



Themed Years

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A “Themed Year” is a year of continuous planning with a common theme in mind. It involves sub-themes which are outworked in line with the months of the year. Each sub-theme is related to the overall theme for the entire year. The sub-themes allow for greater understanding of a particular topic and allow for many activities incorporating the clients needs, interests and abilities.

Having a continuous theme throughout the year gives the clients a sense of purpose and anticipation as each sub-theme brings the overall them to life. The aim is to take the clients on a journey across the year that leaves them with a greater understanding of themselves and others, while having fun and learning new skills along the way.

Facilitating a multi-layered themed approach to the year allows for reinforcement of newly learnt skills while creating stronger community bonds.





Implementing the Program

A need became apparent for activities that were planned and could be grabbed at a moments notice while still maintaining continuity in the activities provided. Themed years allowed for forward planning, in consultation with clients at every step, ensuring that clients were still enjoying and gaining positive outcomes from the activities. The multi-levelled approach allowed for activities to be planned and modified where necessary to include clients of all different abilities and with different interests.

Following are some ideas for implementing sub-themes:

- Outings
- Guest speakers and performers
- Client or staff talks
- Learning a new craft technique
- Listening to music or watching movies relating to the theme
- Information articles in our internal newsletter
- Word puzzles and trivia sessions
- Group games
- Cooking activities
- Supplying clients with books for further reading
- Themed parties



The possibilities are endless!



Qualitative Outcomes

Clients were often interviewed throughout the activities as a way of gauging their enjoyment and satisfaction at all stages of the themed year. Many concurrent themes became evident to us in the language used to describe the activities. Many other qualitative aspects were observed by staff members.

Some of these common themes found were:

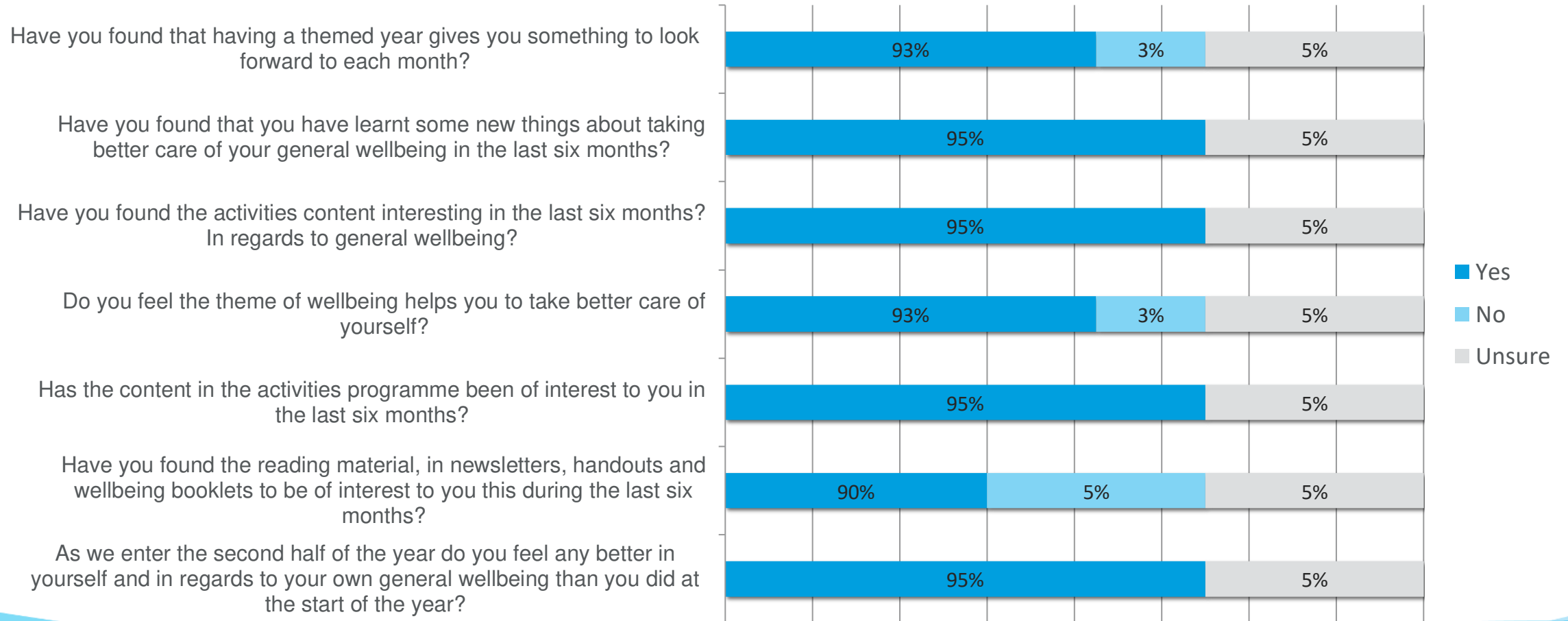
- Newfound purpose in day to day living
- Learning new things and gaining new skills
- Strengthening of friendships
- Less problematic behaviour at the time of sun-downing
- A reduction in observed anxiety levels
- Clients willing to come to activities
- Staff feel that they know clients on a deeper level
- Activities staff are well trusted
- Clients enjoyed reminiscing aspects of the themed year
- Clients know more about the people they live with
- Clients know the staff on a deeper level





Quantitative Outcomes

July 2017 Results (40 Clients Surveyed)



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Recommendations for further development

- The planning for themed years should grow and change with the needs and abilities of the clients
- Resources should continually be collated to create a wide variety of activities to have on hand for each sub-theme
- Electronic resources should be stored on a labeled USB for easy access and hard copy files should be filed for use when needed throughout the year
- It is important to re-evaluate the activities to suit the strengths of the staff members facilitating the activities
- Client satisfaction evaluations should be conducted at various times throughout the activities and upon completion of the themed year to be used to better the current theme and also to influence future themed years
- To keep within budget it is helpful to have a list of community connections i.e. library membership, schools, community groups, relatives, staff resource



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Key learnings for the Diversional Therapy profession

- A new way of activity delivery that brings greater continuity over the year
- Encourage staff participation and allow clients to know staff (other than activities and DT staff) on a deeper level
- Less planning time for DT staff as the themes are set out at the start of the year with resources collated as they are found
- Many opportunities to receive input from clients on particular sub-themes
- A new exciting avenue for themed activity planning and implementation that goes beyond the individual holiday themes