

Stay Strong – Live Long

The Impact of Strength Training and Healthy Lifestyle Choices on Adults 50+ Years

Program Evaluation



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Regular exercise, healthy eating habits, and an overall healthier lifestyle are important behaviors for achieving a high quality of life. People within all age groups need to make healthy and active choices, including older adults. In fact, older adults are recommended to pursue the same level of activity as their younger counterparts. If the same level of activity cannot be maintained, then older adults still need to maintain weekly multicomponent physical activity, as their abilities and conditions will allow. However, despite the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices, it seems that many in the Coachella Valley do not maintain a healthy lifestyle.

About Program

Ms. Mercedes Godfrey is an ACE certified Personal Trainer, Group Fitness Instructor, and Senior Balance Specialist. She leads fitness classes aimed at improving endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility among adults aged 50 and above. Class structure is typically four days a week and at about 45 minutes a session. Courses include education on the principles of fitness and healthier lifestyle choices, goal setting, and hands-on participation.

Ms. Godfrey aspires to establish a nonprofit organization in which she can continue her work in meeting the physical fitness and health needs of adults aged 50 and above. For this reason, Ms. Godfrey sought out HARC to design and carry out an evaluation of her fitness programs. Having a program evaluation would not only be effective in communicating the great work that Ms. Godfrey does, but to also assess areas for improvement

About HARC

HARC, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that specializes in research and evaluation services. These services include, but are not limited to needs assessments, program evaluations, analyses of existing data, and much more. HARC provides customized analytical consulting services, tailored for each particular client to help them better understand the work they do and those they serve. Doing so enables our clients to evaluate the great work that they do and to make the Inland Empire a healthier, and happier place to live.

Method

Measurement

HARC met with Mercedes Godfrey to learn more about the fitness training programs she offers and what exactly should be measured to effectively evaluate progress. After learning more about the programs, a survey was collaboratively designed to measure areas of change for participants in exercise, nutrition, lifestyle, and a final assessment of goals. The survey was administered in a pretest-posttest, structured classroom format. Specifically, participants received a pretest on December 3rd and then received a posttest on March 25th.

Participants

The progress of participants was to be evaluated, and so only participants who completed both a pretest and a posttest were included in subsequent results sections. For reference, a total of 55 participants were included in the dataset. Among these, 35 completed posttests and 20 did not (three were seasonal residents who didn't complete a posttest, 11 had no posttest as they are still participating, and six dropped the class). Excluding those who are seasonal, the class yields about a 11.5% drop rate from the program.

As mentioned, 35 had completed both a pretest and posttest. Because of that, subsequent sections will only include data pertaining to those 35 participants.

Results

Demographics

Of the 35 participants, a total of 42.9% were in the aerobics class and 57.1% were in the Go4Life class. The average age of participants was 75 years old; the youngest participant was 52 years old and the oldest participant was 91 years old. The majority of participants were female (77.1%) and white (80%).

Exercise Levels

Participants improved their levels of general exercise from the time of their pretest to posttest. Most notably, participants either "often" or "almost always" participated in general exercise at pretest (57.6%), compared to 88.6% at posttest.

Some notable areas of improvement for participants include increases in activity level and increases in vigorous intensity activities. Specifically, participants went from being physically active for an average of 4.1 days at pretest, to an average of 4.7 days at posttest – or a half day increase. Additionally, participants went from engaging in vigorous intensity activities, an average of 2.9 days of the week to an average of 4.4 days of the week – a day and a half increase.

Other areas that had slight improvements include: aerobics, muscle strengthening, and moderate intensity activities.

In addition to the number of days, participants were asked to specify the number of minutes they spend on each activity for the week. The number of minutes was multiplied by the number of days to obtain an estimate of the weekly minutes spent on each activity.

Participants made improvements in being physically active, engaging in moderate intensity exercises, engaging in vigorous intensity exercises, and stretching from pretest to posttest. Conversely, aerobic activity and muscle strengthening were approximately similar from pretest to posttest.

Trainer Assessments

In addition to the survey, participants were physically assessed by their physical fitness trainer on four areas of squatting while raising their arms, shoulder presses (weight and repetition), standing and sitting on a chair, and standing on their toes with no hands. Participants made improvements in several areas. For example, at pretest, participants were able to squat and raise their arms at the same time for an average of 144.9 seconds (2.4 minutes). By posttest, however, they were able to do so for 157.6 seconds (2.6 minutes).

Improvements were also made in shoulder strength. That is, participants increased their average shoulder repetition number from the time of pretest average (29.3) to posttest average (32.9) – an increase of 3.6 repetitions. However, shoulder press weight stayed roughly the same from pretest average (5.4 pounds) to posttest average (5.5 pounds).

Standing and sitting in a chair and standing on toes with no hands revealed decreases in performance. Specifically, regarding standing and sitting in a chair, pretest average went from 46.1 times to a posttest average of 34.3 times. And, for standing on toes, pretest averages went from 87.2 seconds to a posttest average of 80 seconds.

Nutrition

Participants made improvement in the level of their nutrition quality. Specifically, the proportion of participants reporting either “good nutrition” or “excellent nutrition” increased from 68.6% to 85.7%. Participants also made improvements in how often they consider the nutrition of their food. For example, 68.5% either “often” or “almost always” considered their nutrition, while 94.3% did so at posttest.

Participants were also asked about their weekly average food group consumption. There were some slight increases in the average consumption of dairy, grains, and protein. Looking at protein specifically, protein was consumed 6.5 days per week at pretest compared to 6.7 days at posttest.

Similarly, dairy consumption increased from 5 days to 5.3 days, and grain consumption increased from 6 days to 6.5 days-- nearly a half day. Fruits and vegetables were consumed nearly every day (about 6 days a week) and seemed to be roughly the same from pretest to posttest. In other words, participants were already in good standing with respect to fruit and vegetable consumption.

Lifestyle

At posttest, participants were also asked to specify how often they engage in a variety of healthy or unhealthy activities throughout the week. Over a course of about four months, nearly all (97.1%) participants report preparing meals at home. Along those lines, 85.3% rarely or never consume fast food.

Alcohol consumption seems to have a bit more variability as most participants drink rarely or never (51.4%); however, some drink often (20%) and some drink sometimes (28.6%). Most participants reported sometimes (60.0%) consuming sugary food while fewer (34.3%) rarely or never consume sugary food.

Goals and Motives

At the end of the pretest, participants were asked to indicate one specific goal that they want to achieve as a result of taking these classes, and what their motivation was for taking the course. Responses were qualitatively analyzed, and similar responses/themes were grouped together.

The most common goal among participants was to improve strength and muscle tissue ($n = 24$). Some participants stated specific areas of strength they wanted to improve such as knees, back, lower body, and upper body. Other goals mentioned included improving flexibility ($n = 7$) and improving balance ($n = 6$). Some also mentioned improving cardiovascular ($n = 4$), such as cardio, lung/heart health, and circulation.

The most common reason for taking the course was to improve their health ($n = 10$). Participants wrote, “improve overall health” and “stay healthy and improve strength” to name a few. Socialization ($n = 7$) was also a theme that emerged. For example, participants wrote comments such as, “structure/socialization”, “group experience”, and “group exercise”.

At posttest, participants were asked to think back to their original goals they had for this course and to rate their level of satisfaction with how well they accomplished their goals. Nearly all participants (91.4%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with how well they accomplished their goal, only 8.6% were neither or dissatisfied. Participants were asked to elaborate on why they rated their level of satisfaction the way in which they did. Participants most often referenced that their rating was due to increases in strength ($n = 8$). For example, participants wrote, “stronger more flexible”, “more strength and vitality”, and “feeling stronger” to name a few. Other responses included that they gained energy ($n = 4$), have a healthier lifestyle ($n = 4$), and have increased mobility ($n = 3$).

Hearing about Class

Participants were asked during the pretest phase how they heard about this fitness course. The most common mode for hearing about the class was through the Joslyn Center ($n = 19$). Other modes included the instructor of the course ($n = 6$) and friends ($n = 5$).

Conclusion

Strong Features

Overall, over the course of roughly four months, Ms. Godfrey's clients have demonstrated improvement in their levels of general exercise from pretest to posttest. Notably, average increases were observed in being physically active, engaging in vigorous intensity activities, squatting and raising arms, and should press repetition. Nutrition quality also increased as did some major food groups, while fruits/vegetables were consumed nearly every day from pre to posttest. Altogether, nearly all participants were satisfied with how well they accomplished their goals.

Potential Improvement

Improvements were made among participants, however, there were a few minor areas in the analyses that may merit consideration. For example, aerobic activity and muscle strengthening slightly decreased from pretest to posttest. It's possible that this is a decrease, or it could be random fluctuation from pretest to posttest as the difference is so small. Further, standing and sitting in a chair, and standing on toes with no hands revealed small decreases in performance. While there are a few areas for potential improvement, they are more so few and far between, as participants demonstrated considerable improvements in being physically active, overall.

Future Study Areas

The current program would benefit from having some follow-up analyses at later points in time and are discussed in further detail in the conclusion of this report. For example, some future areas of interest include conducting group comparisons on class type to assess improvements/needs between groups, measuring social dynamics as an additional outcome, and continuing to collect data on current and incoming students to assess change at longer intervals.

Full Report

Stay Strong – Live Long

The Impact of Strength Training and Healthy Lifestyle Choices on Adults 50+ Years

Introduction

Regular exercise, healthy eating habits, and an overall healthier lifestyle are important decisions to make for achieving a higher level of quality of life. People within all age groups need to make healthy and active choices, including older adults. In fact, older adults are recommended to pursue the same level of activity as their younger counterparts, and if they cannot, still need to maintain weekly multicomponent physical activity, as their abilities and conditions will allow.¹

However, despite these choices to be made, it seems that many in the Coachella Valley perhaps neglect a healthy lifestyle. For example, within in the Coachella Valley, HARC's 2016 data revealed that about 60.5% of adults (175,000+ adults) are overweight or obese. Looking at older adults (55+) specifically, about 58.8% over overweight or obese (71,400+ older adults). Couple that with the finding that approximately 20.8% of the Coachella Valley region doesn't engage in aerobic activity and about 56% don't engage in strength-building exercises either. Again, looking specifically at older adults (55+), 22.6% (28,800+ older adults) don't engage in aerobic activity, and 61.1% (77,000+ older adults) don't engage in strength-building exercises. Clearly, there is a need for regular exercise and thoughtful nutrition in the region.

About this Program

Ms. Mercedes Godfrey is an ACE certified Personal Trainer and Group Fitness Instructor who leads fitness classes aimed at improving endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility among adults aged 50 and above. Class structure is typically, four days a week and at about 45 minutes a session. Courses include teaching principles of fitness and healthier lifestyle choices, goal setting, and hands-on participation. As of this program evaluation report, Ms. Godfrey was hosting two fitness courses. One of these was the Go4Life class which included participants who are little older, may have more injuries, and participate in beginner-level exercises. The other class, Aerobics class, includes people who typically have more experience in exercise and are overall, in better health.



Ms. Godfrey aspires to establish a nonprofit organization in which she can continue her work in meeting the physical fitness and health needs of adults aged 50 and above. For this reason, Ms. Godfrey sought out HARC to design and carry out an evaluation of her fitness programs. Having a program evaluation would not only be effective in communicating the great work that Ms. Godfrey does, but to also assess areas for improvement.

¹ Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd Edition. (2018). Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/>

About HARC

HARC, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that specializes in research and evaluation services. HARC was founded to help tell the story of the Coachella Valley through a quantitative lens, as the only data available to our region was at the county-level. Having a local research firm enables health leaders and service providers to identify health disparities, inequities, unhealthy behaviors, and trends.

HARC has since expanded to not only continue the survey, but to provide other research and evaluation-based services. These services include, but are not limited to needs assessments, program evaluations, analyses of existing data, and much more. HARC provides customized analytical consulting services, tailored to the needs of its clients to help them answer important questions regarding those they serve. Doing so enables our clients to evaluate the great work that they do and to make the Inland Empire a healthier, and ultimately, happier place to live.

Method

Program Measurement

HARC initially met with Mercedes Godfrey to learn more about the fitness training programs she offers and what exactly should be measured to effectively evaluate progress. After learning more about the programs, a survey was collaboratively designed to measure areas of change in exercise, nutrition, lifestyle, and a final assessment of goals.

To evaluate exercise, participants were to be assessed in the improvements they made in general physical exercise, aerobics, strength training, intensity of these routines, and stretching. In addition to the survey, the physical fitness trainer incorporates fitness tests such as squatting, shoulder presses, and standing maneuvers. These tests were included in the assessments. In regard to nutrition, participants were assessed on the quality of nutrition in their diet, how often they consider nutrition, and food group consumption throughout an average week. Another area measured was lifestyle choices, and included aspects such as activity levels, meal prepping, fast-food, alcohol, and sugary food consumption. However, these areas were only measured at posttest.

The survey was administered in a pretest-posttest. That is, participants received a pretest on December 3rd and then received a posttest on March 25th.

Participants

Evaluating the progress of participants was the goal of this evaluation, and so only participants who completed both a pretest and a posttest were included in subsequent results sections. For reference, a total of 55 participants were included in the dataset. Among these, 35 participants completed posttests and 20 did not (three were seasonal residents, 11 had no posttest as they are still participating, and six dropped the class). When not taking into account those who are seasonal, the class yields about a 11.5% drop rate from the program.

As mentioned, 35 had completed both a pre and posttest. Subsequent sections will include data only pertaining to those 35 participants.

Results

Demographics

Of the 35 participants who completed a pretest and posttest, a total of 42.9% were in the aerobics class and 57.1% were in the Go4Life class. The Go4Life class includes participants who are little older, may have more injuries, and participate in beginner-level exercises. The Aerobics class, on the other hand, includes people who typically have more experience in exercise and are overall, in better health.

The average age of participants was 75 years old, with the youngest being 52 years old and the oldest being 91 years old. The majority of participants were female (77.1%) and white (80%). See the Table below for a breakdown of demographic characteristics.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Age groups		
50s	1	2.9%
60s	7	20.0%
70s	15	42.9%
80s	9	25.7%
90s	3	8.6%
Total	35	100%
Gender		
Female	27	77.1%
Male	8	22.9%
Total	35	100%
Race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2.9%
Another race	1	2.9%
Asian or Asian American	1	2.9%
Black or African American	2	5.7%
Hispanic or Latino	2	5.7%
White or Caucasian	28	80.0%
Total	35	100%

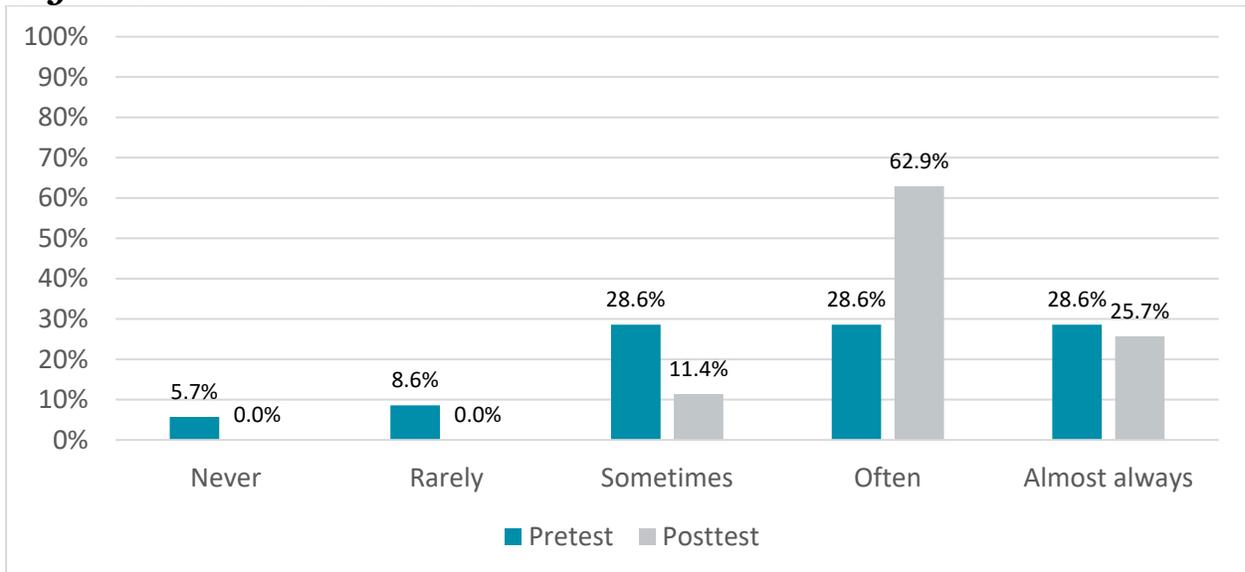
Exercise Levels

General Exercise

To get a sense of current exercise levels, participants were first asked how often they participated any kind of general exercise before today's class.

As illustrated in the Figure below, participants improved their levels of general exercise from the time of their pretest to posttest. Most notably, the majority (88.6%) of participants either "often" or "almost always" participated in general exercise at pretest compared to (57.6%) at posttest.

Figure 1. General Exercise Levels



Note: $n = 35$.

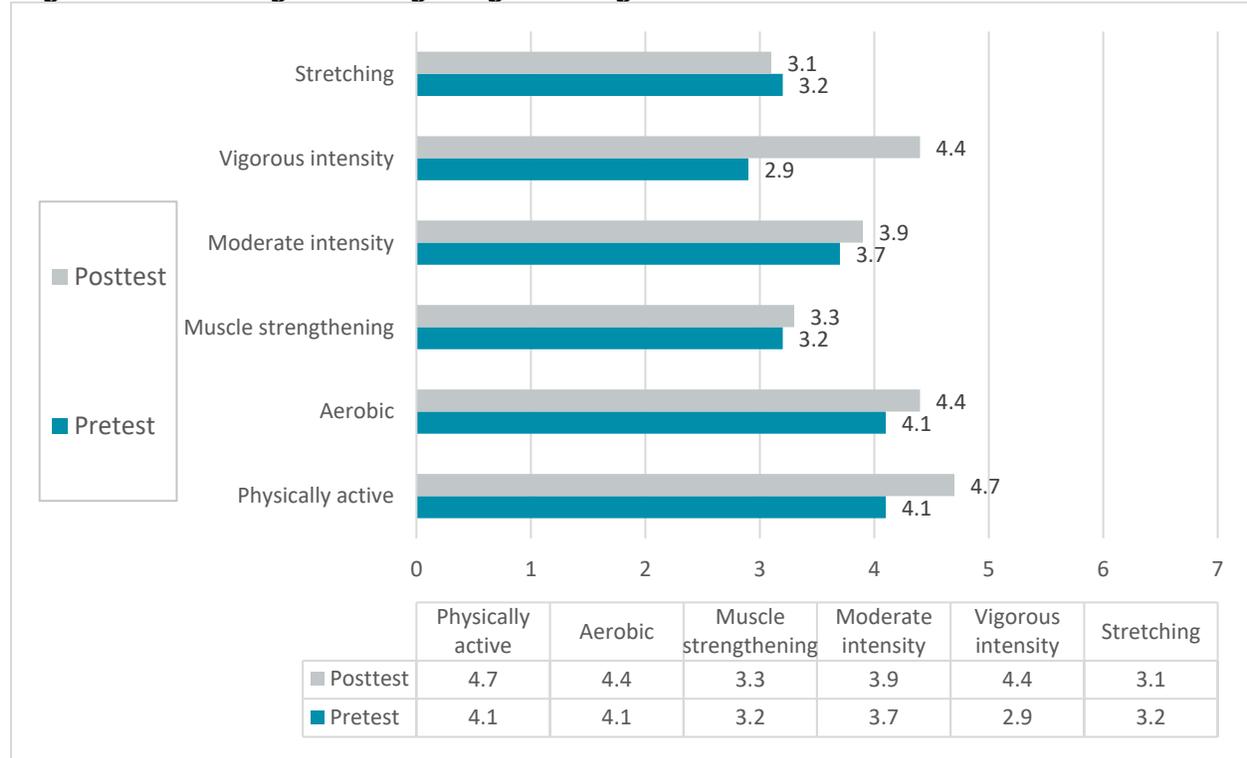
Average Weekly Exercises

Participants were provided with questions pertaining to physical activity, and were asked to specify the number of days and the number of minutes that they devote to each of these activities in an average week.

Some notable areas, as can be seen below, include average increases in being physically active and engaging in vigorous intensity activities. Specifically, participants went from being physically active for an average of 4.1 days, to an average of 4.7 days – or a half day increase. Additionally, participants went from engaging in vigorous intensity activities, an average of 2.9 days of the week to an average of 4.4 days of the week – a day and a half increase.

Other areas such as aerobics, muscle strengthening, and moderate intensity activities had very slight improvement.

Figure 2. Weekly Activity Day Averages

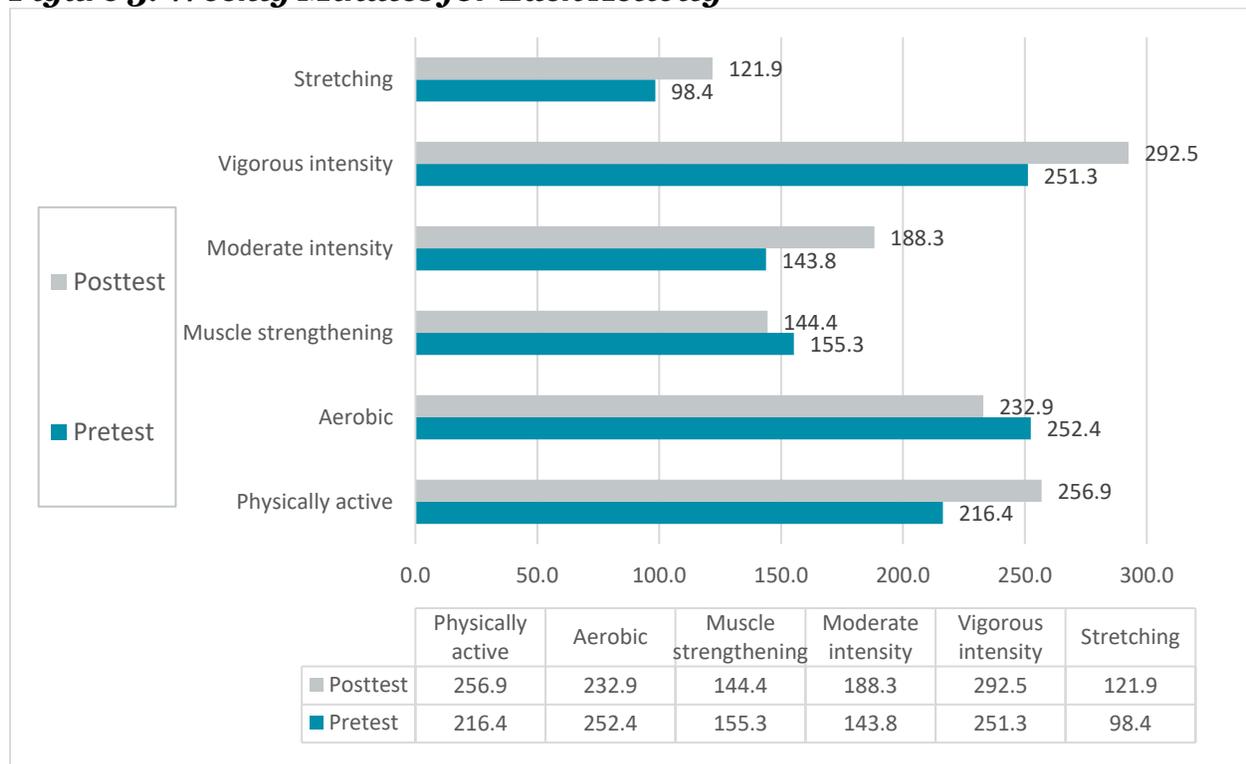


Note: Physically active, $n = 32$; Aerobic, $n = 29$; Muscle strengthening, $n = 18$; Vigorous intensity, $n = 8$; Stretching, $n = 16$.

In addition to the number of days, participants were asked to specify the number of minutes they spend on each activity for the week. The number of minutes was multiplied by the number of days to obtain an estimate of the weekly minutes spent on each activity.

As illustrated in the Figure below, participants made improvements in being physically active, engaging in moderate intensity exercises, engaging in vigorous intensity exercises, and stretching from pretest to posttest. Conversely, aerobic activity and muscle strengthening were approximately similar from pretest to posttest.

Figure 3. Weekly Minutes for Each Activity



Note: Physically active, $n = 32$; Aerobic, $n = 29$; Muscle strengthening, $n = 18$; Vigorous intensity, $n = 8$; Stretching, $n = 16$.

Trainer Assessments

In addition to the survey, participants were physically assessed by their physical fitness trainer on four areas of squatting while raising their arms, shoulder presses (weight and repetition), standing and sitting on a chair, and standing on their toes with no hands.

As illustrated in the Table below, participants made improvements in several areas. For example, at pretest, participants were able to squat and raise their arms at the same time for an average of 144.9 seconds (2.4 minutes). By posttest, however, they were able to do so for 157.6 seconds (2.6 minutes).

Improvements were also made in shoulder strength. That is, participants increased their average should repetition number by 3.6, from the time of pretest average (29.3) to posttest average (32.9). However, shoulder press weight stayed roughly the same from pretest average (5.4 pounds) to posttest average (5.5 pounds).

Standing and sitting in a chair and standing on toes with no hands revealed decreases in performance. Specifically, regarding standing and sitting in a chair, pretest average went from 46.1 times to a posttest average of 34.3 times. And, for standing on toes, pretest averages went from 87.2 seconds to a posttest average of 80 seconds.

Table 2. Physical Fitness Trainer Assessments

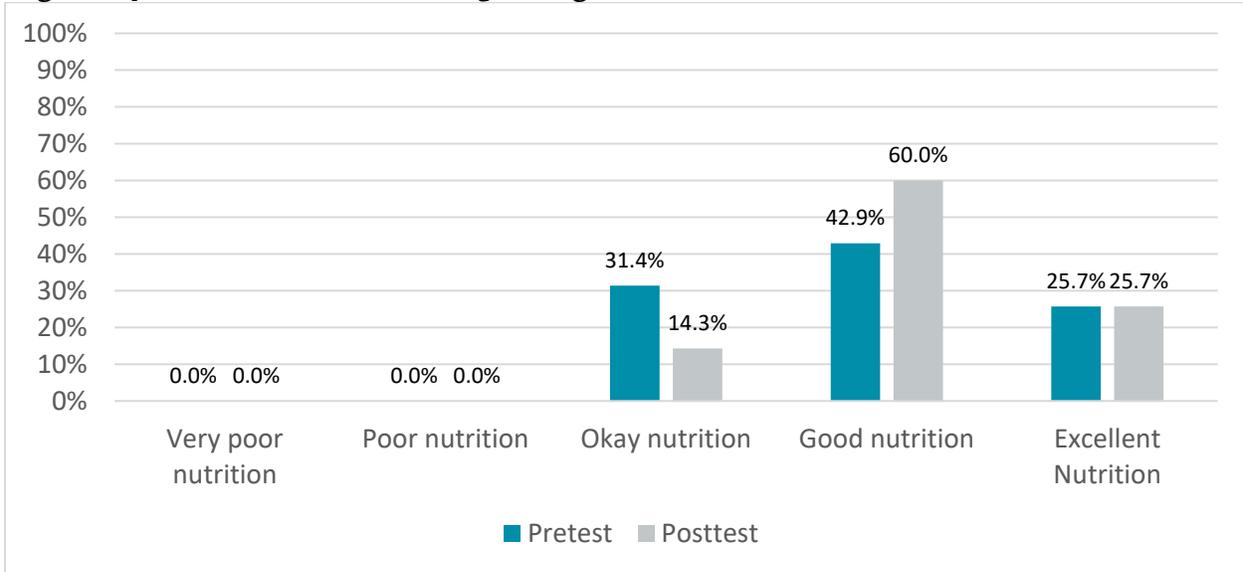
Assessment	Pretest Average	Posttest Average
Squatting while raising arms ($n = 35$)	144.9 seconds	157.6 seconds
Shoulder press – repetition ($n = 32$)	29.3 repetitions	32.9 repetitions
Should press – weight ($n = 32$)	5.4 pounds	5.5 pounds
Standing and sitting in chair ($n = 31$)	46.1 repetitions	34.3 repetitions
Standing on toes with no hands ($n = 31$)	87.2 seconds	80 seconds

Nutrition

Participants were also assessed on areas of nutrition such as their self-perceived quality of nutrition, consideration of nutrition, and weekly consumption of various food groups.

As illustrated in Figure 4, participants made improvement in the level of their nutrition quality. Specifically, the proportion of participants reporting either “good nutrition” or “excellent nutrition” increased from 68.6% to 85.7%.

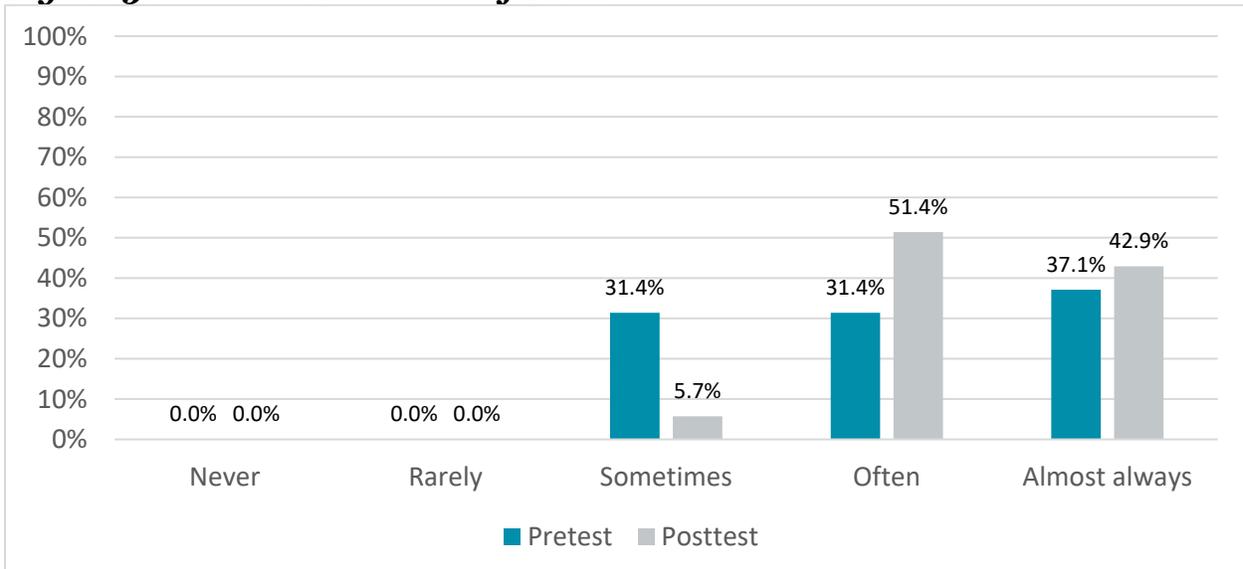
Figure 4. Current Nutrition Quality



Note: $n = 35$.

Participants also made improvements in how often they consider the nutrition of their food. For example, 68.5% either “often” or “almost always” considered their nutrition, while at posttest, 94.3% did so.

Figure 5. Consider Nutrition of Food



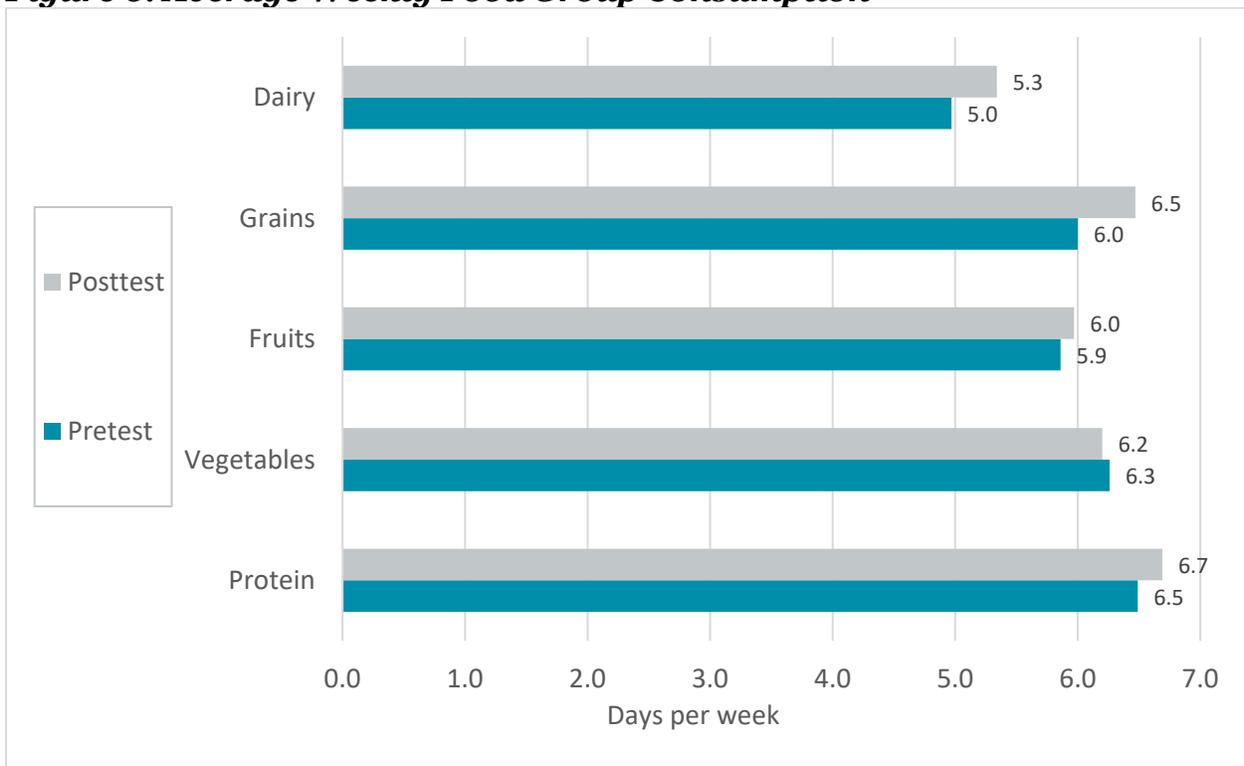
Note: $n = 35$.

Participants were also asked about their weekly average food group consumption. As illustrated in Figure 6, there were some slight increases, on average in the consumption of dairy, grains, and protein.

For protein, the average number of days in which protein was consumed was 6.5, compared to 6.7 days, on average at posttest. Similarly, dairy increased from 5 days to 5.3 days, and grains increased from 6 days to 6.5 days - nearly a half day.

Participants consumed fruits and vegetables nearly every day (about 6 days a week) and seemed to be roughly the same from pretest to posttest. In other words, participants were already in good standing with respect to fruit and vegetable consumption.

Figure 6. Average Weekly Food Group Consumption



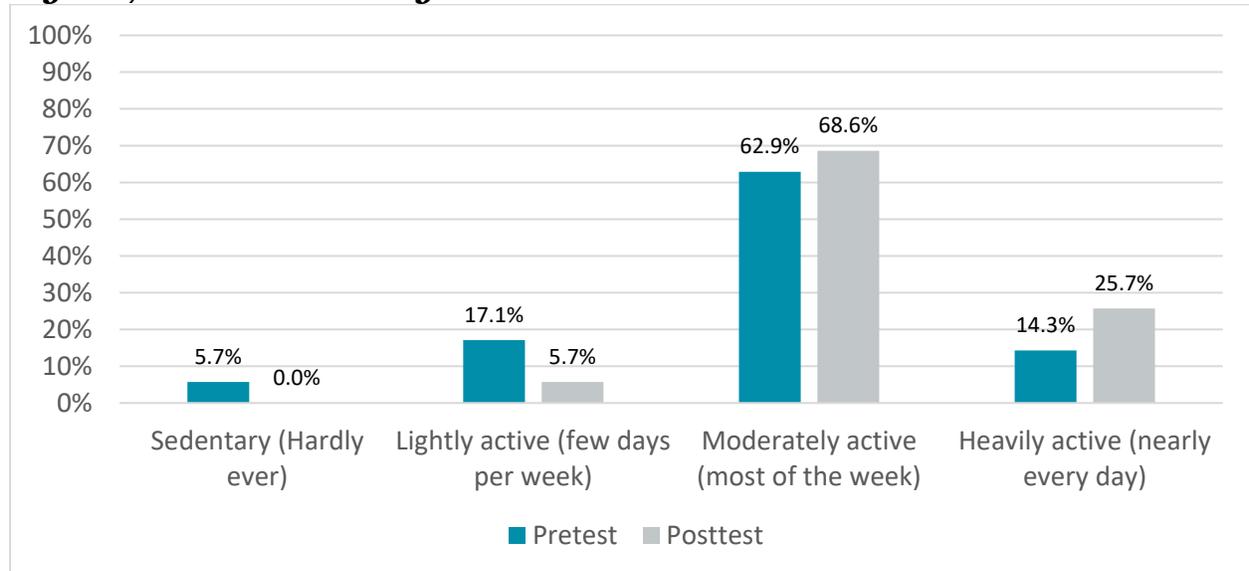
Note: Protein, $n = 35$; Vegetables, $n = 35$; Fruits, $n = 35$; Grains, $n = 34$; Dairy, $n = 35$.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle changes were assessed through general activity levels, fast-food consumption, preparing meals at home, alcohol consumption, and sugary food consumption.

As illustrated in Figure 7, participants increased their level of activity. For example, at pretest, 77.2% were either “moderately active” or “heavily active”, while at posttest, nearly all (94.3%) were active at these levels.

Figure 7. Current Activity Level



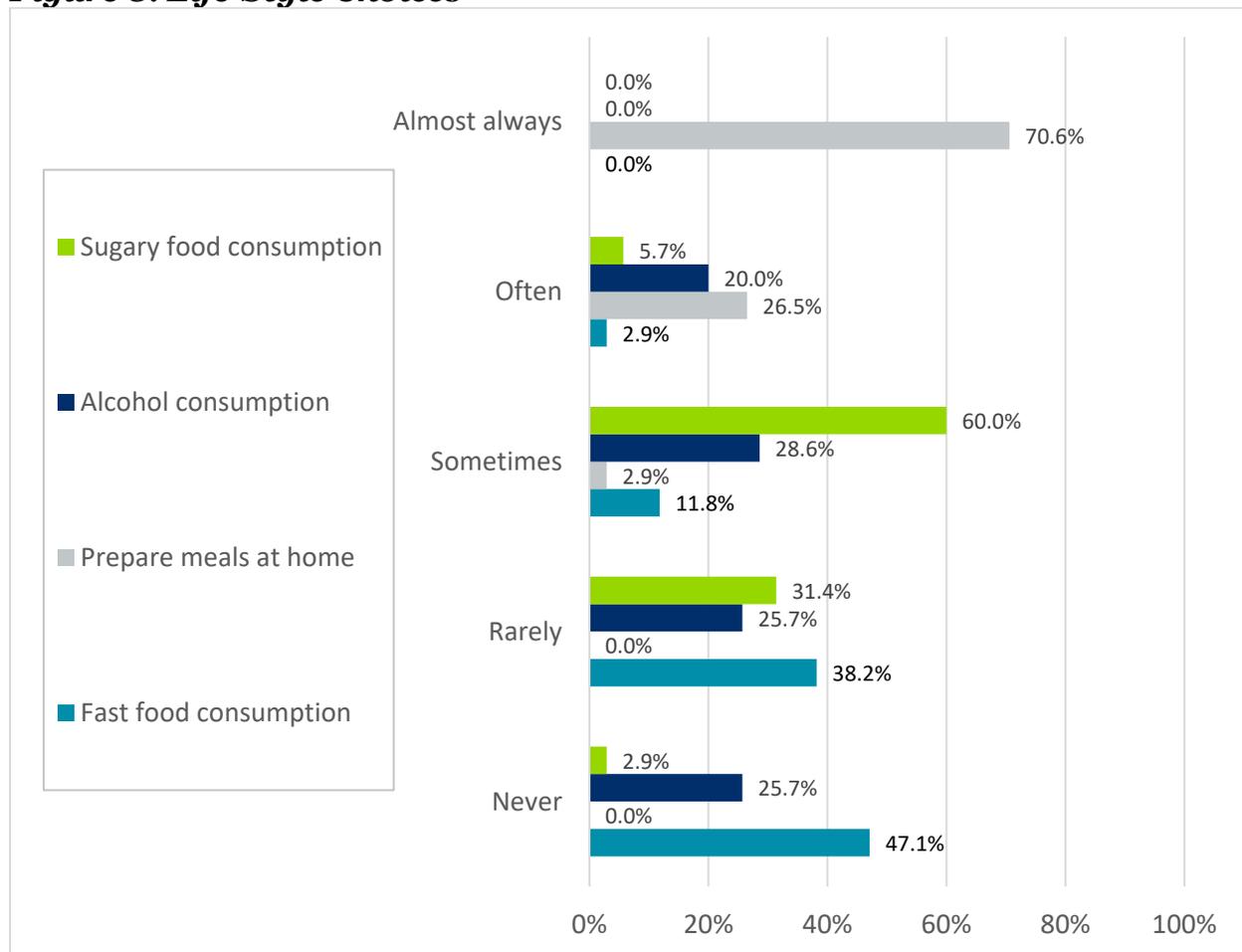
Note: $n = 35$.

At posttest only, participants were also asked to specify how often they engage in certain healthy/unhealthy activities throughout the week.

As illustrated in Figure 8, over a course of about four months, nearly all (97.1%) participants report preparing meals at home. Along that note, 85.3% rarely or never consume fast food.

Alcohol consumption seems to have a bit more variability as most participants drink rarely or never (51.4%); however, some drink often (20%) and some drink sometimes (28.6%). Most participants reported sometimes (60.0%) consuming sugary food while fewer (34.3%) rarely or never consume sugary food.

Figure 8. Life-Style Choices



Note: Fast food consumption, $n = 34$; Preparing meals at home, $n = 34$; Alcohol consumption, $n = 35$; Sugary food consumption, $n = 35$.

Goals and Motives

At the end of the pretest, participants were asked what is one specific goal that they want to achieve as a result of taking these classes, and what their motivation was for taking the course. Responses were qualitatively analyzed, and similar responses/themes were grouped together.

The most common goal among participants was to improve strength and muscle tissue ($n = 24$). Some participants stated specific areas of strength they wanted to improve such as knees, back, lower body, and upper body. Other goals mentioned included improving flexibility ($n = 7$) and improving balance ($n = 6$). Some also mentioned improving cardiovascular ($n = 4$), such as cardio, lung/heart health, and circulation.

Table 3. Specific Goals to Achieve

Theme	Frequency
Improve strength and muscle	24
Improve flexibility	7
Improve balance	6
Improve cardiovascular	4
Lose weight	2
Maintain fitness	2
Improve core	1
Improve physique	1
Increase energy	1

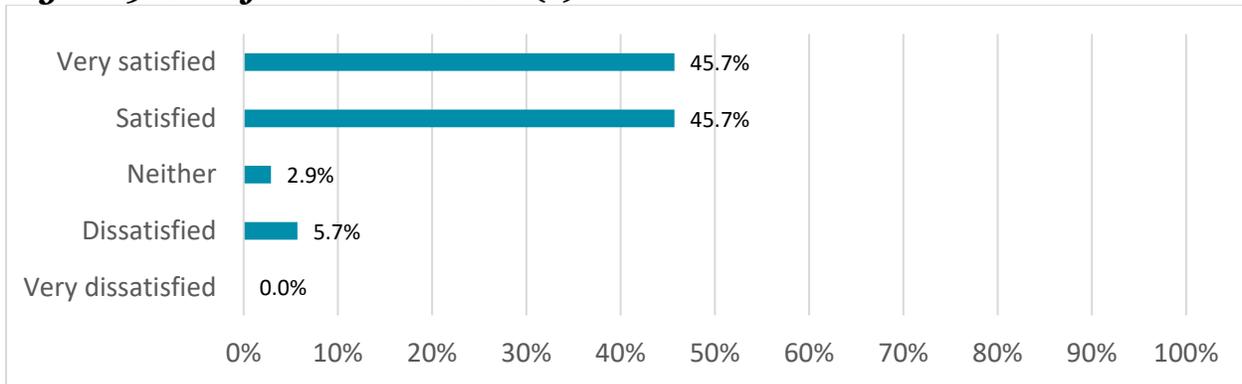
The most common reason for taking the course was to improve their health ($n = 10$). Participants wrote, “improve overall health” and “stay healthy and improve strength” to name a few. Socialization ($n = 7$) was also a theme that emerged. For example, participants wrote comments such as, “structure/socialization”, “group experience”, and “group exercise”. See Table 4 below for a complete list of themes.

Table 4. Reasons for Taking the Course

Theme	Frequency
Improve my health	10
Socialization	7
Maintain fitness	4
Improve strength	4
Have a routine or structure	3
Improve stamina or activity	2
Reference to personal trainer	2
Like the class style	1
Affordable exercise	1
Minimize pain	1
Improve balance	1
Wanted to try a new class	1
Recovery after surgery	1

At posttest, participants were asked to think back to their original goals they had for this course and to rate their level of satisfaction with how well they accomplished their goals. As illustrated below, about nearly all (91.4%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with how well they accomplished their goal. Only 8.6% were neither or dissatisfied.

Figure 9. Satisfaction with Goal(s)



Note: $n = 35$.

Participants were asked to elaborate on why they rated their level of satisfaction the way in which they did. Participants most often referenced that their rating was due to increases in strength ($n = 8$). For example, participants wrote, “stronger more flexible”, “more strength and vitality”, and “feeling stronger” to name a few. Other responses included that they gained energy ($n = 4$), have a healthier lifestyle ($n = 4$), and have increased mobility ($n = 3$). See Table 5 for a complete list of themes from the open-ended responses.

Table 5. Reason for Satisfaction Rating

Theme	Frequency
Gained strength	8
Gained energy	4
Healthier lifestyle	4
Increased mobility	3
Have less pain	2
Positive comments on program (e.g., great place, quality program)	2
Feeling better overall	2
Decreased weight	2
Want more classes offered	2
Feeling more “normal”	2
Improved balance	2
Need program improvement (e.g., tougher classes, more weights)	2
Overall improvement	2
Social gathering	2
Still have personal improvements to be made	2
Gained flexibility	1
Met personal goals	1
Enthusiasm from personal trainer	1

Hearing about Fitness Class

Participants were also asked during the pretest phase how they heard about this fitness course. As can be seen below, by far, the most common mode for hearing about the class was through the Joslyn Center ($n = 19$). Other modes included the instructor of the course ($n = 6$) and friends ($n = 5$).

Table 6. Mode for Hearing about Course

Theme	Frequency
Joslyn Center	19
Instructor	6
Friend	5
Family	2
Newspaper	2
Internet	1

Conclusion

Summary

The current report reflects a program evaluation of the fitness training and healthy lifestyle education delivered by Ms. Mercedes Godfrey. HARC was sought out to design the evaluation, measurement tools, analyze the data, and describe the findings.

Strong Features

Overall, over the course of close to four months, Ms. Godfrey's clients have demonstrated improvement in their levels of general exercise from pretest to posttest. Notably, average increases were observed in being physically active and engaging in vigorous intensity activities. Participants also made improvements in squatting and raising arms and shoulder press repetition. Aside from physical activity, participants made improvement in the level of their nutrition quality. There were some slight increases, on average, in the consumption of dairy, grains, and protein. Fruits and vegetables were consumed nearly every day (about 6 days a week) at both pretest and posttest. On that note of nutrition, nearly all participants report preparing meals at home and rarely or never consuming fast food.

Altogether, nearly all participants were satisfied with how well they accomplished their goals.

Potential Improvement

Improvements were made among participants, however, there were a few minor areas in the analyses that may merit consideration. For example, aerobic activity and muscle strengthening slightly decreased from pretest to posttest. It's possible that this is a decrease, or it could be random fluctuation from pretest to posttest as the difference is so small. Further, standing and sitting in a chair, and standing on toes with no hands revealed small decreases in performance. While there are a few areas for potential improvement, they are more so few and far between, as participants demonstrated considerable improvements in being physically active, overall.

Future Study Areas

The current program would benefit from having some follow-up analyses at later points in time.

Class Comparison

For example, of the 35 in the current dataset, a total of 42.9% were in the aerobics class and 57.1% were in the Go4Life class. Both of these classes have considerably different characteristics as one consists of more advanced students and one consists of more beginners. Collecting more data and having a larger sample for each group would enable an evaluation of the two groups separately. Thus, progress and needs among advanced students and beginner students could be delineated.

Other Areas to Measure

Clearly there are certain aspects to assess in an exercise program, but often there are additional areas for consideration. For example, in the open-ended responses of the current study, some responses included “socialization” as a reason for taking the course, and a few people specifically mentioned they were satisfied because of the social dynamic. Incorporating measures pertaining to these areas of socialization or perhaps group interaction would provide a worthwhile outcome of interest. Essentially, it seems that participants enjoy the group interaction and that’s something that could be measured moving forward.

Further Data Collection

The results of the current study reflect good improvement among participants and thus, it is important to continue collecting data among current and new participants, for analyses at later points in time. Doing so would enable comparisons between those who have been in the program for some time and those who are new. It would also help to demonstrate improvement on a long-term scale, rather than a three-month period. While progress over these several months is a positive finding, it would be beneficial to assess change at longer intervals.