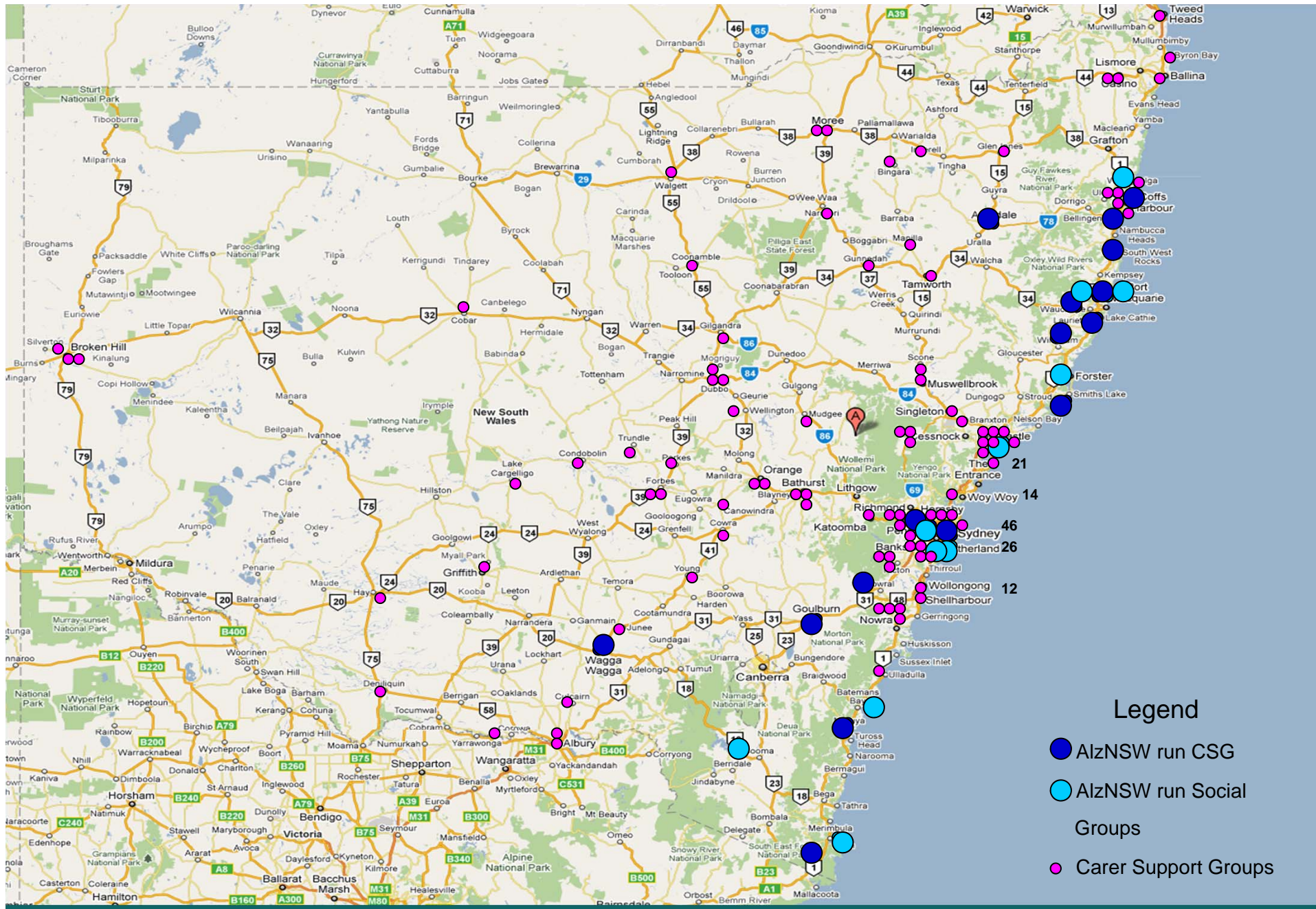


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Outline for Today

The purpose of today is to report on the ongoing effects of the Carer Support Group Leadership training for group leaders in NSW and their groups.

- Statistics on support groups
- Background research
- Findings of the Group Leadership Program Evaluation survey





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Aim of the Quality Support Groups Research Project

Investigate and document what
constitutes quality in a dementia
carers support group in NSW

Effective Group Leadership Workshops



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- Introduction to Group Work Leadership
- Advanced Group Leadership
- Grief, Loss and Dementia Carer Support Groups
- Group Leaders' Forum

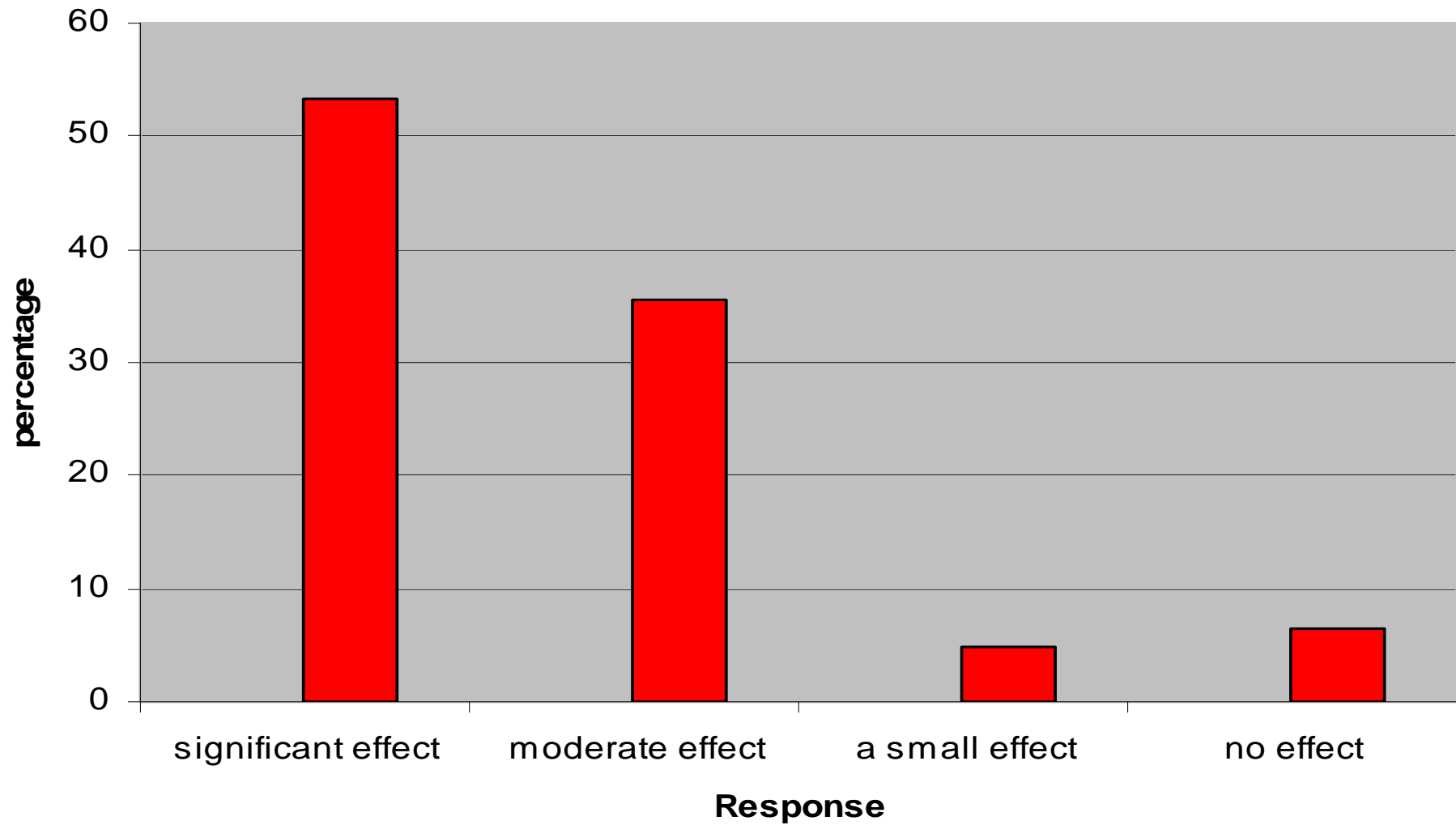
Group Leadership Program Evaluation Survey



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- Setting up the group
- Planning processes
- Group work skills and practices
- Communication skills
- Working with challenging topics
- Working with challenging situations
- Self care

The way you set up your group



Benefits of Group Guidelines



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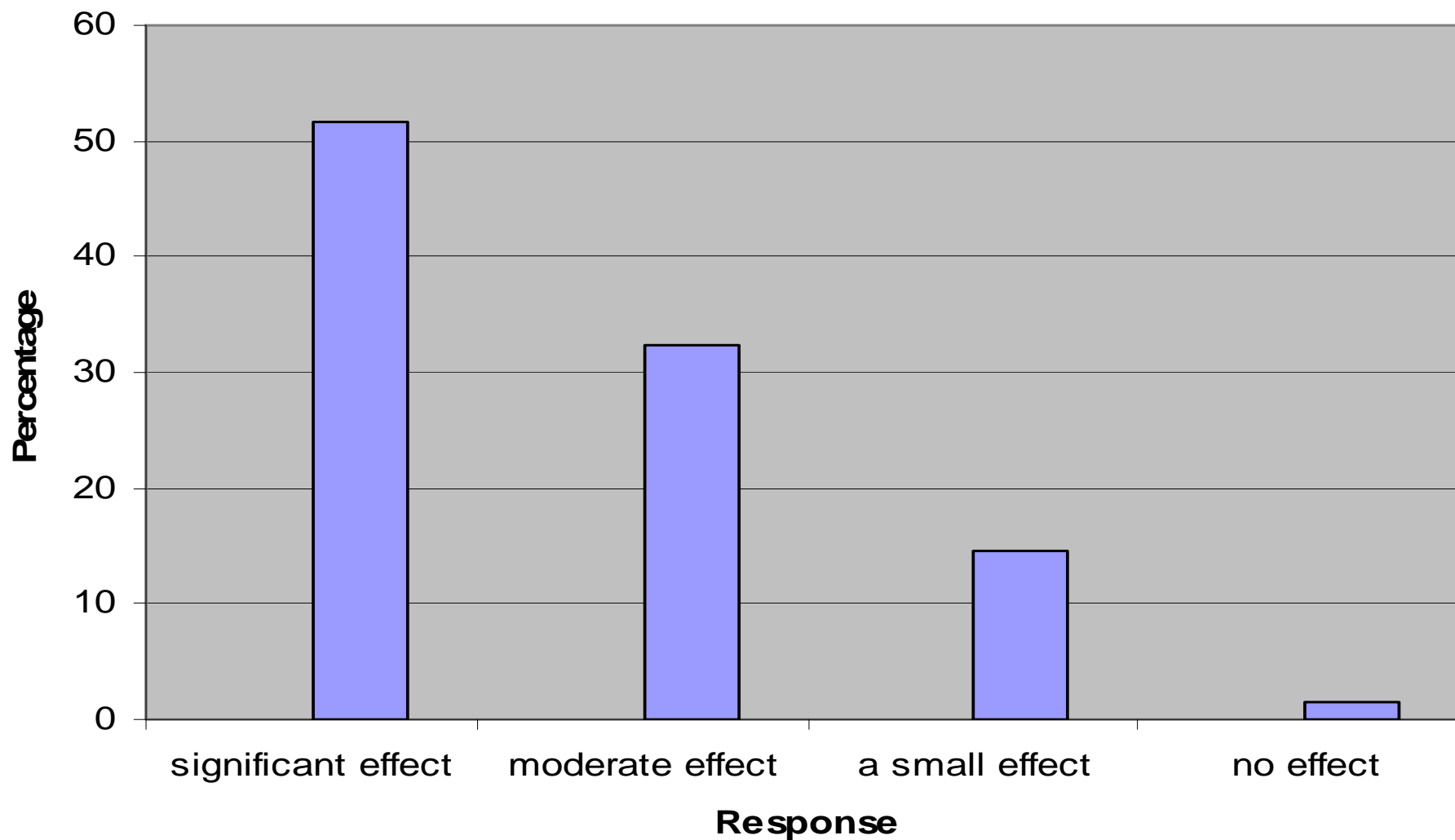
Group Members

- Were more open to share and contribute
- Group interaction and cohesion increased

Leader

- Increased confidence
- Less stress

The way you plan your sessions



Planning Cycle



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Session Reports



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- Helped leaders identify key factors for improvement and change
- Assisted with evaluations and future planning
- Supported the role of the group leader
- Provided data for organisational and funding body reports

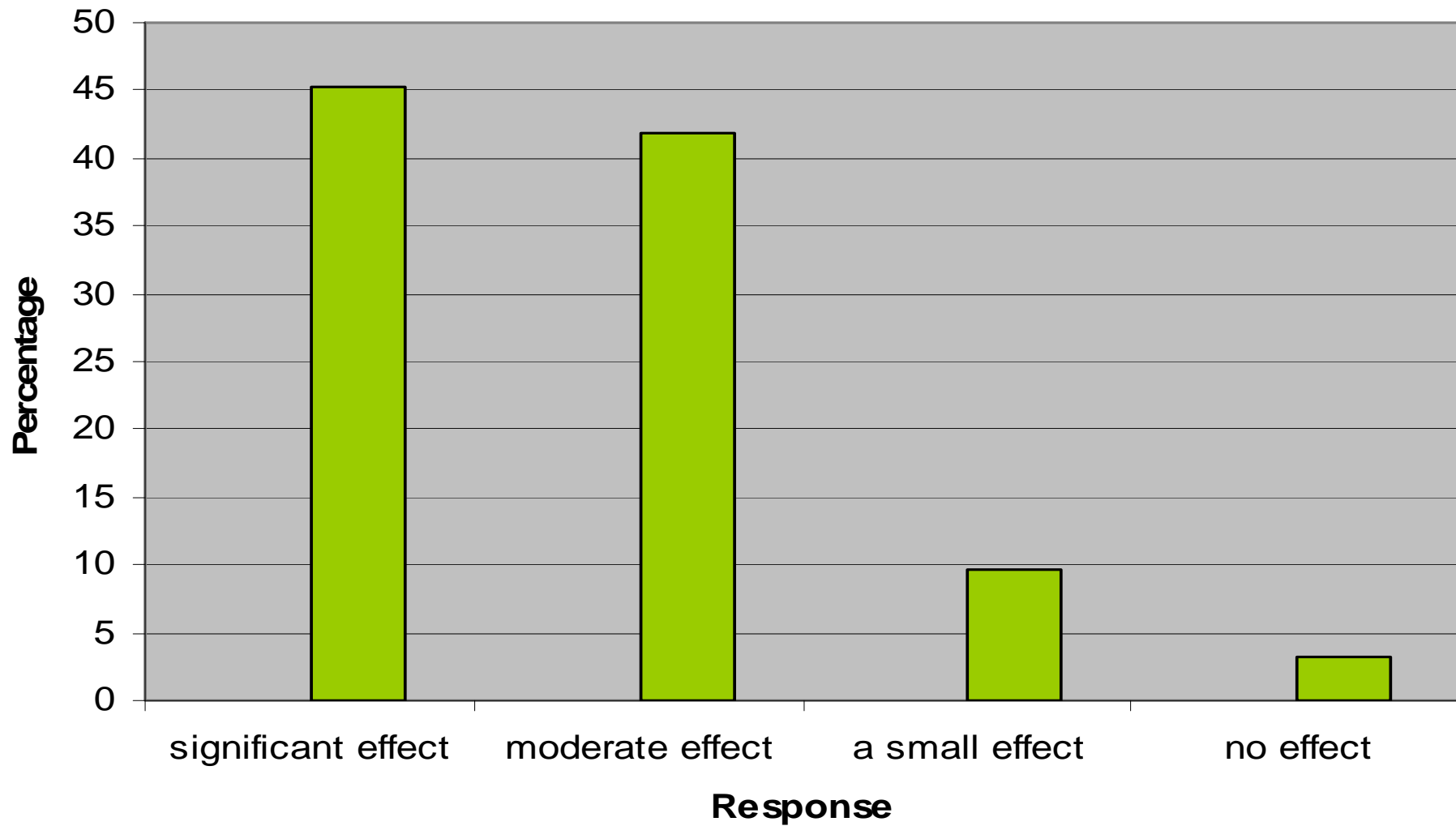
Evaluations



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- An essential part of programming and future planning
- Necessary to identify if the group members needs, and the aims and objectives of the program were being met
- A useful tool for continuous improvement

The processes/practices you use within the group





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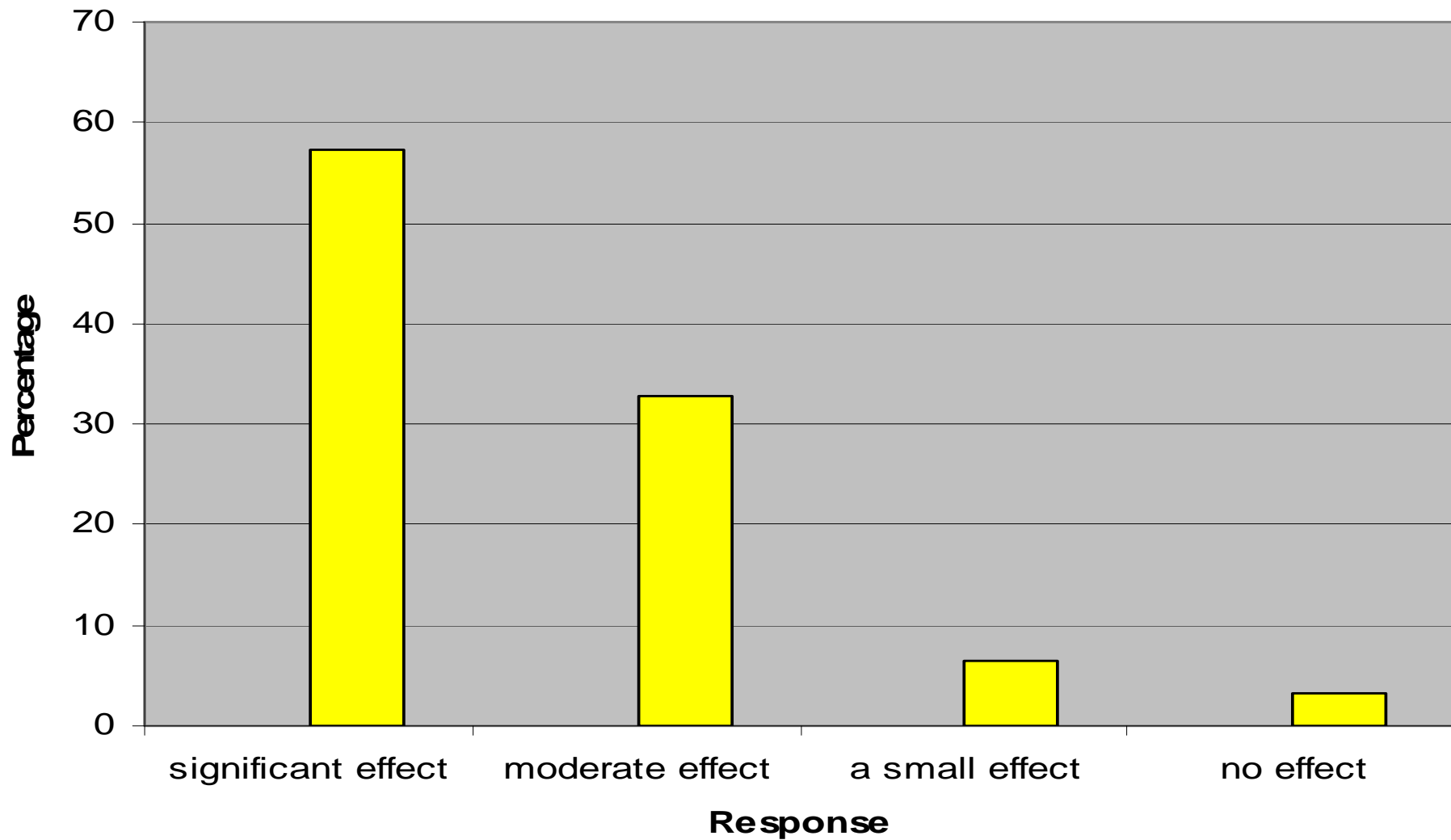
Processes and Practices used in Group



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- Allonomous and autonomous interaction
- Questioning techniques
- Task and maintenance roles

The way you communicate with members



Mutual Aid in Groups



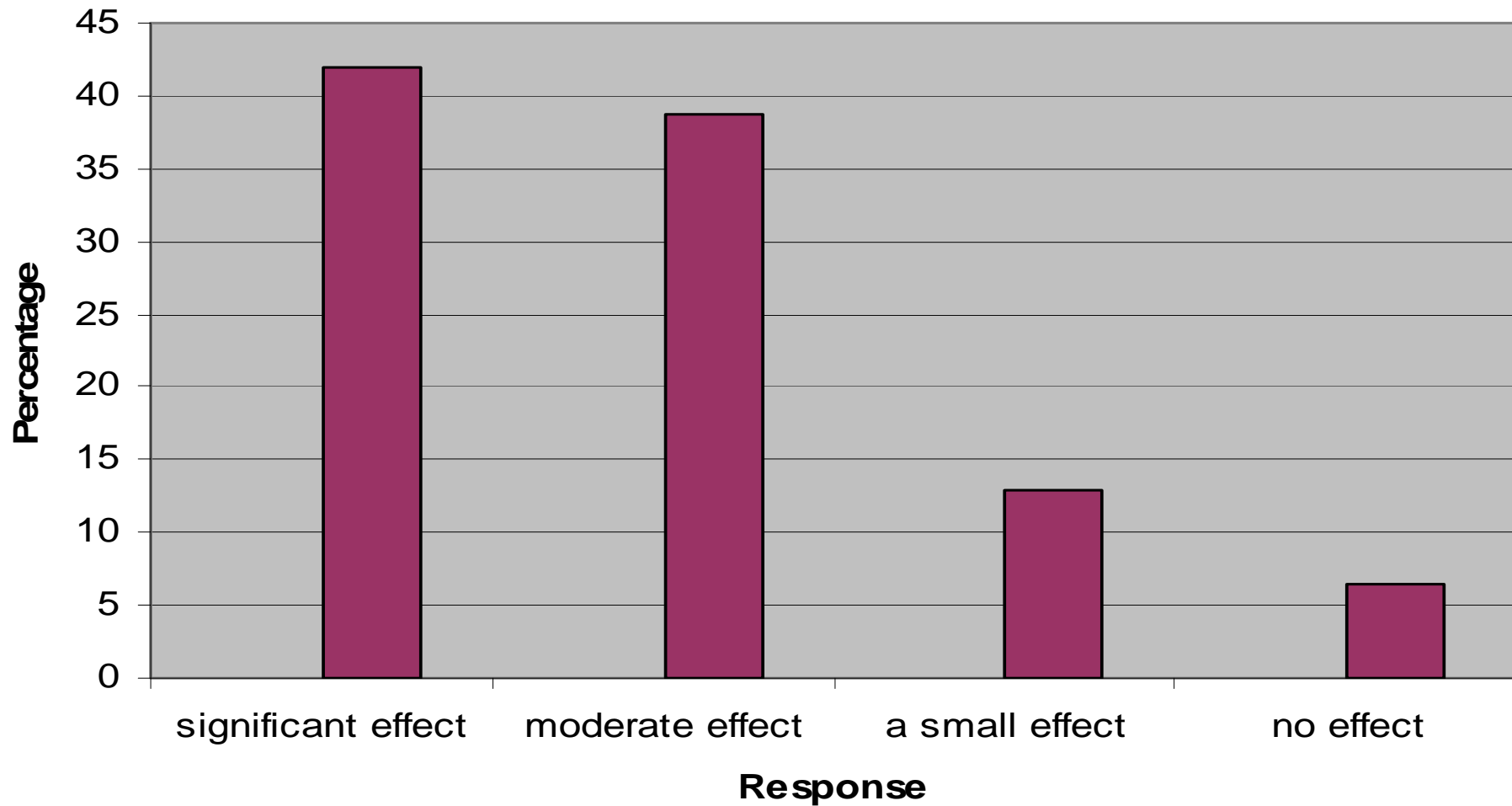
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- Improved dynamics and strengthened relationships between group members
- Provided an opportunity for reciprocity
- Helped with group cohesion as members accepted greater ownership of the group

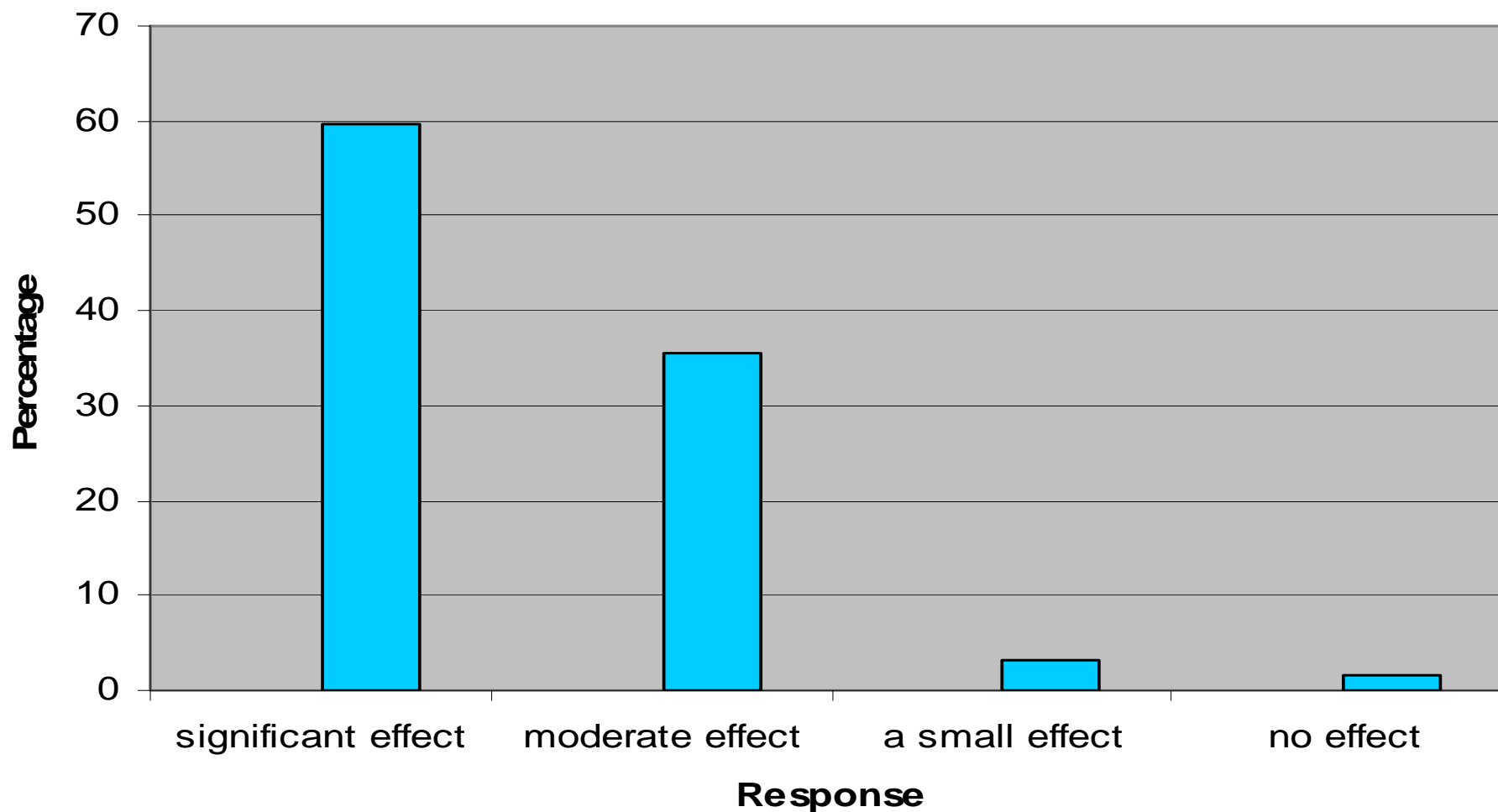


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The methods you use to guide group members through difficult topics



The strategies you have learned to manage challenging group situations



Group Management Strategies



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- Cutting Off
- Drawing Out
- Silence
- Working with Emotions



Working with Emotions



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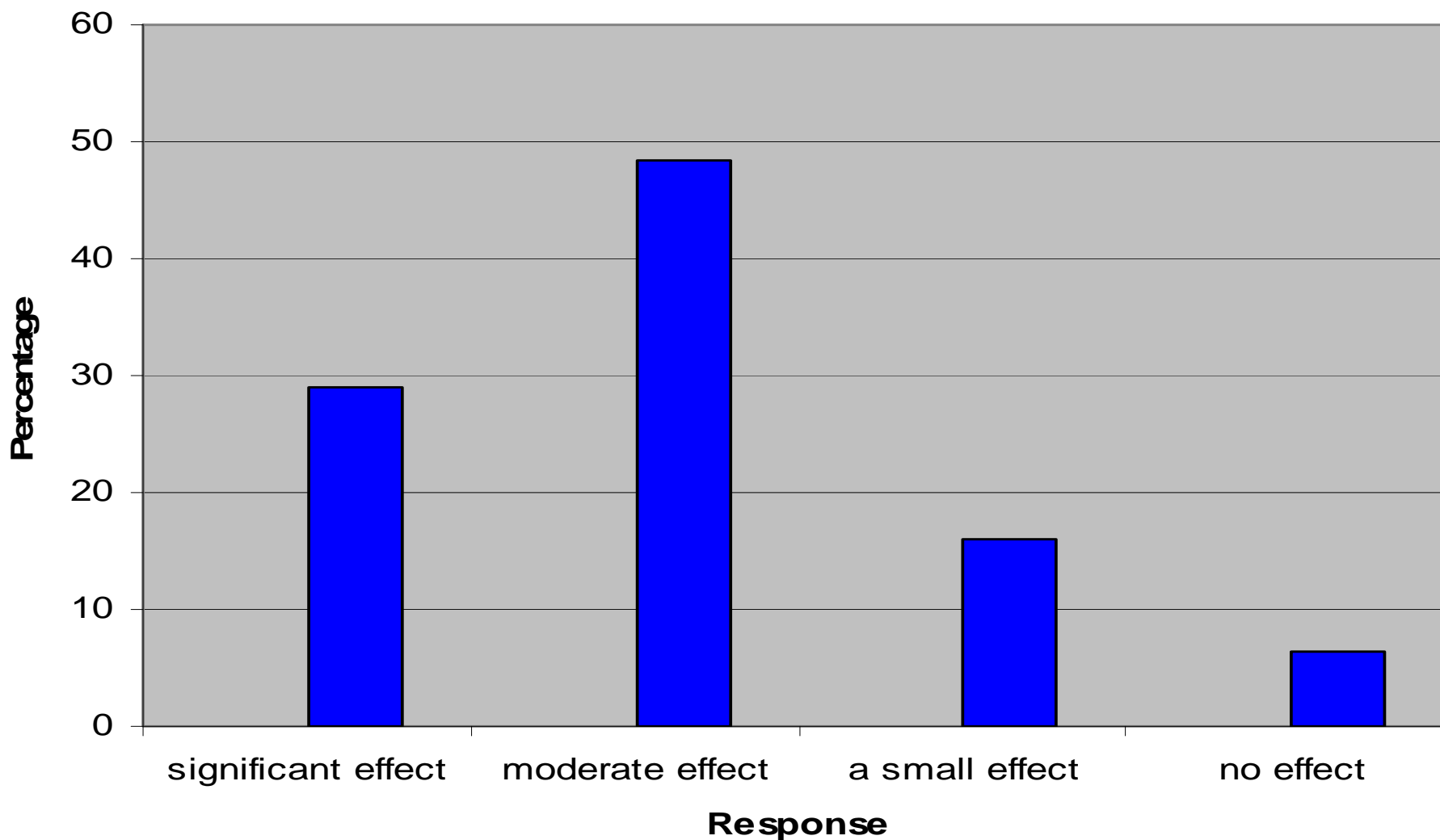
- Respond rather than react to those in grief
- Normalise feelings
- Spend more time with emotional group members in group time
- Not feel the pressure to “fix” group members if they cried



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- **“The use of silence has improved since my education; I now no longer feel the need to fill every silence with advice or comforting noises(but) that we value what they are saying enough to listen in respectful silence!”**

How to take care of yourself as a group leader



Self Care for Leaders



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Co-leadership

Debriefing

Supervision

Personal boundaries
and relaxation





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“Debriefing has played a major role in my continuation of being a leader. This eliminates taking any baggage back to the office or home with you.”

“Supervision was a great asset for problem solving and bouncing ideas around. Also getting positive support and advice about group dynamics.”

“The most important personal lesson I have learnt after the training is to “leave work at work” I find walking is an excellent release for de-stressing.”

Overall Findings



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Would you recommend the AlzNSW
Group Leadership training to other
group leaders?

100%

Summary



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Group Leaders who attended training are:

- More confident in a range of group work skills
- Better able to respond to challenging situations
- Relieved to have clearer boundaries
- More aware of the need for self care strategies



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Thank you