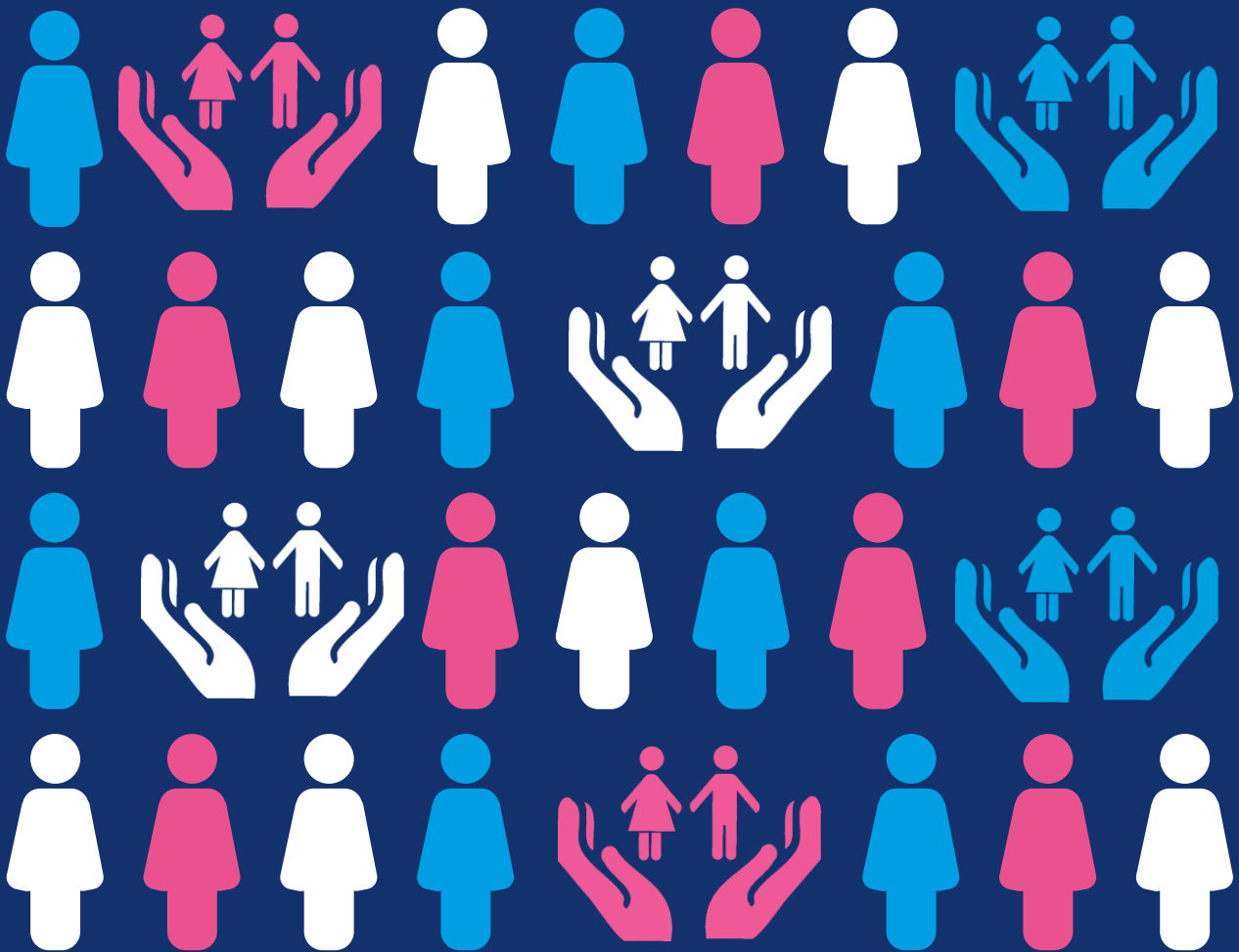


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# Appendix 1.0

## Wellbeing and group support sessions: evaluation of feedback

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**Group Support and Wellbeing Session:  
Evaluation Report – April 2021**

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## Introduction

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As part of the emergency Covid Funding secured from the Home Office SafeLives were asked to provide clinical supervision to the staff of domestic abuse organisations and to address the heightened wellbeing and mental health needs of those staff as a result of the pandemic.

Feedback from colleagues working on the frontline had highlighted the increased pressures domestic abuse (DA) services are facing during the second Covid wave and subsequent lockdown. Workloads have not only increased but in many cases the complexity and level of violence has also increased. Additional pressures of home schooling, having to work from home and a loss of normal coping strategies means there is a greater risk of low morale, stress and anxiety.

SafeLives wanted to ensure we were agile and responsive to this crisis as part of our 'Staying Safe at Home' work. With the additional funding from the Home Office, we commissioned Rock Pool C.I.C to develop a support and wellbeing offer to frontline DA practitioners in England and Wales. The objective of this offer is to increase resilience and morale at a time of immense pressure, enabling services to remain available and sustainable for clients.



To ensure the most efficient and effective use of the funding provided, a targeted approach was developed (see above).

## Overview of Supervision offer and uptake

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The 1:1 supervision offer was based on need, with individuals requiring this more intensive support identified through the support and wellbeing groups.

Seven individuals requested clinical supervision; each being offered up to four sessions. This was provided by an independent BACP registered clinician and arranged with the individuals at a time to suit them.

## Overview of the Resilience Self Help Tool

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The resilience self-help tool will be widely available on our website and community platform and free to access for anyone. This tool will remain available indefinitely and provides a legacy for the work once funding has ended. The Resilience Tool (developed by Rock Pool C.I.C) comprises of a pre-recorded video highlighting and reassuring individuals of the different emotional responses and coping strategies they may have experienced during COVID 19. It legitimises the distress they may have experienced while working from home with increasing caseloads. It also describes ways to reframe coping strategies and positive lifestyles, while acknowledging the pressures on front line workers. There is an e-book to

download which has five chapters focusing on being safe, keeping connected, understanding resilience, nurturing environments and understanding emotions and healthy relationships. All aimed to promote self-care and with practical tools to support individuals. This will be available and promoted through our networks and social media channels.

## Overview of the group support and wellbeing session

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### **Aim of the groups:**

To increase resilience and morale for frontline DA professionals

### **About the groups:**

- Developed in partnership with RockPool, a specialist trauma and wellbeing organisation for domestic abuse
- Two hour sessions with groups of up to 10
- Facilitated by two experienced SafeLives Associates
- A safe, confidential and reflective space to discuss the current challenges with peers
- Practical tools, developed for the groups, are provided to attendees, including grounding techniques and wellbeing approaches

SafeLives provided a total of 57 support and wellbeing group sessions to frontline workers between January and March 2021, and two sessions were cancelled due to low attendee numbers and/or staff illness. Sessions were attended by 325 people working for 121 different organisations. The largest proportion of organisations accessing support have been within the domestic abuse sector. However, there have been a number of statutory agencies that employ frontline Domestic Abuse staff that have also accessed this support.

The two-hour sessions had up to 10 participants and explored practical tools for managing vicarious trauma and resilience.

## Methodology

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A short anonymous feedback survey was shared with the participants at the end of the group support and wellbeing session. The survey was completed by 111 participants. Respondents were asked seven questions related to the key objectives and outcomes of the session. Three questions were answered on a standard 5-point Likert scale, one question ranging from 'Not at all' to 'Extremely' Useful and the other two questions gave a statement where respondents could choose from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. The final two questions called for 'open-ended' written responses and gave an opportunity to feedback on the most useful aspects of the session and leave any other general comments. The feedback survey was captured using Survey Monkey and the data exported to Excel for analysis.

One of the limitations of this methodology highlights that the feedback survey was filled in on a voluntary basis by participants at the end of the session, thus the respondents' sample size is not representative of all the participants. In this way, it is not possible to determine the full impact of the session on all participants and there may be other factors influencing outcomes which were not measured as part of this study. Analyses are intended to explore and collect the experiences of the participants, providing insights on the session and helping to understand its impact.

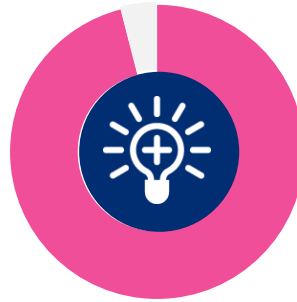
## Main Findings



**84%**

of respondents found the session **extremely useful** or **very useful**. No one said they found it to be not useful at all

**94%**

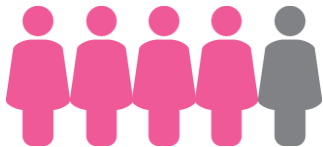


of respondents agreed that **the practical tools would be useful to them**



**56%**

of respondents said the most useful aspect of the session was **having a safe and confidential space to discuss and share challenges with peers**



**83%**

of respondents were **likely** or **extremely likely** to **recommend the session to a colleague**

“

“Thank you for hosting these, it makes a big difference to be able to reflect with people who understand our line of work and the difficulties we face. I will be recommending all my staff to join on a session.”

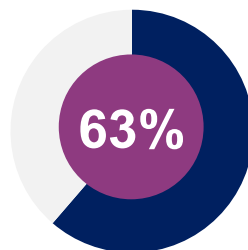


**None**

of the respondents found the session to be **not useful at all**.



of respondents agreed that **the session will have a positive impact on their morale**



of respondents who left a general comment **gave thanks for the useful session and brilliant work**



“I really enjoyed speaking and listening to the facilitators today, I thought that they had really good understandings as to what would be affecting us as DV practitioners working in lockdown.”

The group support and wellbeing session focused on three main outcomes, reflected in the question asked post-session:

- Staff taking part in group wellbeing sessions will have improved wellbeing, resilience and morale.
- SafeLives are agile and responsive to needs of frontline services at a time of unprecedented pressure.
- Improved engagement with community platform and insight to pressure on services.

The 111 responses and comments received were overwhelmingly positive and a summary can be seen below and quotes from the survey are shown throughout the report. A full breakdown of responses to each question can be found in the Appendix.

“ I really enjoyed the group interaction. I like to hear other people’s experiences across the country that can be similar or different to mine as a DA practitioner. It helps me feel less alone and more like my experience is normal.

When asked to rate how useful respondents found the session, more than four-fifths (84%) of respondents found it extremely useful or very useful, less than one fifth (14%) moderately useful and two respondents (2%) slightly useful. No one said they had found the session to be not useful at all.

Respondents were asked how likely they will recommend the session to a colleague on a rating scale where 0 was not likely and 10 was extremely likely. Four-fifths (83%) of respondents answered 8 or higher with no one giving an answer below 5.

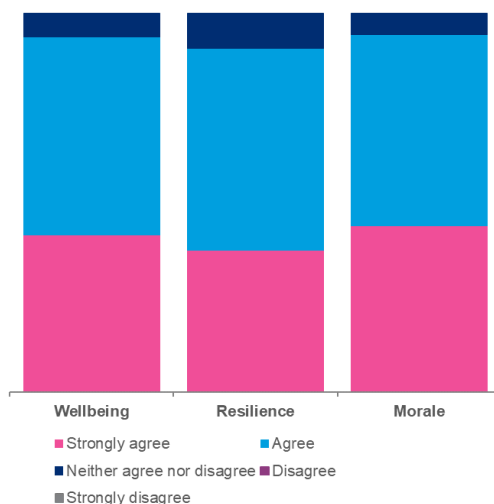
### Respondents reported the session will have a positive impact on their wellbeing, resilience and morale

Questions were asked to assess whether attendees thought the session would have a positive impact on their morale, resilience and wellbeing using a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Strongly agree and agree were grouped together to show agreeing with the statement, ‘neither agree nor disagree’ were considered neutral and disagree and strongly disagree were grouped as disagreeing.

The vast majority (94%) of respondents agreed the session would have a positive impact on their morale, 93% of respondents agreed the session would have a positive impact on their wellbeing and 90% agreed their resilience would be positively impacted.

As seen in Graph 1, nobody completing the survey disagreed that the session would have a positive impact in any of the three areas.

Graph 1. Do you think the session will have a positive impact?



### The majority of respondents agreed that the practical tools would be useful to them

Practical tools were provided during the session and respondents were asked if they would be of use to them. The same rating scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used as in previous questions. The majority of respondents, 94%, agreed that the tools provided in the session would be useful to them with nobody disagreeing.

### Attendees were either members of the SafeLives Community Platform or were planning on joining after the session

One of the outcomes of the session was to improve engagement in SafeLives community platform, to reflect this, a multiple-choice question was added in the survey asking participants if they were a member of SafeLives community platform and if they intended to join. Two-fourths of respondents (43%) answered that they were already members of the community and two-fourth (44%) of respondents stated that they were not members of SafeLives community but were planning to join. Less than one-fifth (14%) of respondents said that they were not part of the community nor were they planning to join.

## Having a safe and confidential space to discuss and share current challenges with peers was valued by frontline workers

Respondents were asked one open-ended question about the most useful aspects of the session. The responses to these questions were varied and covered a range of aspects, which were coded to reflect the re-occurring themes as shown in Q2 in the appendix. In total 102 people answered this question. Some of the responses given could be coded into more than one category and so these responses were split, meaning that we coded 147 responses overall. The percentages given are based on the number of people who answered this question rather than the number of individual coded responses.

The most common aspect of the session highlighted by half of respondents (56%) was that the session had given them a safe and confidential space to discuss and share the current challenges with their peers. One third (31%) of respondents reflected on how the session had given them the opportunity to learn and share strategies, tips and suggestions for resilience, stress relief and anxiety (31%).

“ Feeling that what I am experiencing I am not alone, also to learn that I can do things for myself and not feel guilty.

Exploring ways to practice and talking about self-care was highlighted by a quarter of respondents (23%) and a similar number (21%) stated that the session was a great opportunity to take time to pause and reflect on what they are experiencing professionally and as individuals. Several respondents (7%) commented on how exploring the

mechanism by which the brain reacts to trauma and the science behind it was very useful in order to better understand what frontline workers are experiencing in their day to day work. Finally, respondents have also left some general or personal comments about the session and trainers or left some general comments such as ‘everything was useful’ (7%).

## Participants gave thanks for the session as general feedback

A space at the end of the survey was provided for general feedback about the session. Similarly, to the previous open-ended question, the responses were coded to reflect the re-occurring themes. In total 38 people answered this question. Some of the responses given could be coded into more than one category and so these responses were split, meaning that we coded 67 responses overall. The percentages given are based on the number of people who answered this question (38) rather than the number of individual coded responses.

There were a very small number of constructive comments (3 comments) covering the duration and timing of the sessions. These comments were used internally to consider how to improve the sessions, accommodate the different needs of participants and make sure everyone found it valuable.

The comments left in this section were overwhelmingly positive. Three-fifths of respondents who left a general comment (63%) thanked for the useful session and brilliant work, of these 50% directly mentioned the interactive session and the amazing trainers. Moreover, other comments emphasised how great it was to be able to share experiences and challenges with peers (16%).

Additionally, respondents highlighted that the session was a good reminder of self-care (13%), and some of them left personal comments showing interest in SafeLives’ training and stated that they will check the resources mentioned during the session (13%). Respondents also stressed that the session has been a good opportunity to explore strategies and tips including grounding techniques and wellbeing approaches (11%) and a good reflective space (11%). Discussion of how a wellbeing and group support session would benefit all the domestic abuse frontline workers was specifically mentioned in 11% of the comments.

“ Thank you for hosting these, it makes a big difference to be able to reflect with people who understand our line of work and the difficulties we face. I will be recommending all my staff to join on a session.

“ I really enjoyed speaking and listening to the facilitators today I thought they had really good understanding as what would be affecting us as DV practitioners working in lockdown, and this in itself was a help.

## Conclusion

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The impact of the feedback has created discussion around how we continue to support frontline practitioners in their roles. The comments have provided evidence of unmet need which could contribute to high staff turnover, burnout and poor practice. These issues were highlighted in SafeLives' recent practitioner's survey<sup>1</sup>, which asked frontline services about the direct impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Almost one fifth of responses (17%) raised concerns about the effect of the pandemic on staff stress and burn out, which ties strongly to increased demand on services.

Almost 9 out of 10 responses (88%) reported an increase in demand since the pandemic began, which is likely to be affecting staff wellbeing and mental health.

The group support and wellbeing sessions have been very well received as shown by the survey responses and its outcomes were incredibly positive. The comments around how useful and beneficial the session was, show the impact of offering a two-hour wellbeing and group support session aimed at frontline workers. The session has had a positive impact on the participants by providing practical tools and techniques for them to use alongside a connection to their peers.

“ I found the session really helpful – it can be difficult to address feelings of being overwhelmed in a role that requires you to be the logical/calming person for the victims we support. Today's session showed the importance of seeking resilience and practicing self care to enable us to continue to provide affect support and acknowledge our own needs. *[sic]* ”

## Recommendations

- To share findings with all services and promote the importance of support and supervision
- Promote the self help resilience tool
- Consider continuing with the support and wellbeing groups as a way of reaching the frontline, hearing their voices and promoting healthy practice.

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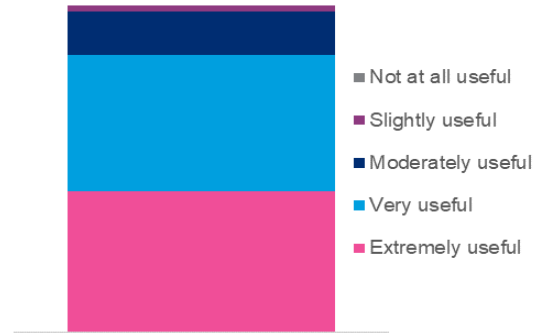
<sup>1</sup> SafeLives' 2020/21 survey of domestic abuse practitioners in England and Wales.  
safelives.org.uk info@safelives.org.uk 0117 403 3220



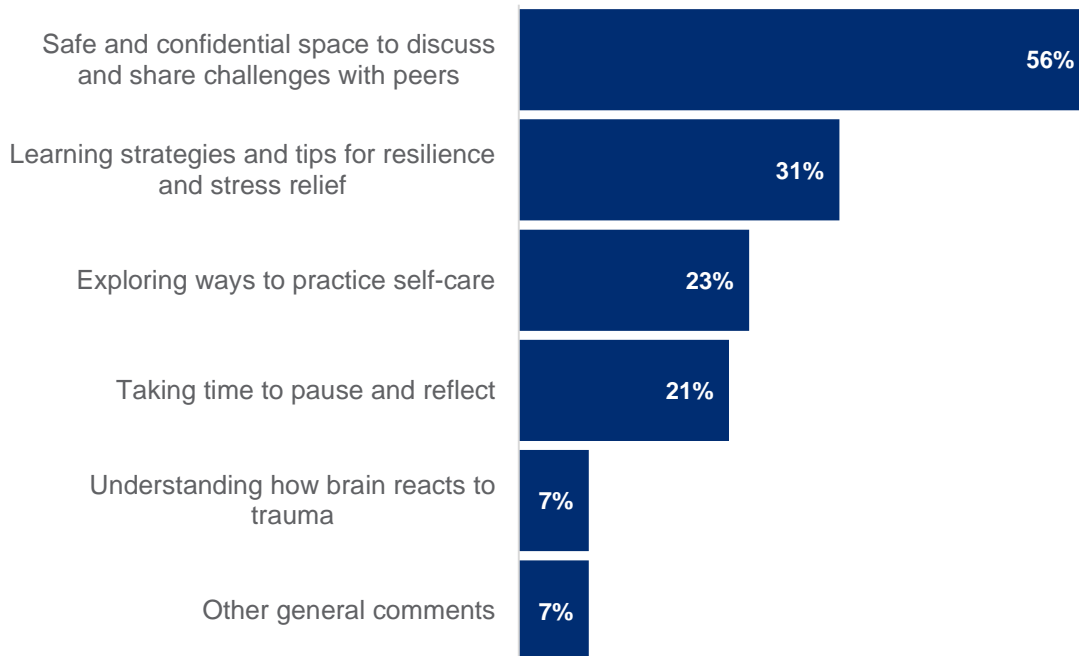
## Appendix 1.1

### Q1. How useful did you find the session?

- More than four-fifths (84%) of respondents found it extremely useful or very useful, less than one fifth (14%) moderately useful and two respondents (2%) slightly useful.
- No one said they had found the session to be not useful at all.



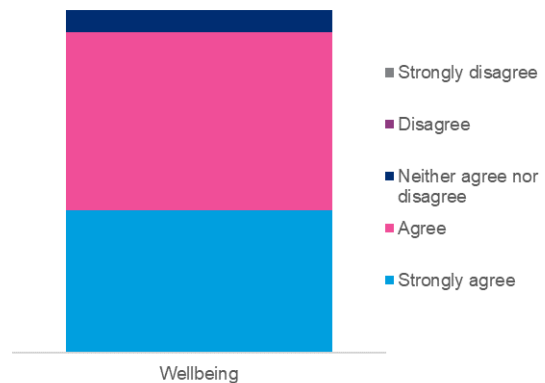
### Q2. What were the most useful aspects of the session?



### Q3. Do you think the session will have a positive impact?

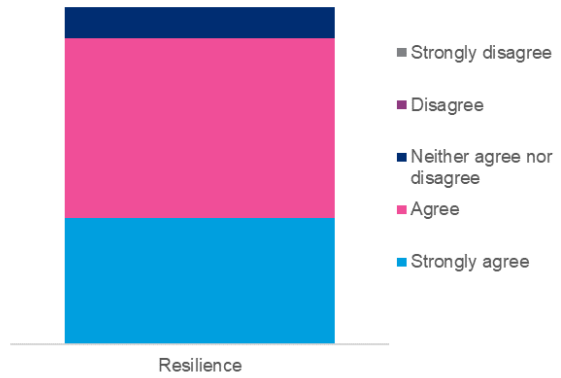
#### Wellbeing

- The vast majority of respondents, 93%, agreed that the session would have a positive impact on their wellbeing, a small number of respondents (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.
- No one disagreed with the statement.



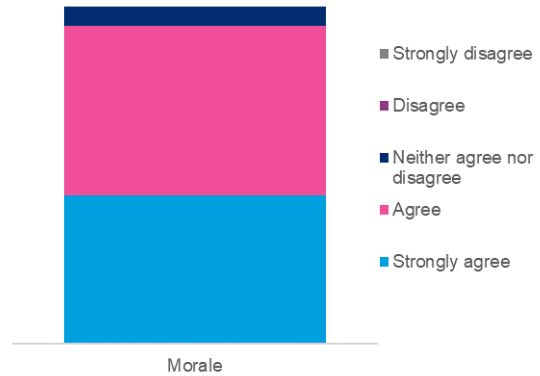
**Resilience**

- The majority of respondents, 90%, agreed that the session would positively impact their resilience. Very few respondents (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.
- No one disagreed with the statement.



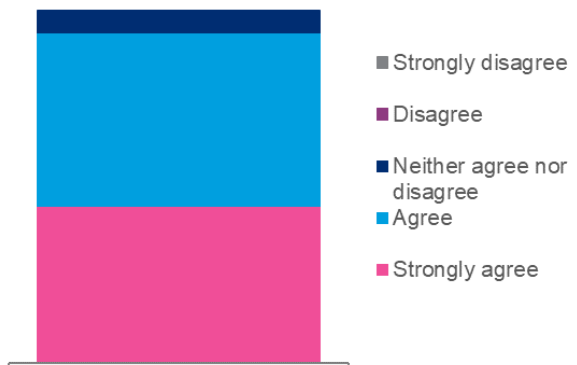
**Morale**

- The vast majority of respondents, 94%, agreed that the session will have a positive impact on their morale and a small number of respondents (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.
- No one disagreed with the statement.

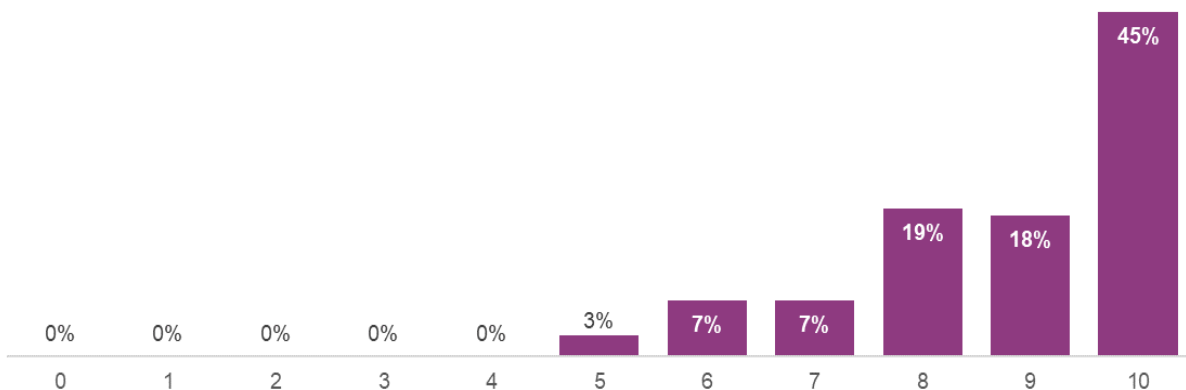


**Q4. Do you think the practical tools provided will be useful to you?**

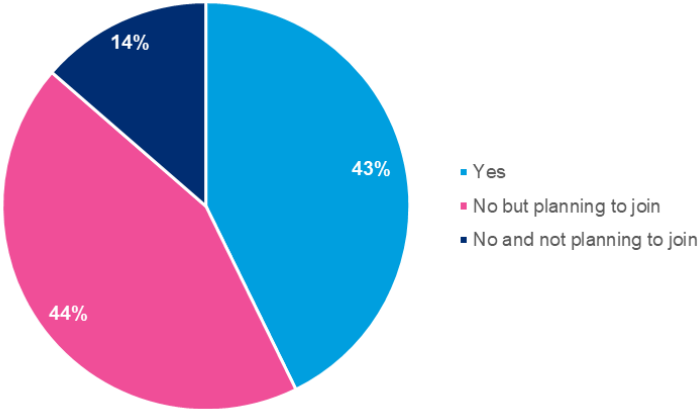
- The majority of respondents, 94%, agreed that the tools provided in the session would be useful to them and very few respondents (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.
- No one disagreed with the statement.



**Q5. On a scale of 0-10 are you likely to recommend the session to a colleague?**



**Q6. Are you a member of SafeLives community platform?**



**Q7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

