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All Ireland Institute of
Hospice and Palliative Care

Psychological, Social
and Spiritual Care
Research Special Interest Group

13th Annual Palliative Care Research Network Symposium 2024, Belfast

Exploring Spiritual and Psychological Care in Palliative Care: Key Findings from an All Ireland Survey

Dr Barry Quinn, Senior Lecturer Cancer & Palliative Care, Queen's University Belfast
Dr Niall Galligan, Lead Psychologist, Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services Dublin

Background

The All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care (AIIHPC) Psychology, Social and Spiritual Care Research Special Interest Group established 2023

Brings together members from the Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN), the Early Career Research Forum (ECRF) and Voices for Carers

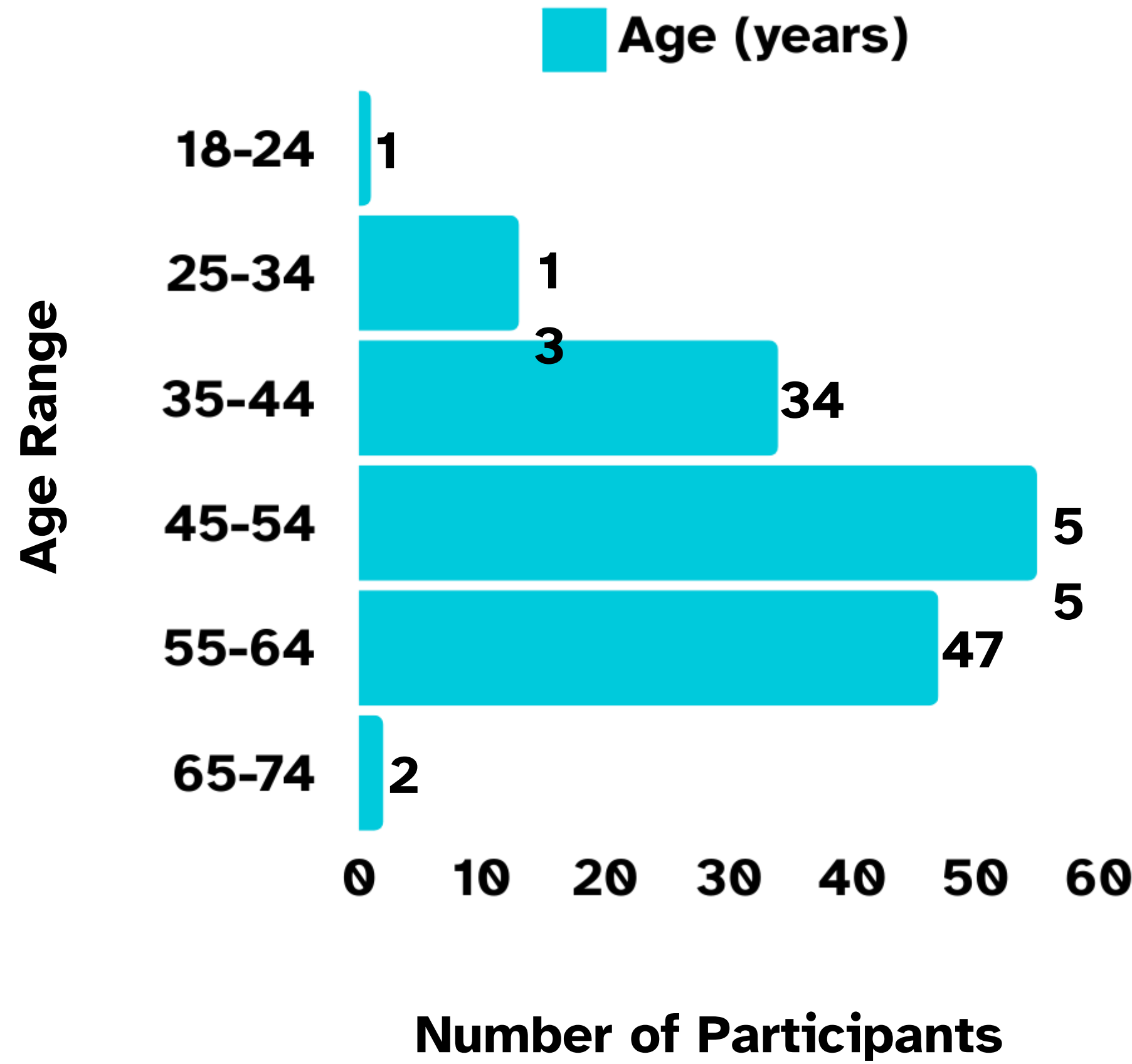
Survey

Aim:

To explore current practice and need helping to guide the work of the AIIHPC
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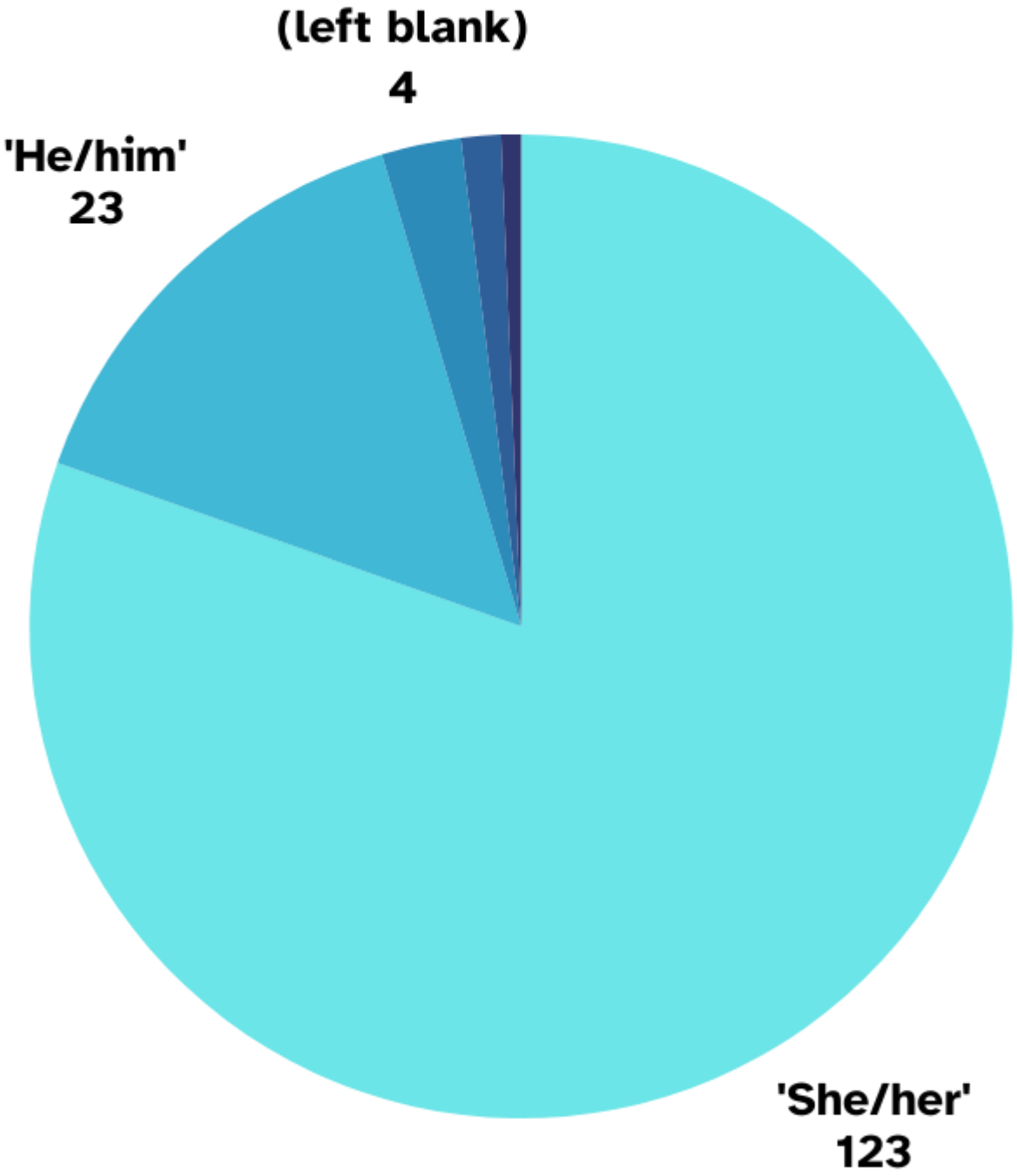
Survey sent to AIIHPC members August / September 2024

Age Range (years)



General Stats

Gender Identity



Total Responses = 151

General Stats

Religion / Spirituality

Participants

Christianity	107	
Spiritual but not religious	28	
Neither spiritual or religious	12	
Agnostic	1	
Buddhism	1	
Humanism	1	
Non Practicing Catholic	1	
		<u>Total Responses =</u> <u>151</u>

Role in Palliative / End of Life Care



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Nurse	69
Social Worker	18
Other	13
Occupational Therapist	10
Chaplain	9
Doctor	8
Pastoral Care Worker	5
Physiotherapist	5
Dietitian	5
Pharmacist	4
Psychologist	3

Total Responses = 151

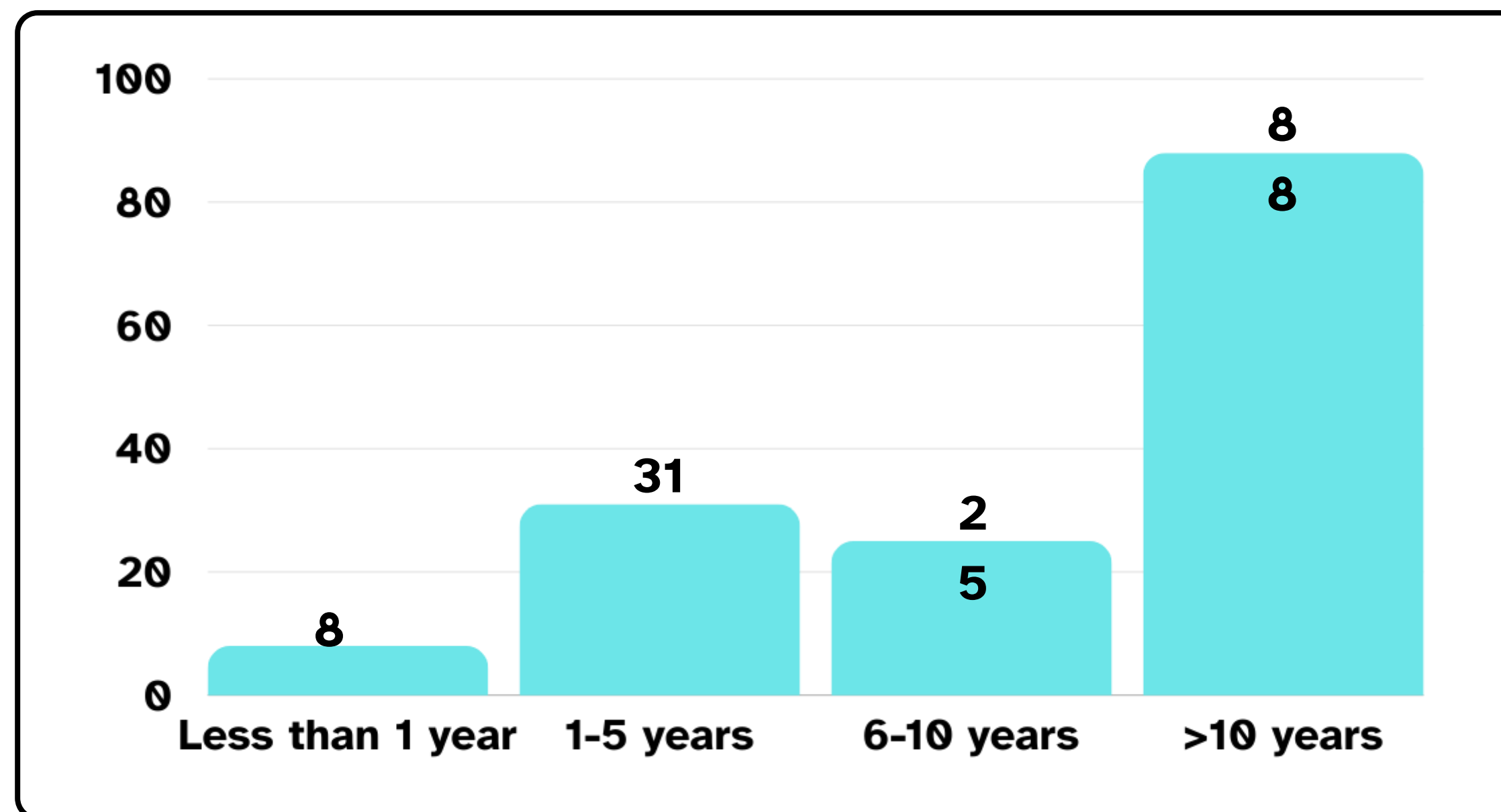


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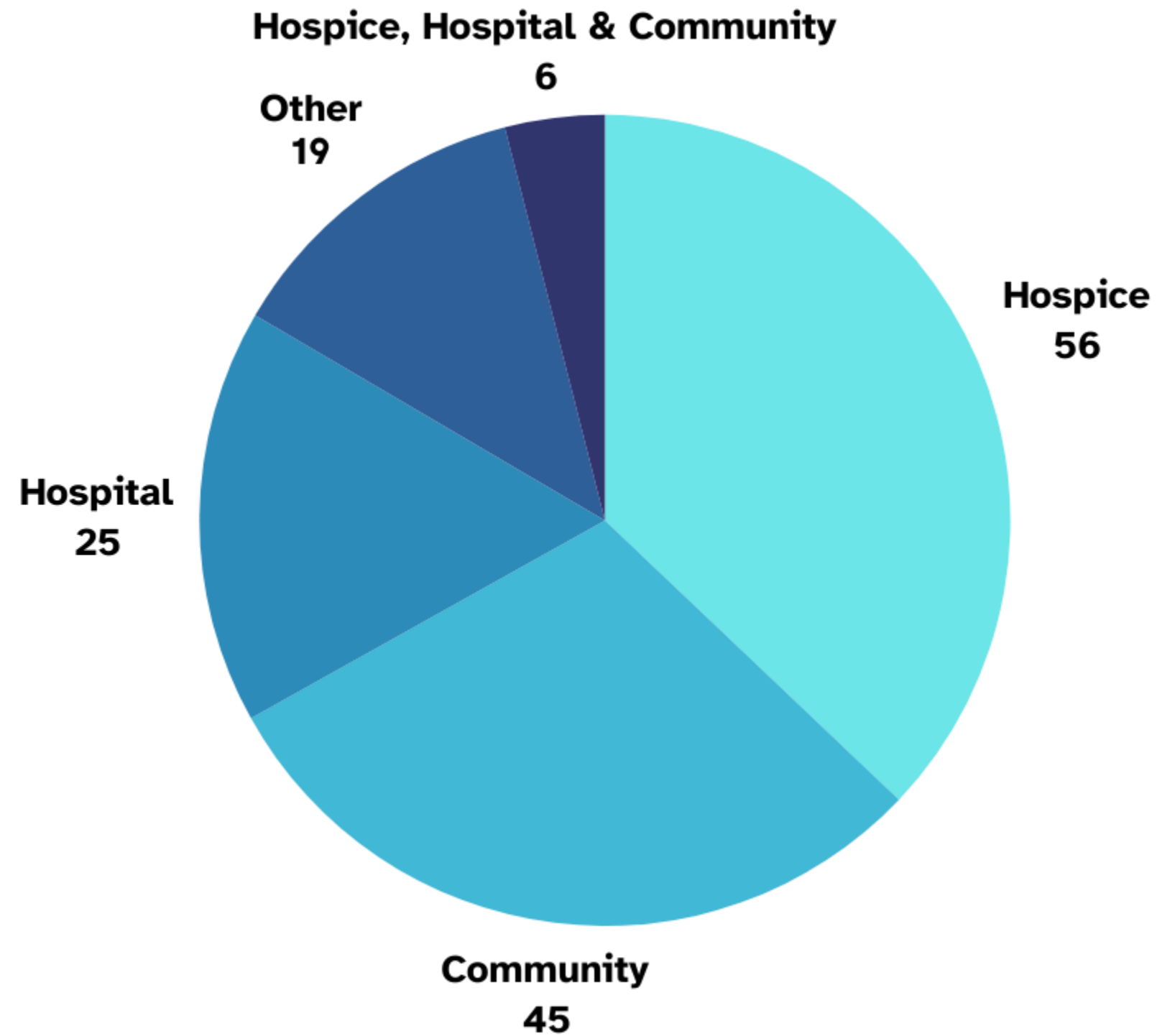
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How long have you been engaged in supporting people receiving palliative and end-of-life care?



What kind of service do you work in?



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Spiritual Care

Qualitative Data

**Could you describe in your own words the
role of spiritual care in palliative care?**

4 Core Spiritual Themes identified



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Theme 1

Spiritual Care as an **integral component** of Holistic Palliative Care involving patient and family

“Spiritual pain contributes to the overall 'total' pain experience that our children and families experience and it's essential that professionals know how to explore needs and offer the right support”

“Spiritual care is an essential component of offering holistic care”



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Theme 2

Spirituality, Personhood and Existential Issues

*'Taking into consideration in essence the
whole person - giving space to finding
meaning in death and dying'*



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Theme 3

Spiritual Care is nested within the context patients' personal values & beliefs

*'Spiritual care relates to attending to
and responding to the beliefs and
values of the person living with
advanced illness.'*



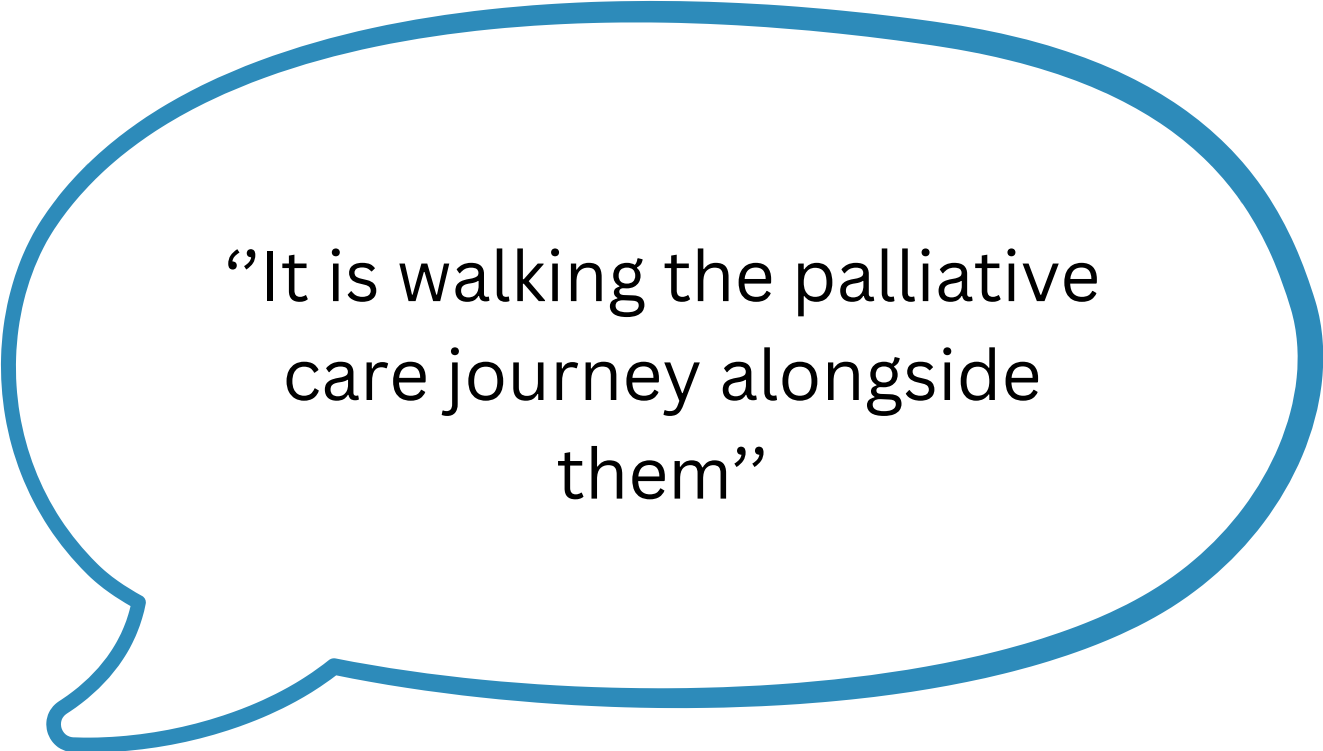
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Theme 4

Spiritual Care as a **form of guidance** through a journey



“It is walking the palliative
care journey alongside
them”



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Spiritual Care

Quantitative Data

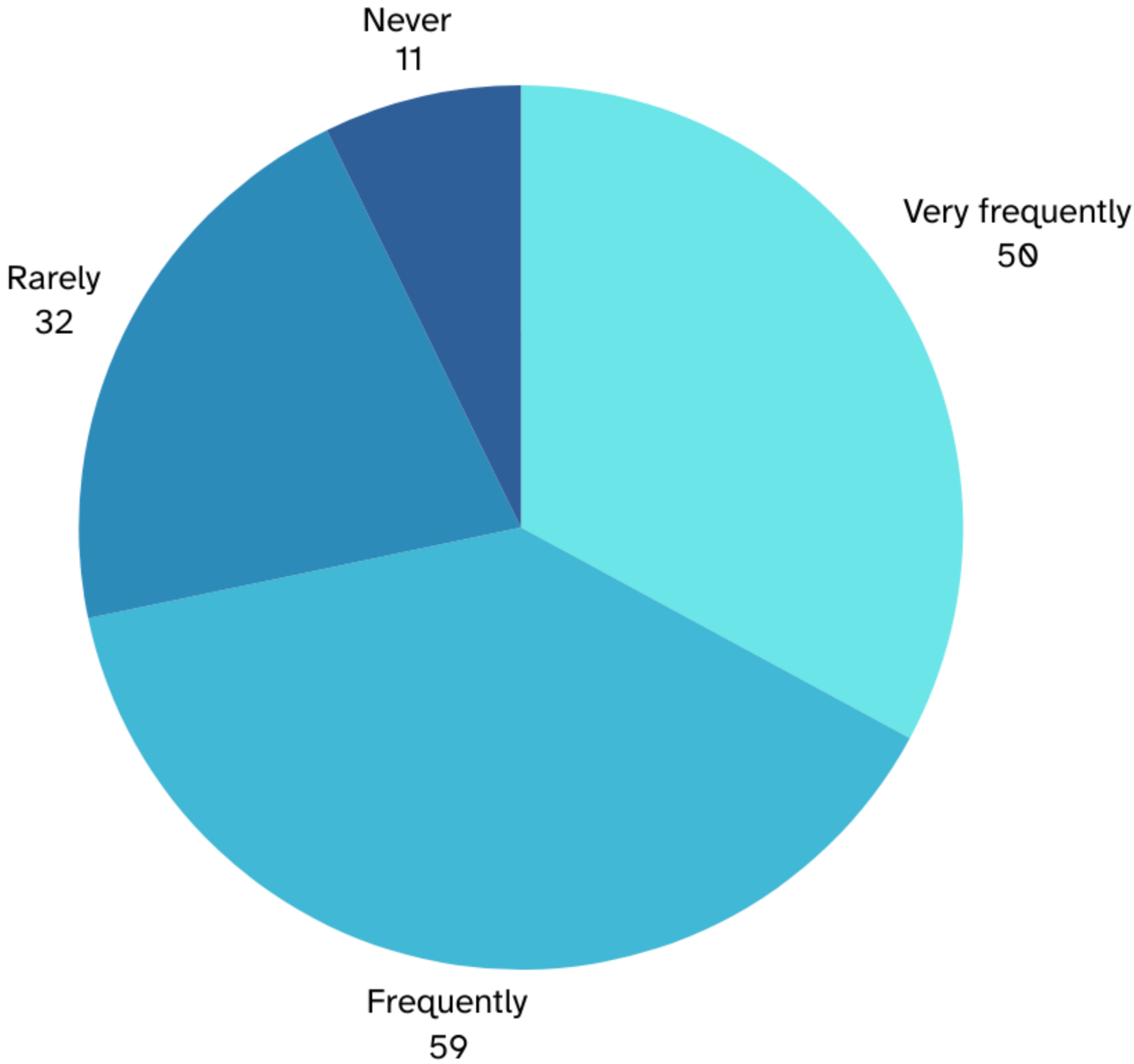
How often are you involved in assessing and supporting patients' and family or carers' spiritual needs?



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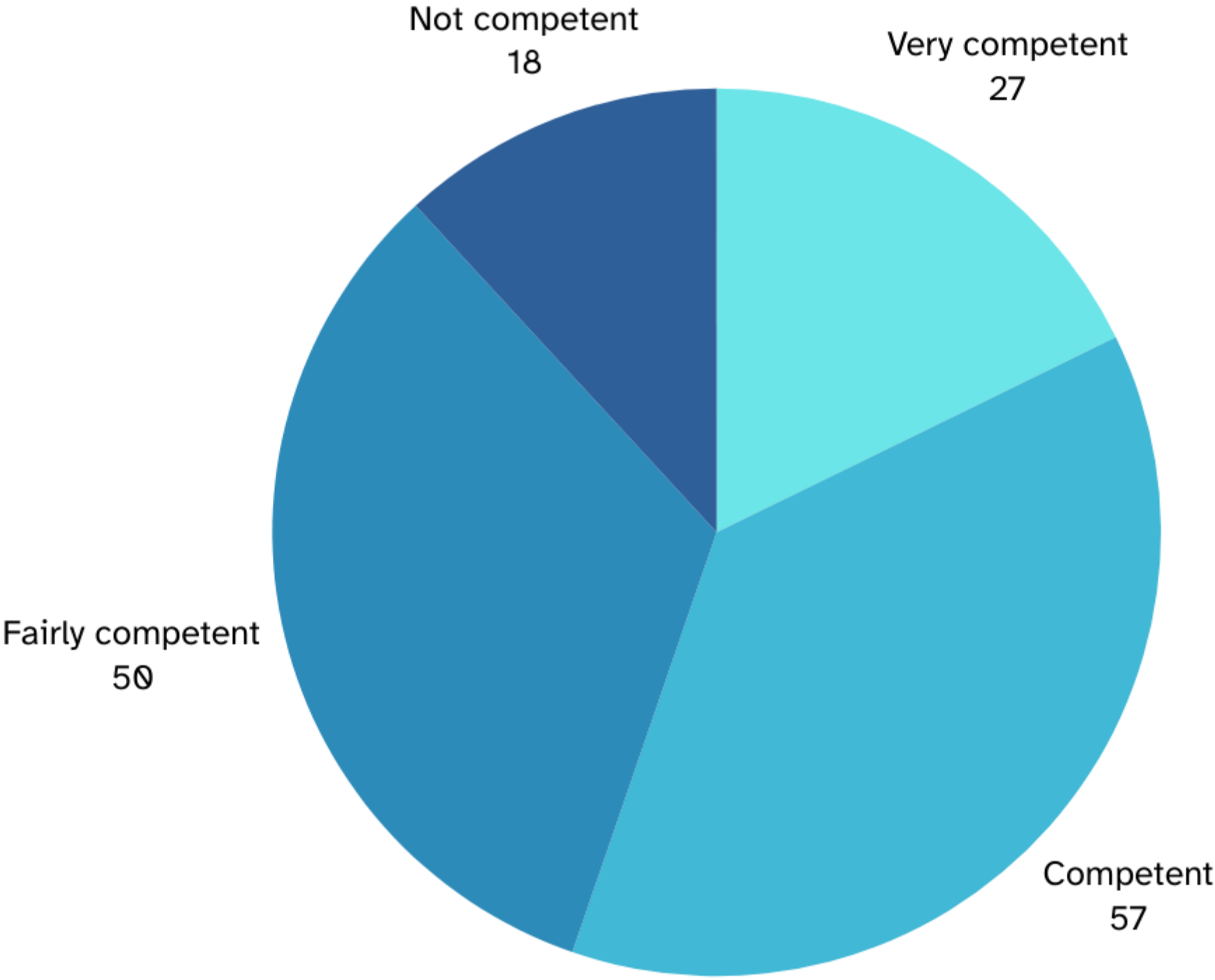
How would you rate your competence in supporting patients' and family or carers' spiritual needs?



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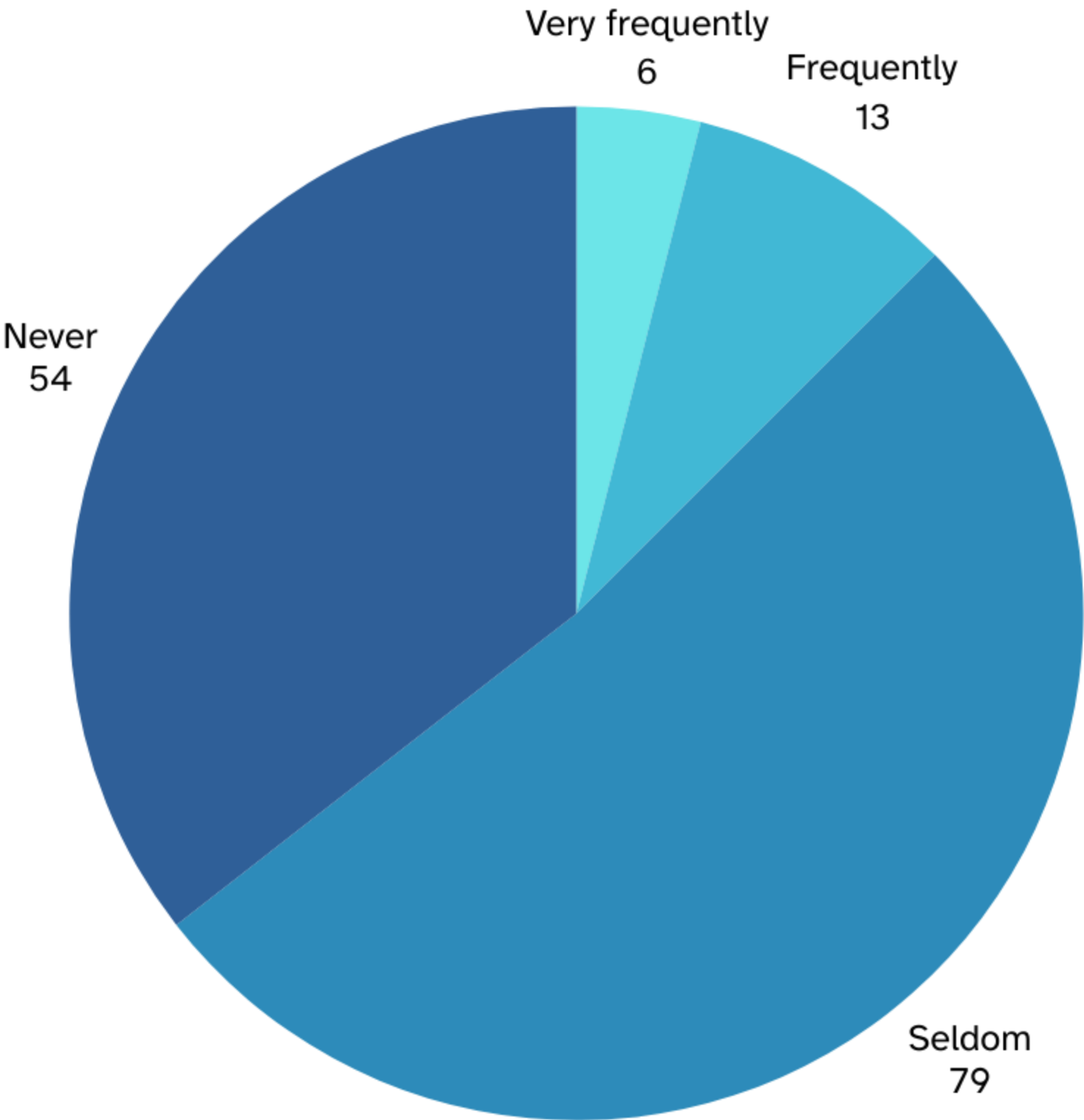
How often have you received training focused on spiritual care?



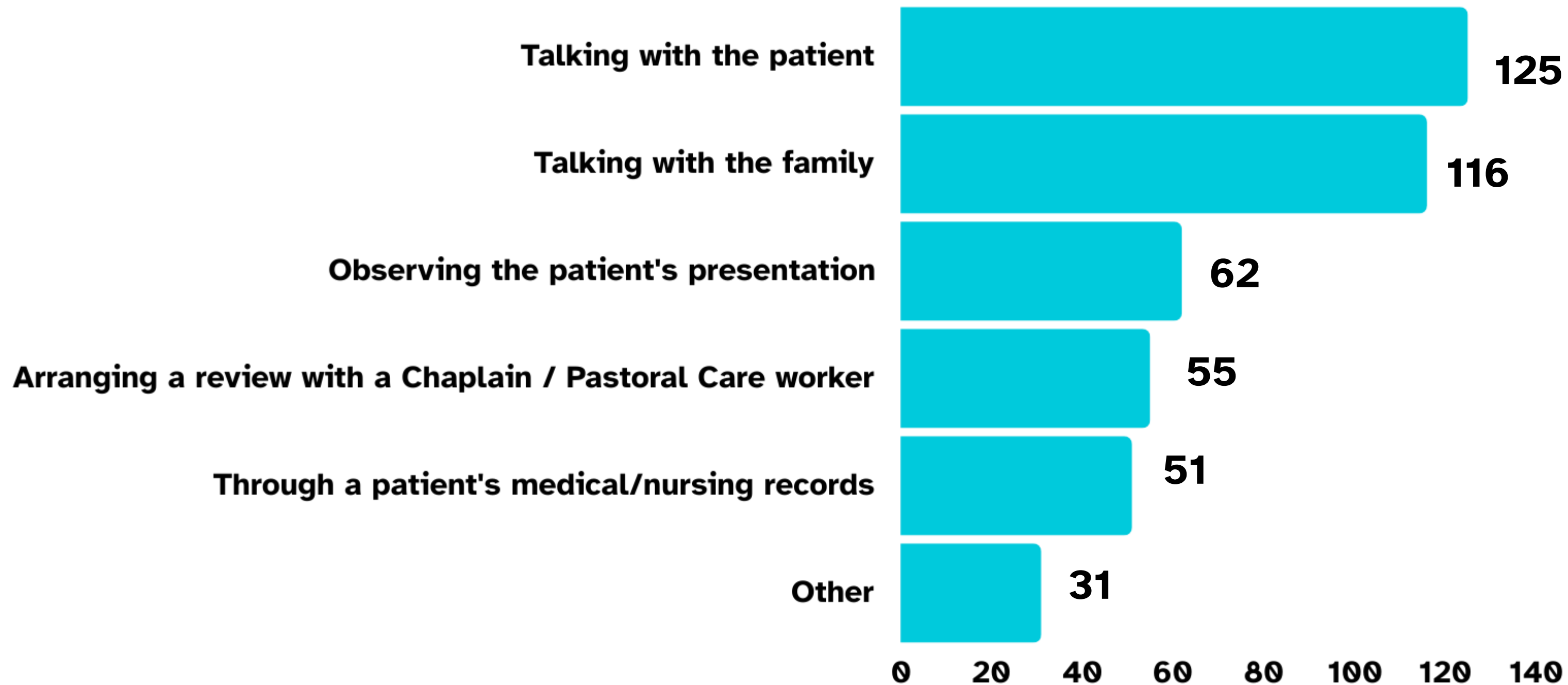
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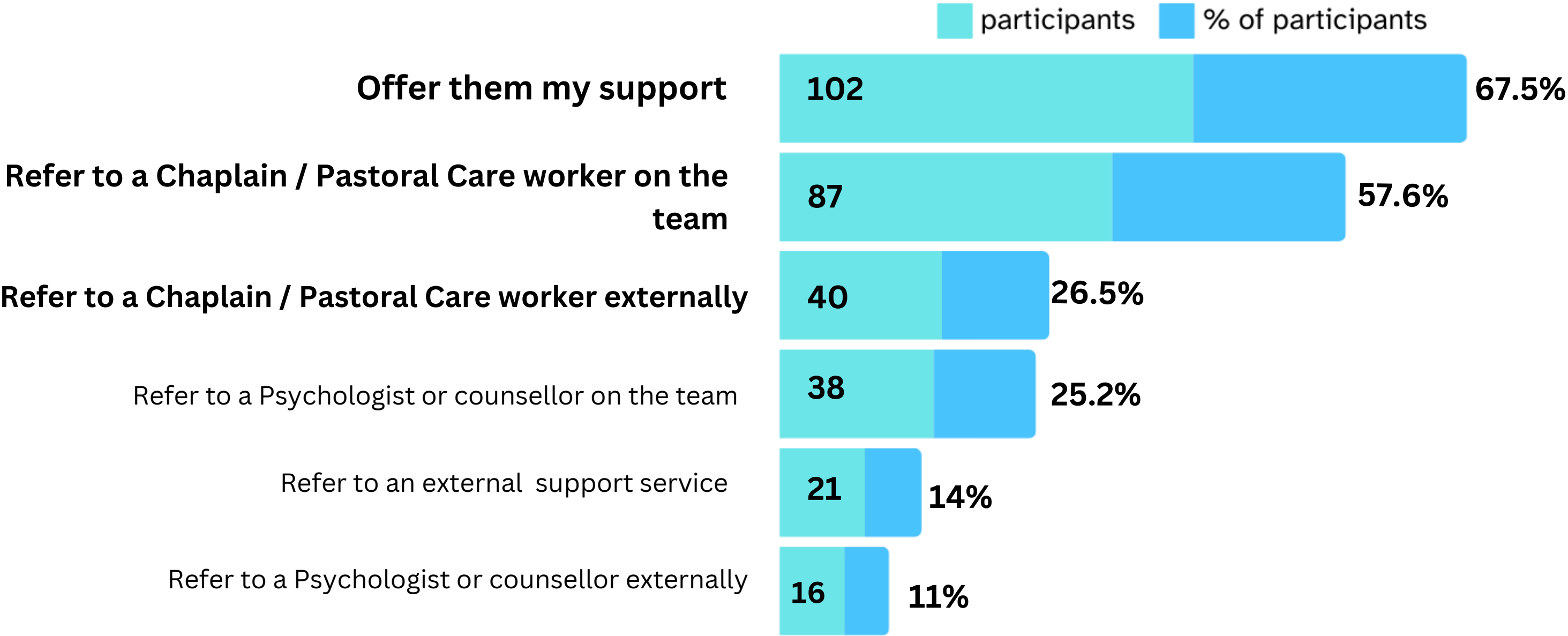
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How do you assess patients' and family / carers' spiritual needs?



If you identify any type of spiritual needs in a patient or family / carer, what do you do next?



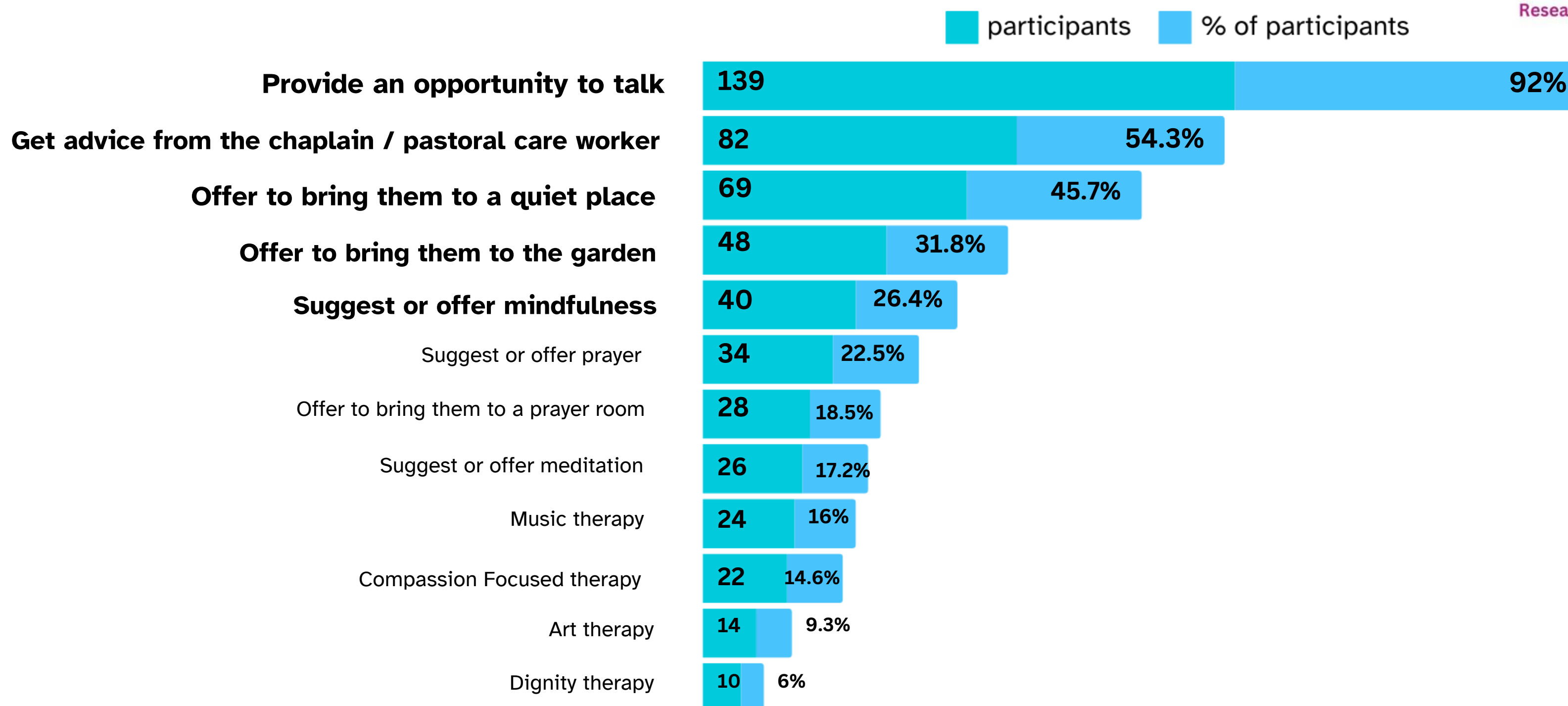


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What interventions and approaches do you use to support patients' or family / carers' spiritual needs?



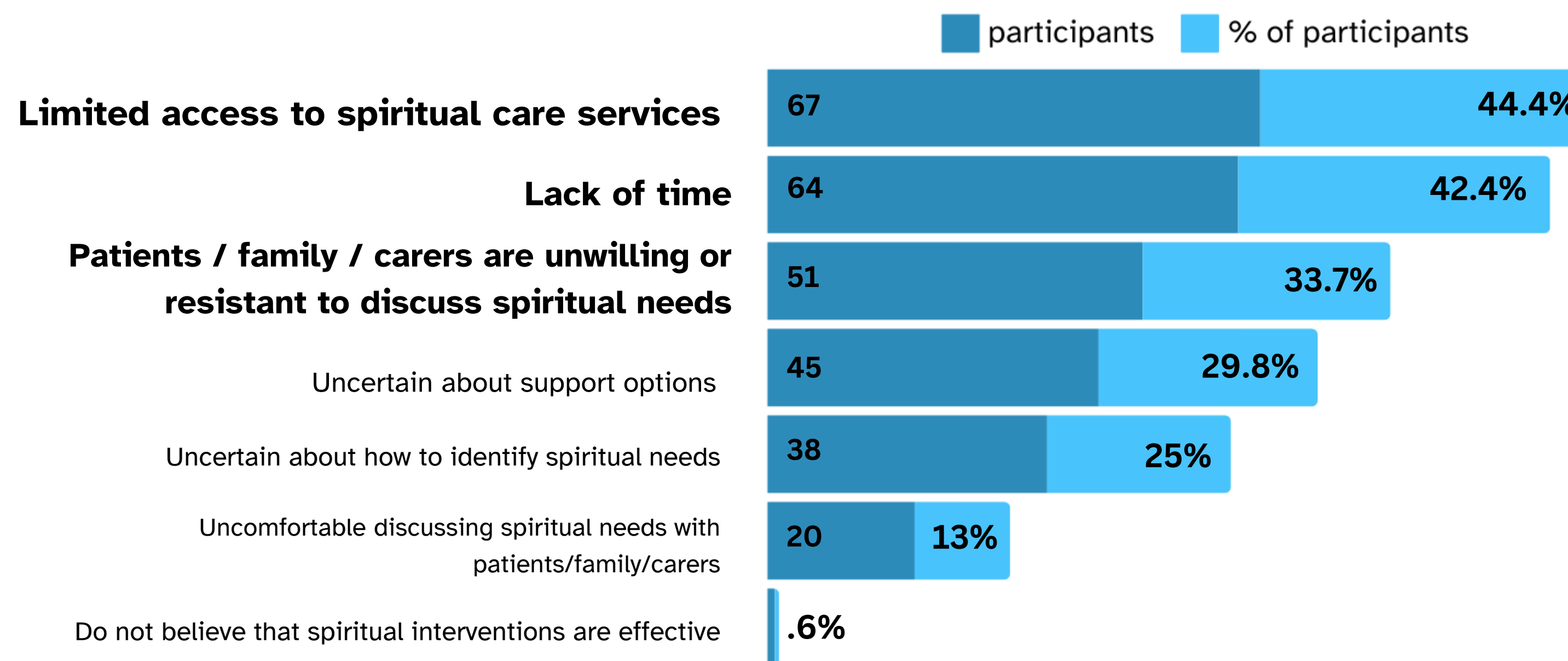


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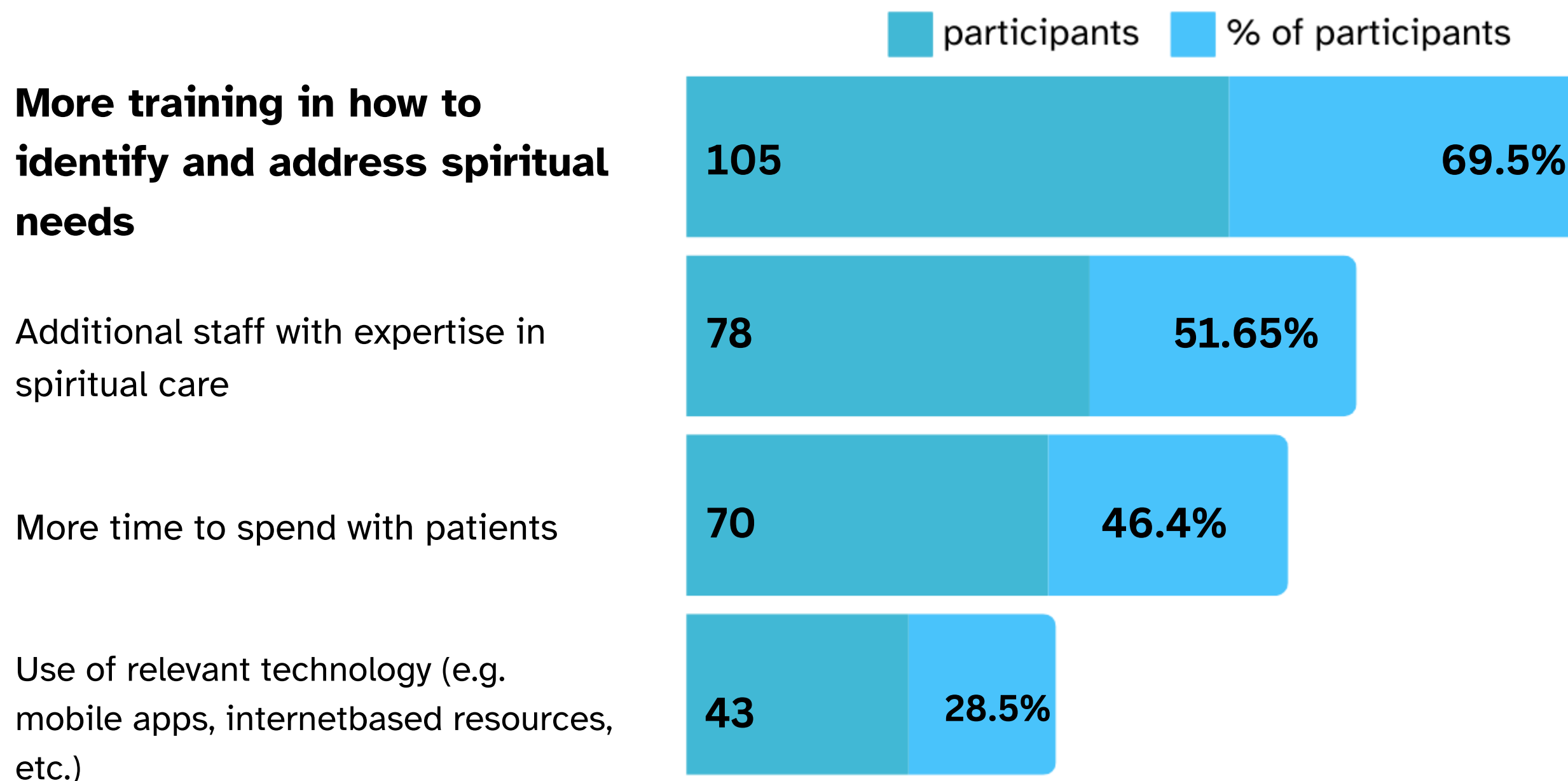
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What are the main challenges for the delivery of spiritual care in palliative care?



What resources could help you / your organisation / team address spiritual needs more effectively?





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Psychological Care

Qualitative Data

**Could you describe in your own words the role
of psychological care in palliative care?**

4 Core Psychological Themes identified



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Theme 1

Psychological care as a **cornerstone** of the holistic palliative care model

“Provides a safe non-judgemental space where they feel enabled to express any thoughts, feelings and emotions makes them feel heard, valued and actually has a huge impact on their physical symptoms and pain”



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Theme 2

**Psychological care at end of life involves
facilitating a supportive therapeutic space with both the
patient and their family**

*"Gives patients the opportunity to
express anxiety or psychological
wrestling they are living with, via
therapeutic conversation"*

*"It provides a safe space for
patients and family to articulate
what they are thinking or feeling"*



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Theme 3

**Psychological care at the end of life focuses on the
alleviation of psychological distress and the enhancement of
patients' existing resilience / coping strategies**

*"It supports individuals who are
experiencing psychological distress.... while
focusing on enhancing psychological
resources among all patients facing death"*



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Theme 4

Psychological care at the end of life involves
leveraging patients' past experiences to deal skillfully with
present / future challenges

*"Discussing how previous to
diagnosis, what coping mechanisms
or strategies were in place"*

*"Exploring what mechanisms they
have used to help them through
difficult times"*



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Psychological Care

Quantitative Data

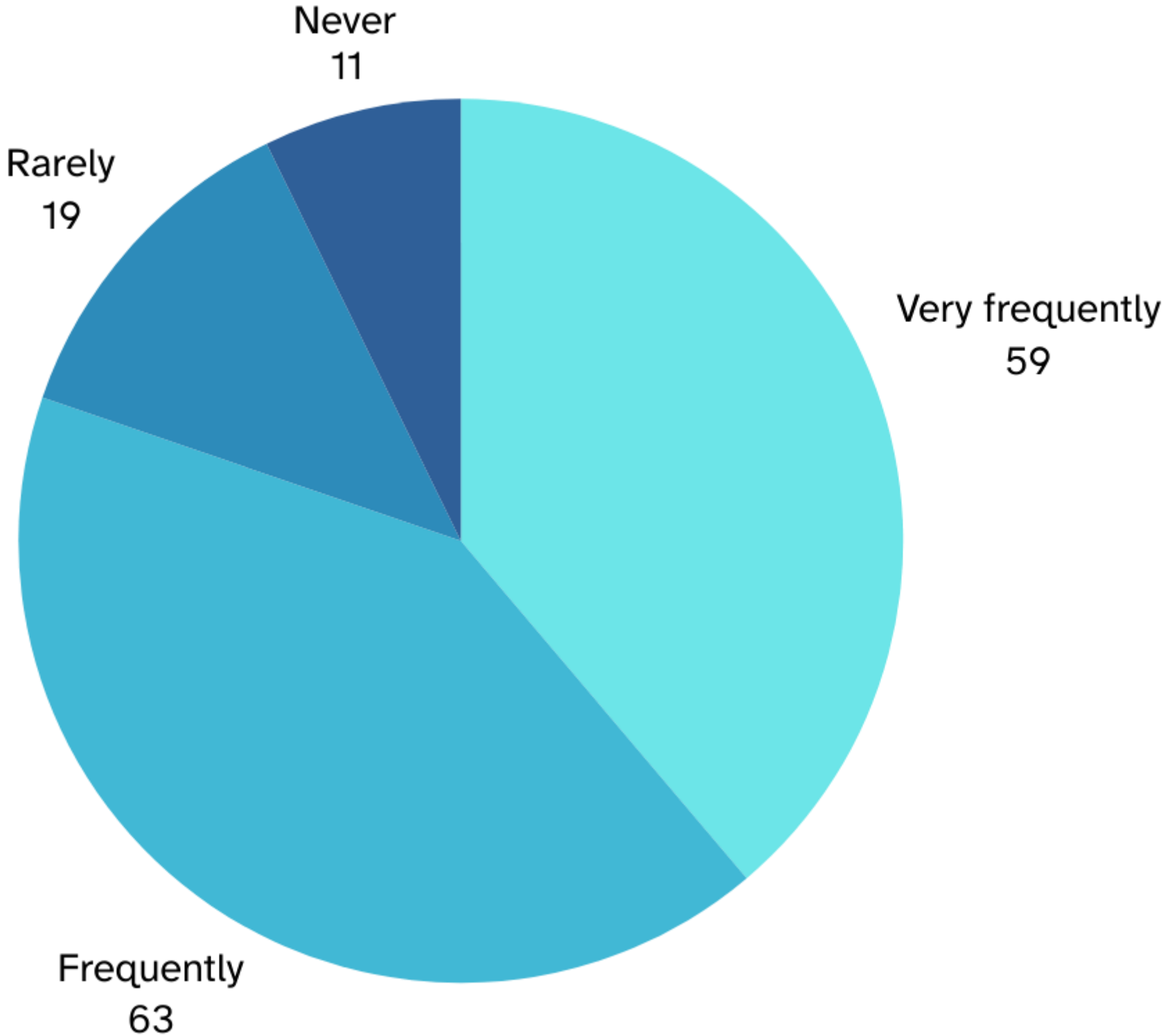
How often are you involved in assessing and supporting patient and family / carers' psychological needs?



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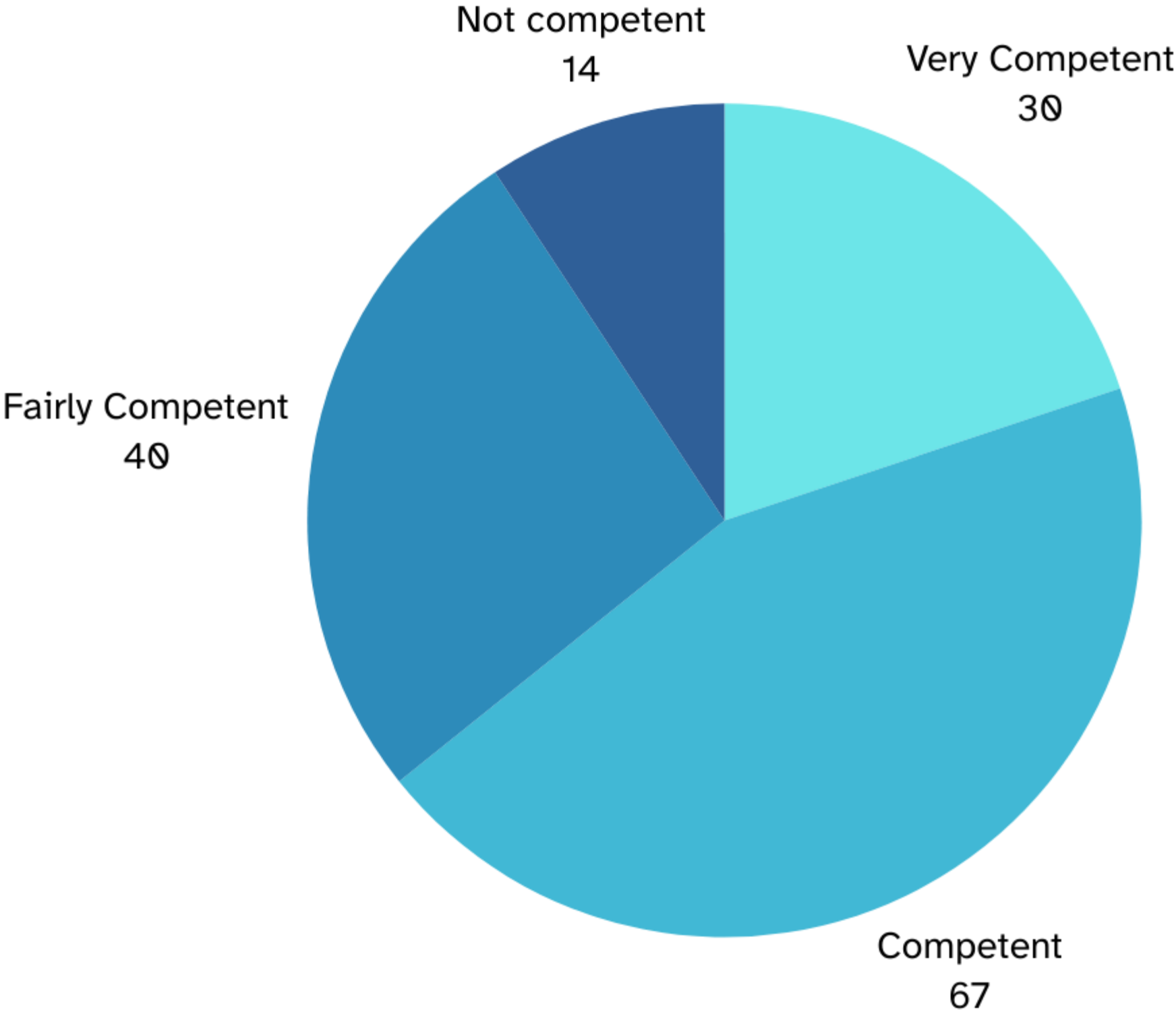
How would you rate your competence in supporting patients' and family / carers' psychological needs?



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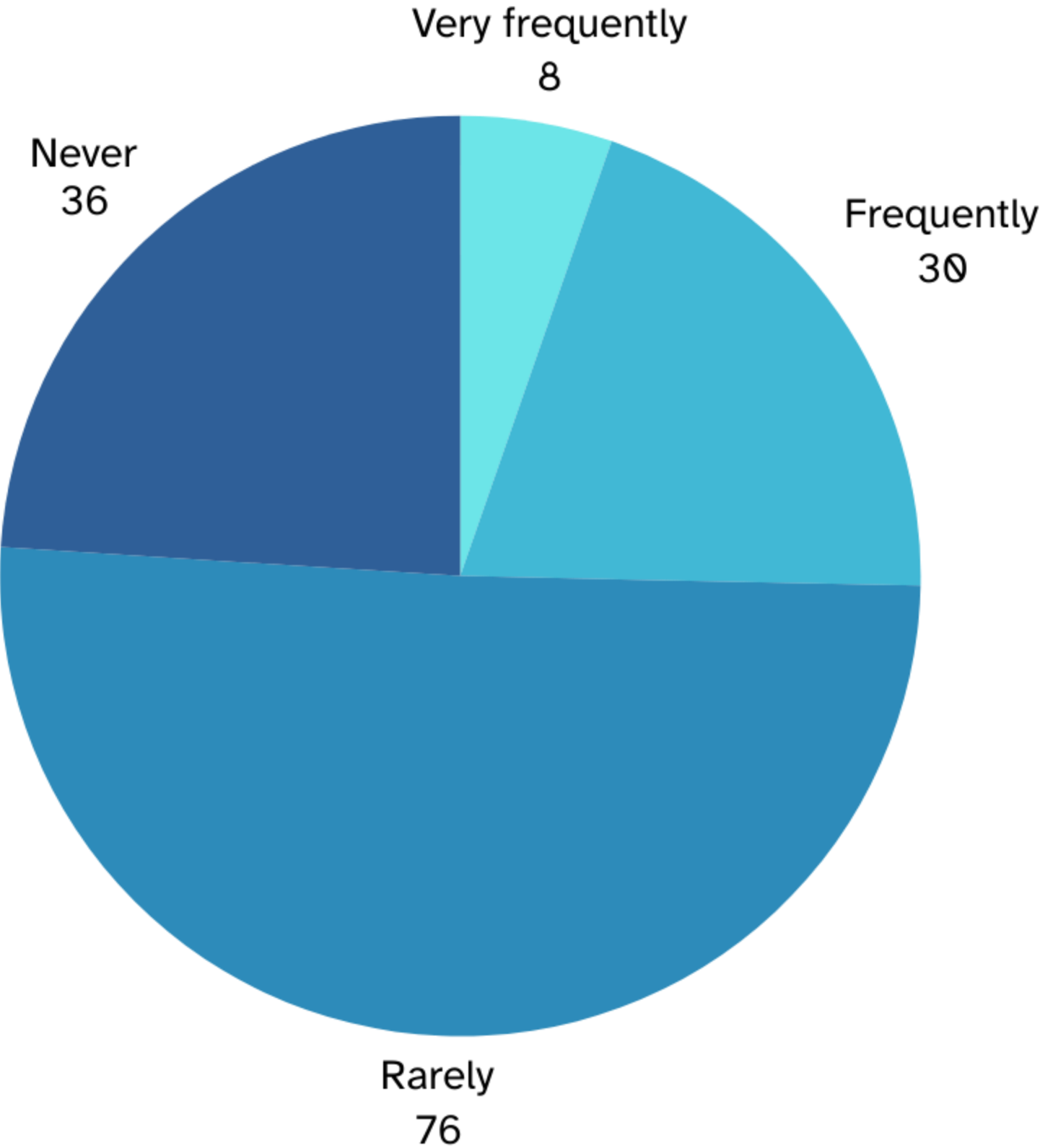
How often have you received training focused on psychological care?



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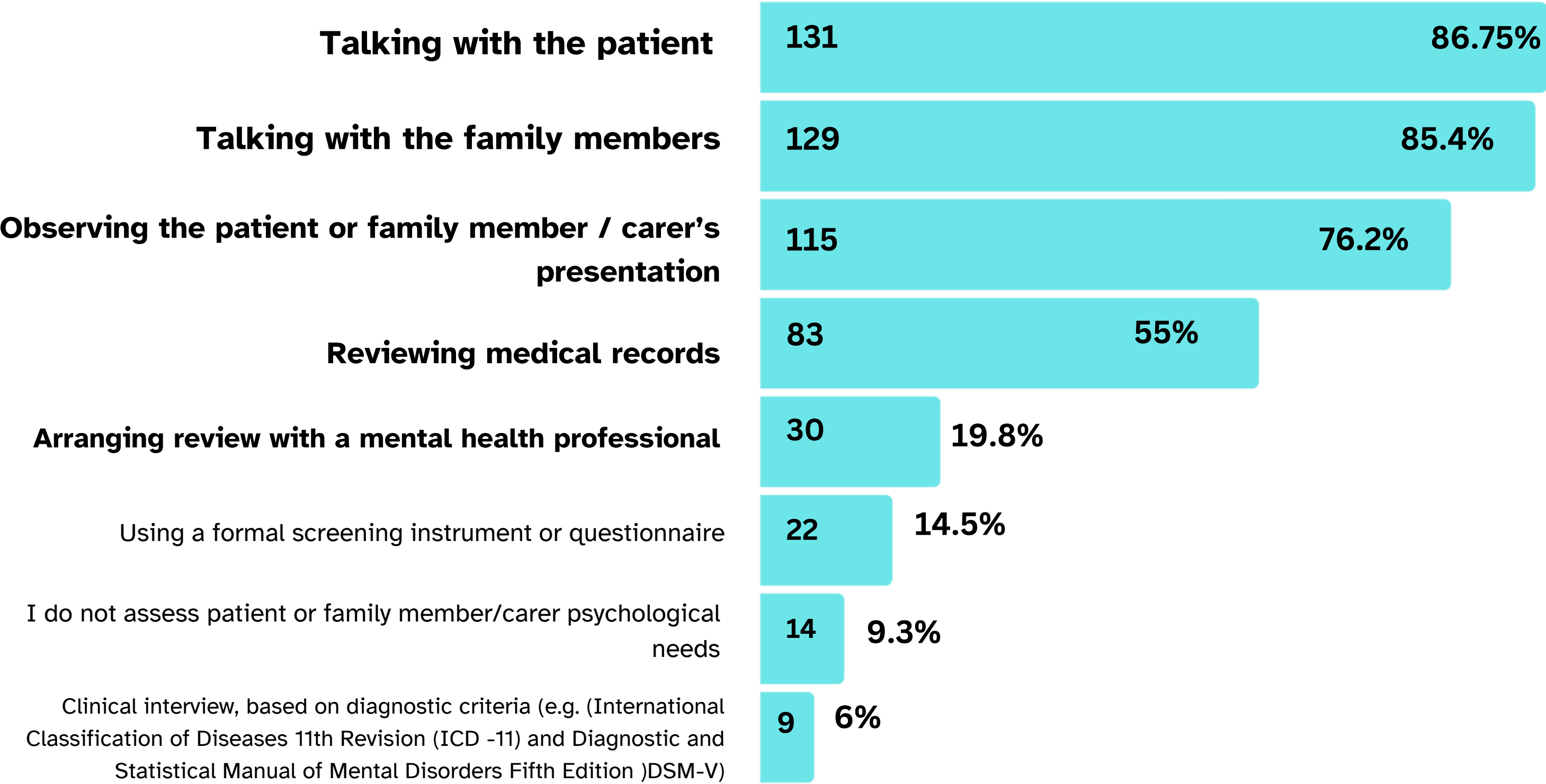
How do you assess patients’ and family / carers’ psychological needs?



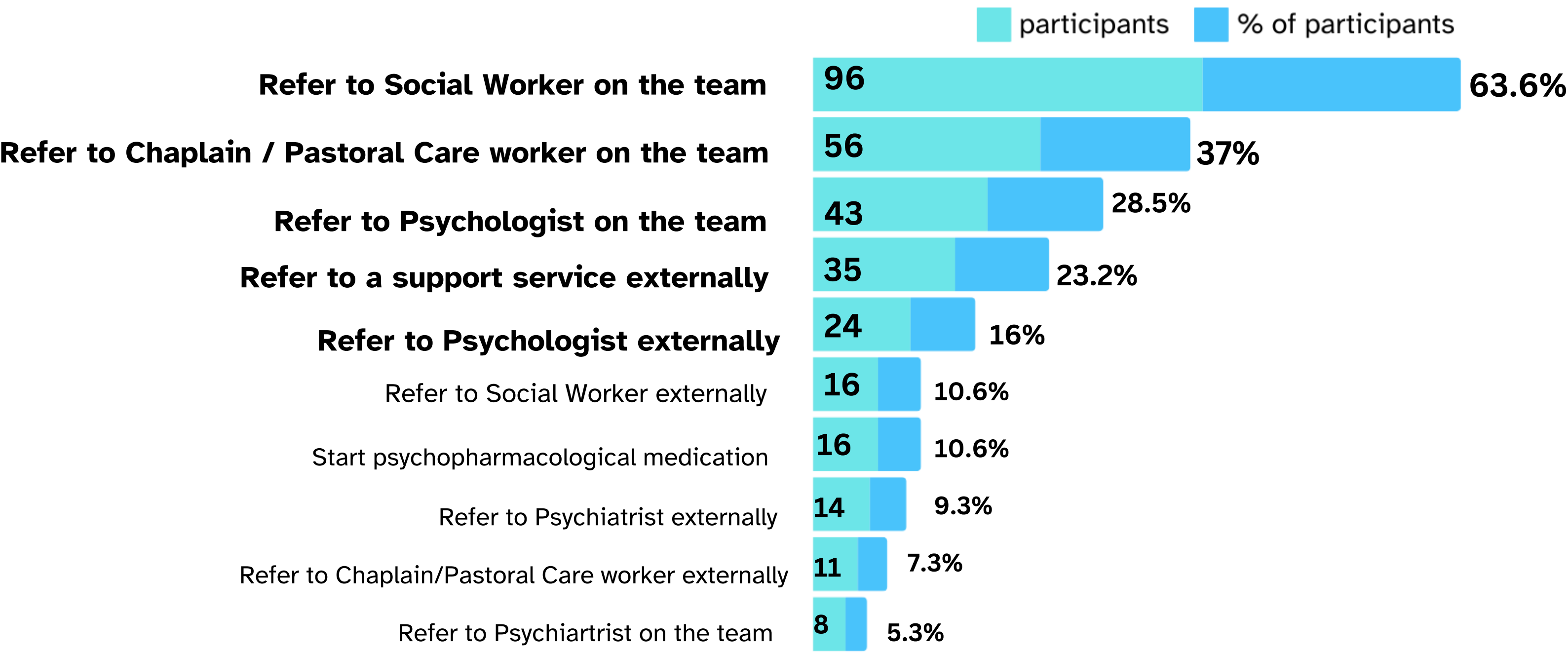
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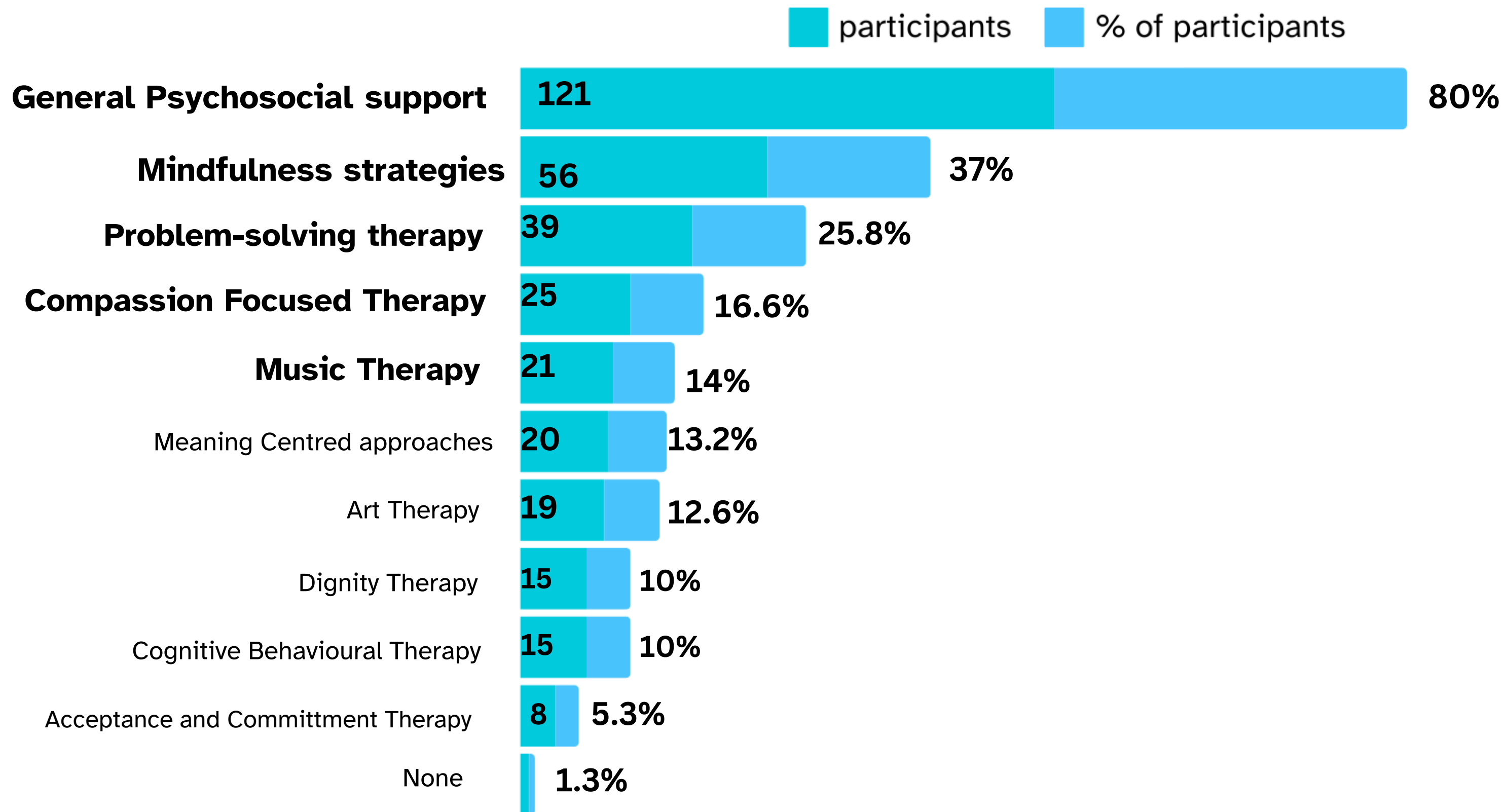
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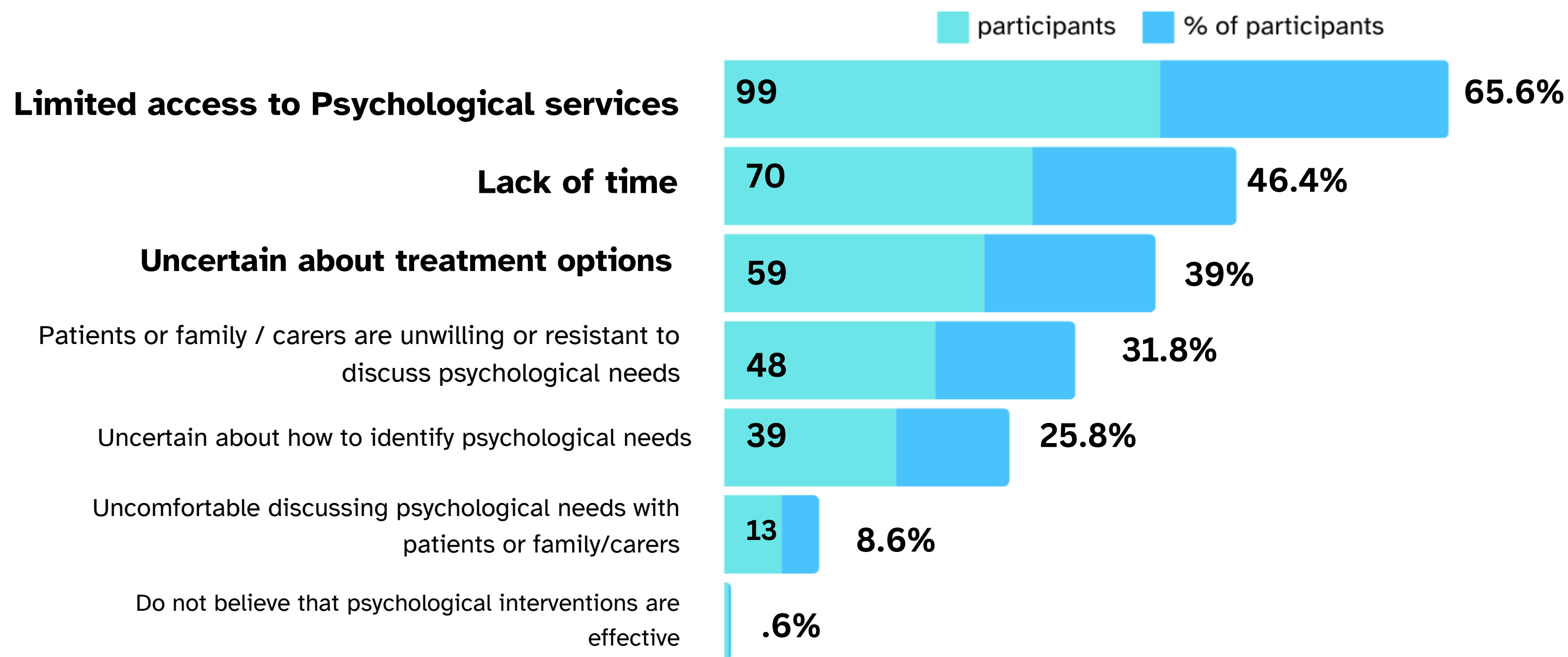
If you identify any type of psychological needs in a patient or family / carer, what do you do next?



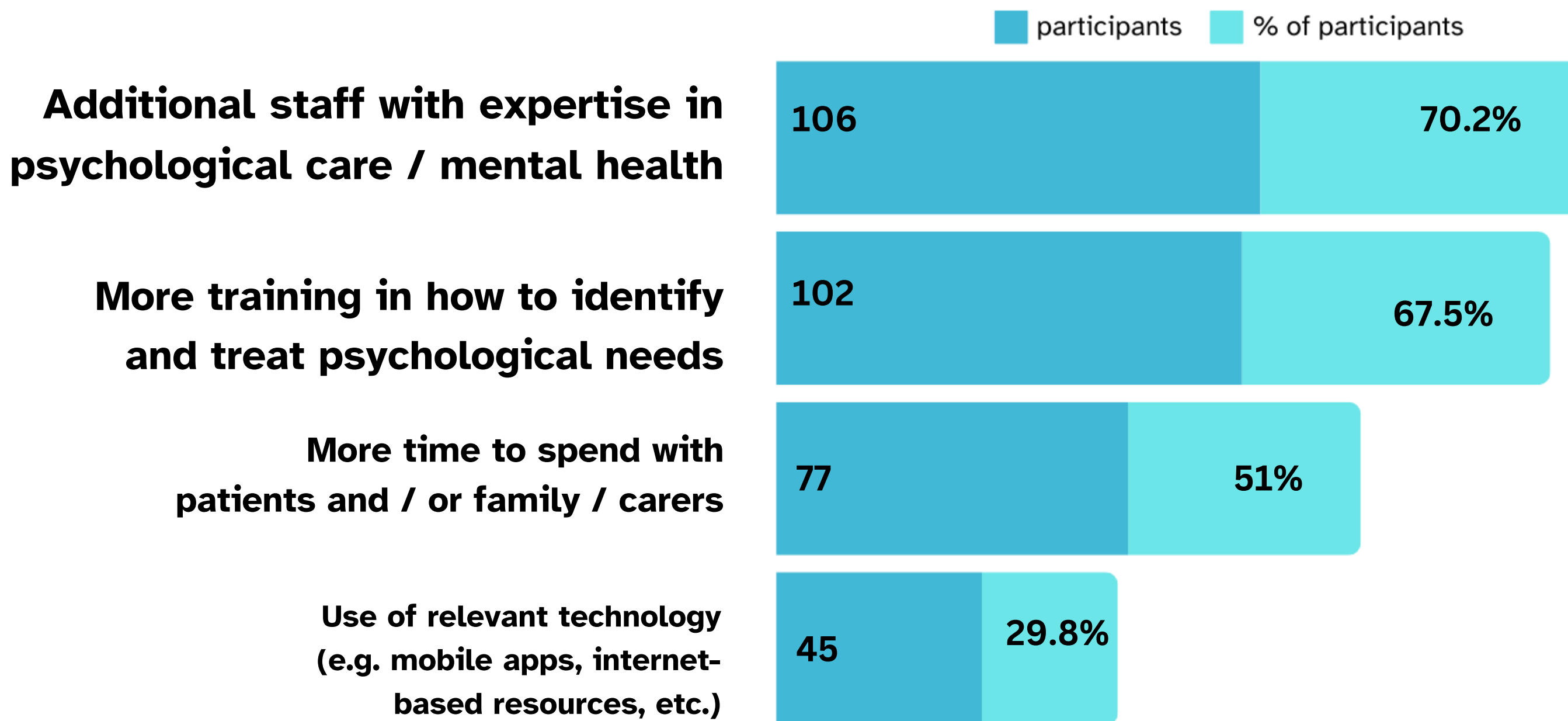
What (nonpharmacological) approaches do you use to support patients' or family / carers' psychological needs?



What are the main challenges for delivery of psychological care in palliative care?



What resources could help you / your organisation / team address psychological needs more effectively among your patients and their family / carers?





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What further training would help you to identify and support patients' and family / carers' spiritual and psychological care needs?

Spiritual Care

- Caring for one self
- Practical skills to address spirituality
- Skills to identify and assess spiritual need
- Better understanding of spirituality and religion
- Greater awareness of culture and those who may feel excluded or ostracised

Psychological Care

- Training on assessment and identification of psychological needs
- Knowing when to refer and who to
- Signposting to Support services
- Creating communication and conversations
- Mental Health engagement
- Support in dealing with grief and loss