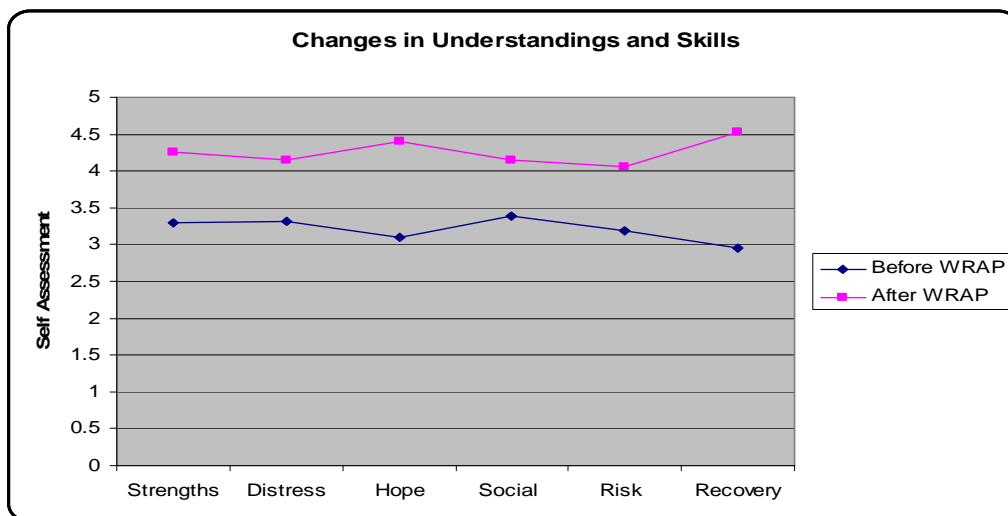


Wellness recovery action plan **SELF HELP RECOVERY EDUCATION**

During the last few months, the Wellness Recovery Action Plan program has been delivered to people in recovery in Central East Ontario. Two separate sessions were provided: *Orientation to WRAP* as well as *WRAP Facilitation Certification*. The programs were led by Ann Thompson, who is certified by the Copeland Centre to facilitate WRAP. Forty-four participants were surveyed retrospectively regarding their experience during and following the program. The survey comprised quantitative measures of personal growth and change, collected using a Likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 5 (completely) and included anecdotal reflections regarding the program delivery as well as the personal impact experienced as a result of participation in the program.

An overwhelming number of participants assessed excellence in program peer leadership (91%) and program materials (86%). Overall, participants reported a collective 21% improvement on all measures. The most substantial improvements are noted in the areas of realizing hope (26%) and understanding the recovery perspective (31.4%). Interestingly, when the scores from *Orientation to WRAP* are filtered from those of the *WRAP Facilitator Certification*, the improvement differential for participants of facilitator certification (1.06) exceeds that of those who participated in *Orientation to WRAP* (0.12), suggesting that facilitator certification resulted in greater change. These results cannot be considered relevant due to the low numbers of people who participated in the survey who only completed the orientation program, however this is an indicator for future study in subsequent evaluation.



Impact of WRAP Participation

The anticipated impacts of WRAP participation are: increased understanding and appreciation of personal strengths, improved ability to identify and negotiate distress and feel safe; increased interpersonal and social comfort; realization of hope and knowledge of recovery. As you will see in Chart 1, participants reported improvements in each of these areas. The significant increase in

the participants understanding of recovery and realization of hope suggests a cumulative learning effect.

In addition to retrospective self reports regarding pre and post observations of behaviour and thinking, people were asked to describe specific effects and changes related to their participation in WRAP. When asked to report how they had used WRAP to build on their personal strengths, participants indicated that using wellness and recovery language built confidence and they felt more confident to articulate their experiences, and their wishes, which affected their ability for self-advocacy. They used WRAP tools and techniques to recognize threats to their wellness and to develop healthy, proactive responses. Many participants recognized the importance of group format by noting how important it was to have others recognize their strengths and to have an opportunity to acknowledge the strength in others.

Also related to strengths and skills, are the reports regarding improvements in managing distress and experiencing an increased feeling of safety. Participants describe that increased awareness of stressors and signs of distress led to proactive and preventive alternative behaviours and thinking. They indicate that these changes have in turn raised tolerance of distress as well as confidence levels in recognizing and responding to distress. Two separate effects related to risk emerged from the evaluation of the program: people reported being better able to proactively prevent or confidently managing situations that previously provoked risk and therefore they feel safer; people also reported that with their renewed confidence and personal responsibility they have more comfort taking and surviving risks now.

The experiential and reflective learning in the WRAP program have clearly improved people's self reports related listening more in conversation. People report that as they have improved their listening, they are more tolerant and patient in interactions and they experience more social confidence and competence. Learning facilitation skills affected leadership abilities for some people in the group and were effective in improving a sense of connecting.

Participants identify that gaining knowledge, recognizing strengths and feeling capable and confident in managing distress relate to their sense of hopefulness. Simply by experiencing the positive relationships within the WRAP groups raised people's sense of hope and a belief that others also hope for them. Finally, WRAP education has shifted the perspective of most participants to accept recovery as a journey toward wellness. Adjusting how they define their experiences using recovery language has shifted understandings about personal comfort and responsibility and has resulted in more confidence in being well.