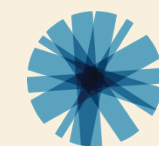




Bifrost program evaluation ▲

October 8th, 2025

Conducted by: The Happiness Research Institute



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About the project

The results presented in this report are based on responses to an online survey developed by The Happiness Research Institute for the purpose of evaluating and gaining insight into the impact of Bifrost activities & programs.

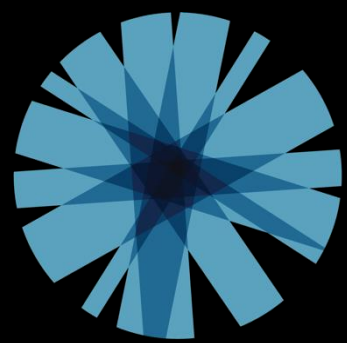
The evaluation focused on exploring the broader wellbeing effects of Bifrost activities. A key motivation was to understand whether participation in this recreational community can foster inclusive social connections and help counteract isolation or exclusion, especially among individuals who do not thrive in other communities due to, for instance, discrimination.



About Bifrost

Bifrost is a national association that offers creative activities for young people including cosplay, roleplaying games, military simulations and much more.

The activities are run by local programs all over Denmark.



About the Happiness Research Institute

The Happiness Research Institute is an independent think tank specializing in wellbeing, happiness and quality of life. The Institute's goal is to show how measurements of people's wellbeing can be used inform programmatic, budgetary, and/or policy decisions to improve population wellbeing.



Highlights

1. Recreational communities are powerful wellbeing engines

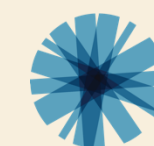
*Particularly important for young people that face exclusion in traditional settings (such as at school)

2. Participants report exceptionally high levels of belonging and inclusion within the Bifrost community

*More so than in other recreational club/school settings

3. Participants feel that this inclusive environment fosters real-world skill development

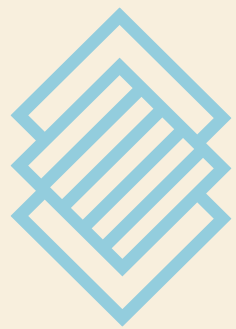
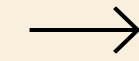
*By offering safe spaces to explore, participants report e.g., an increased sense of confidence, greater comfort speaking in front of others, and social life improvements (to name a few)



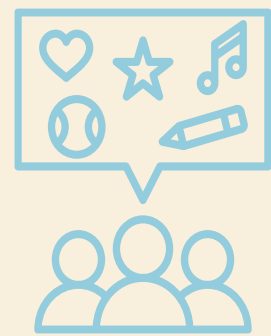
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Report Chapters



01.
Methods
& sample



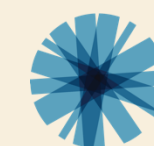
02.
Recreation &
wellbeing



03.
Connection &
belonging



04.
Confidence
& skill-building

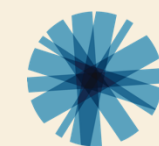
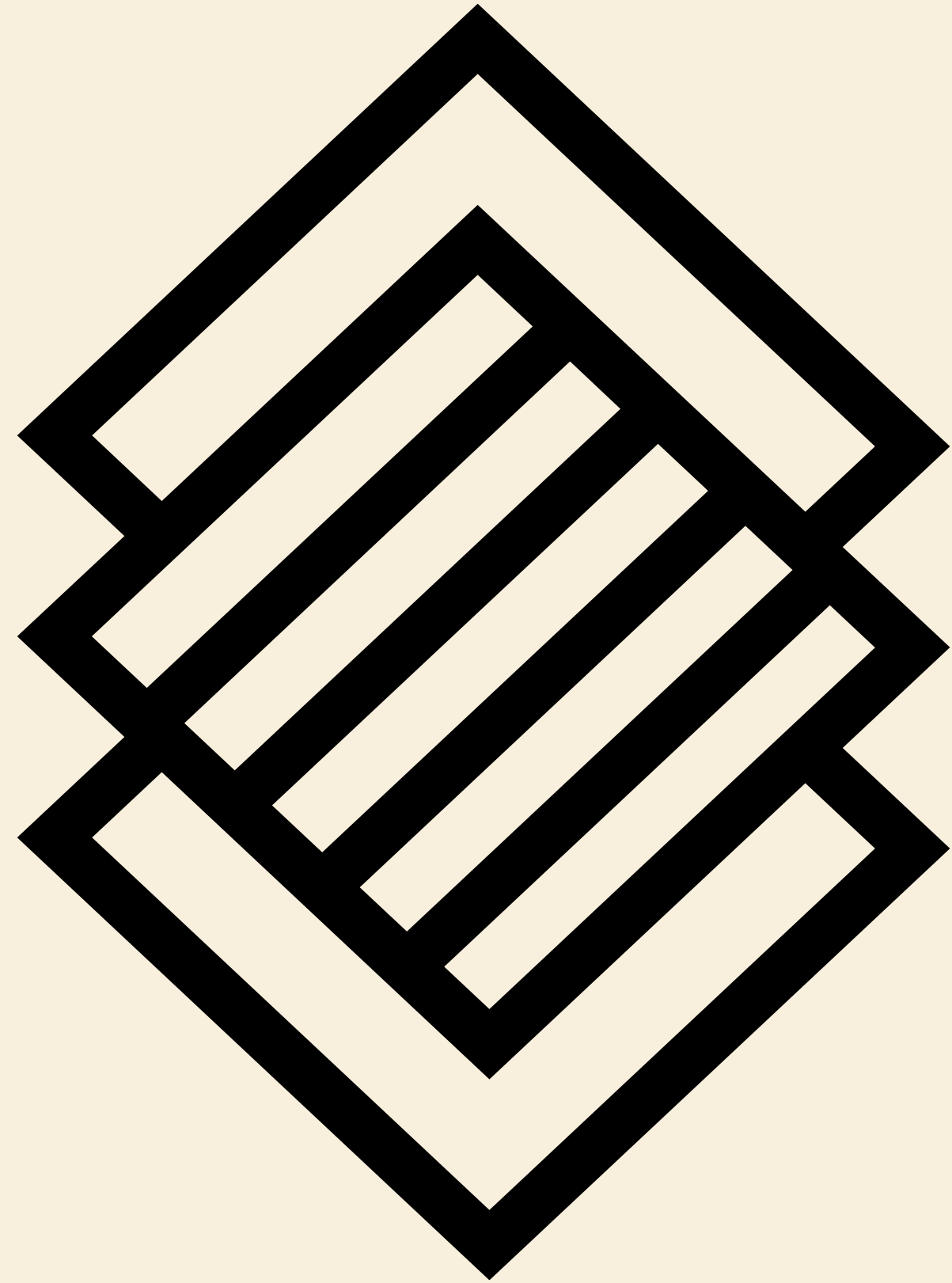


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01.

Methods & sample



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Survey method



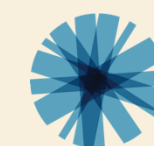
Respondents were asked to complete an online survey centered around themes of social connection, collaborative skill-building, self-esteem, subjective wellbeing, and general experiences with local programs.



Both Bifrost leaders and participants (8 years of age and older) were eligible to respond to the survey, which was offered online in Danish between December 2024 and September 2025.



These results are based on responses to a single timepoint survey.
**In light of a lower response rate, the findings reported should be viewed as indicative of meaningful trends rather than statistically significant results.*



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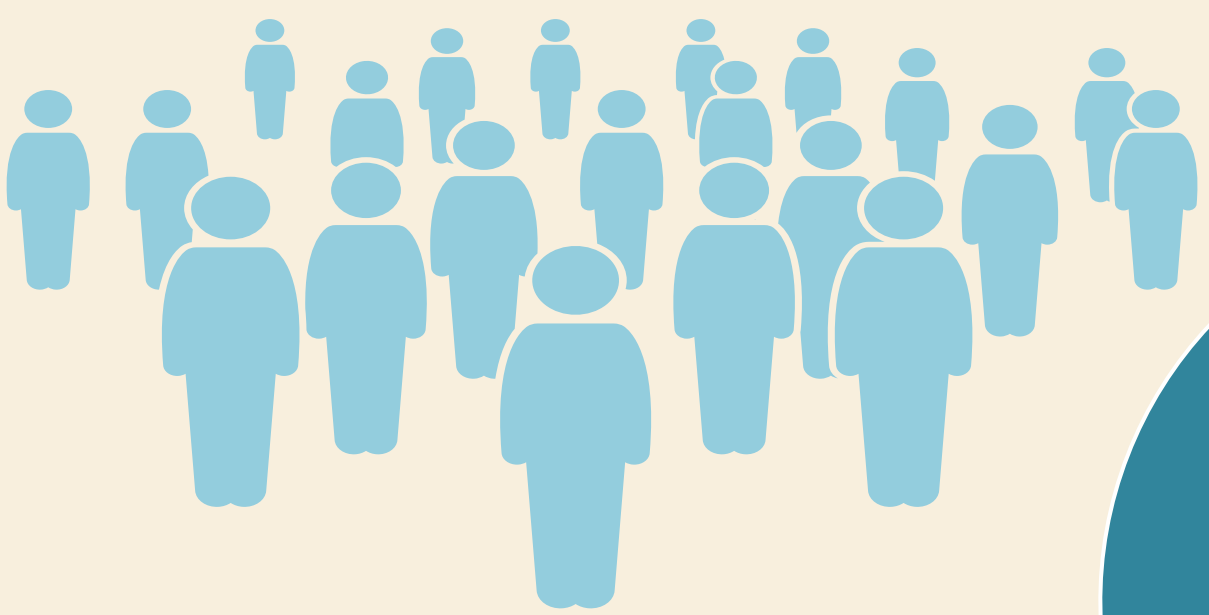
Sample

AT A GLANCE

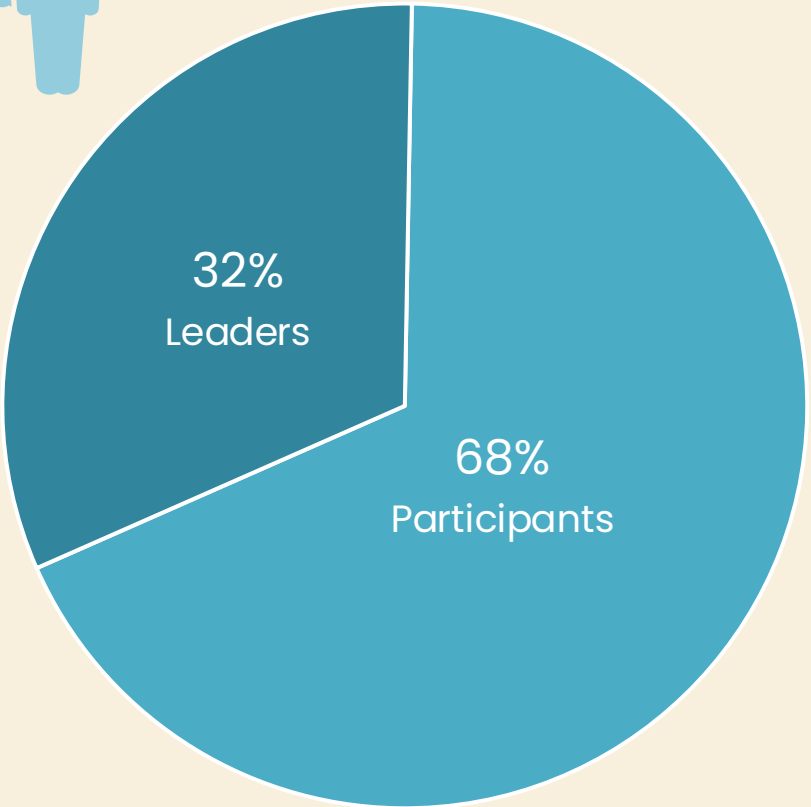
As of September 15th 2025:

69 survey responses were collected.





Demographics

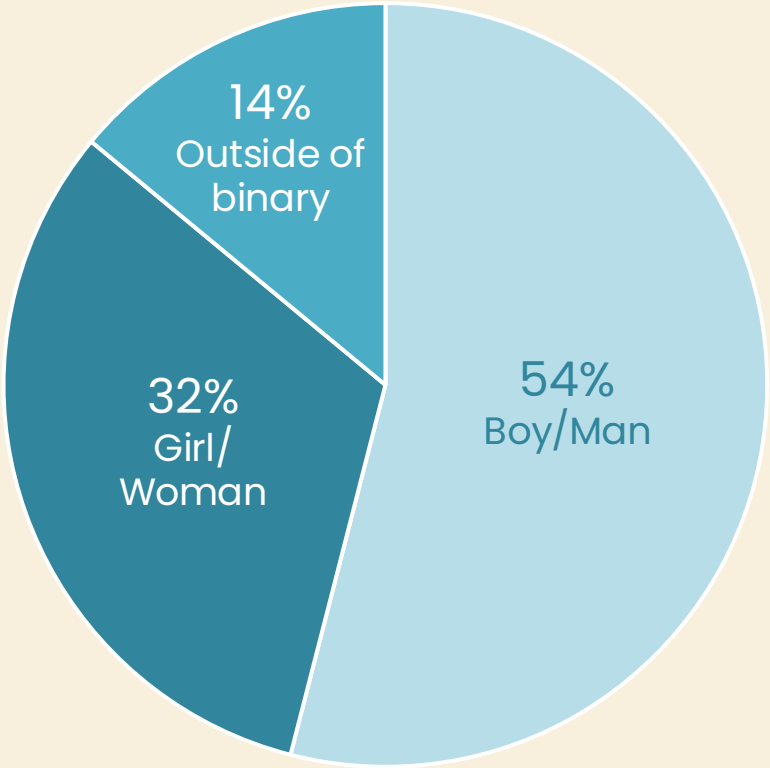


Of the 69 respondents:

- **32%** were **leaders**
- **68%** were **participants**

The **average age** of the group was **21.4** years of age

- Leader respondents were, on average, **28.4** years of age
- Participant respondents were, on average, **18.2** years of age



In terms of **gender identity**:

- **54%** of respondents were **men**
- **32%** were **women**
- **14%** **did not identify with this binary**



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Primary & secondary activities

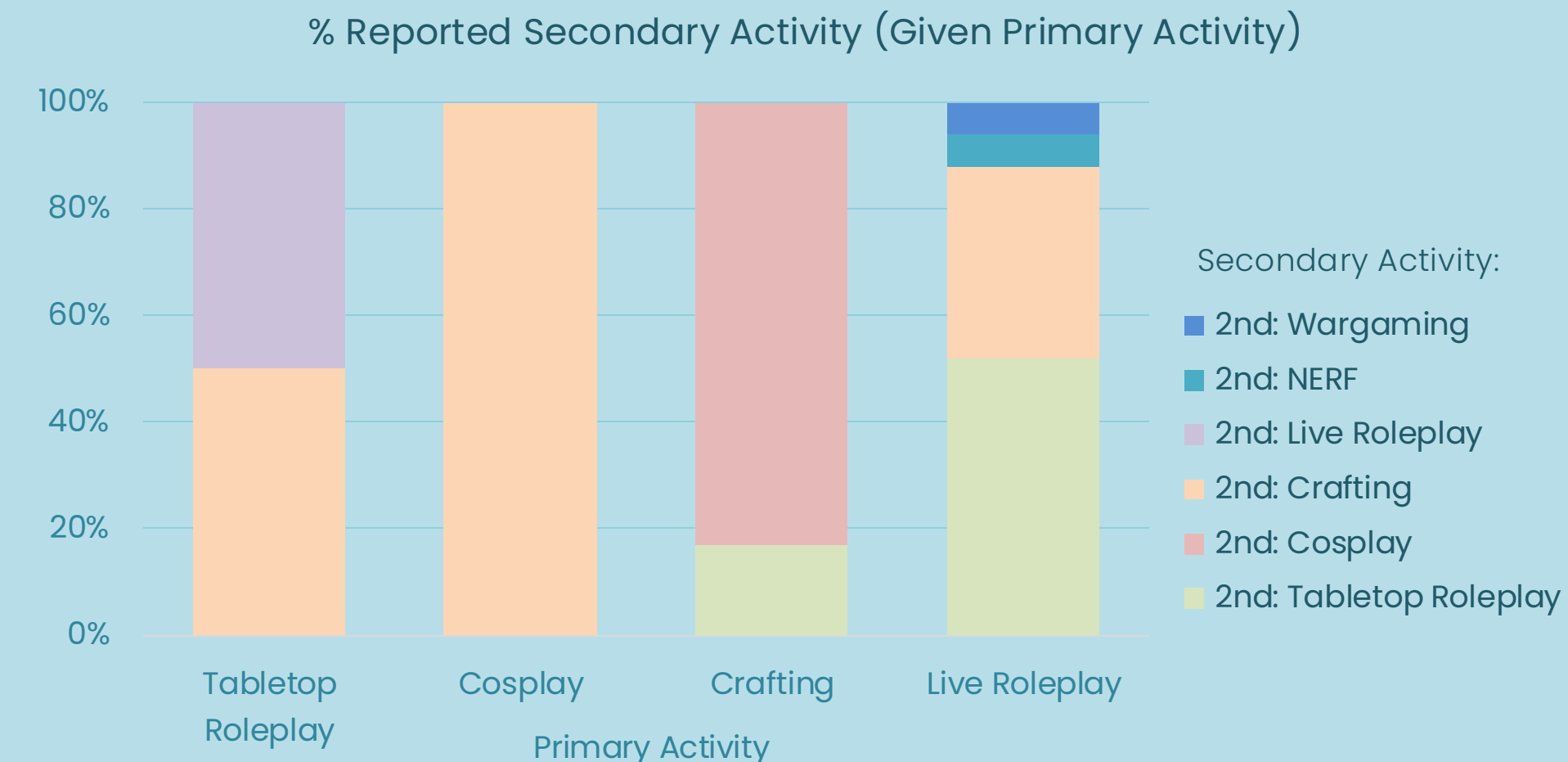
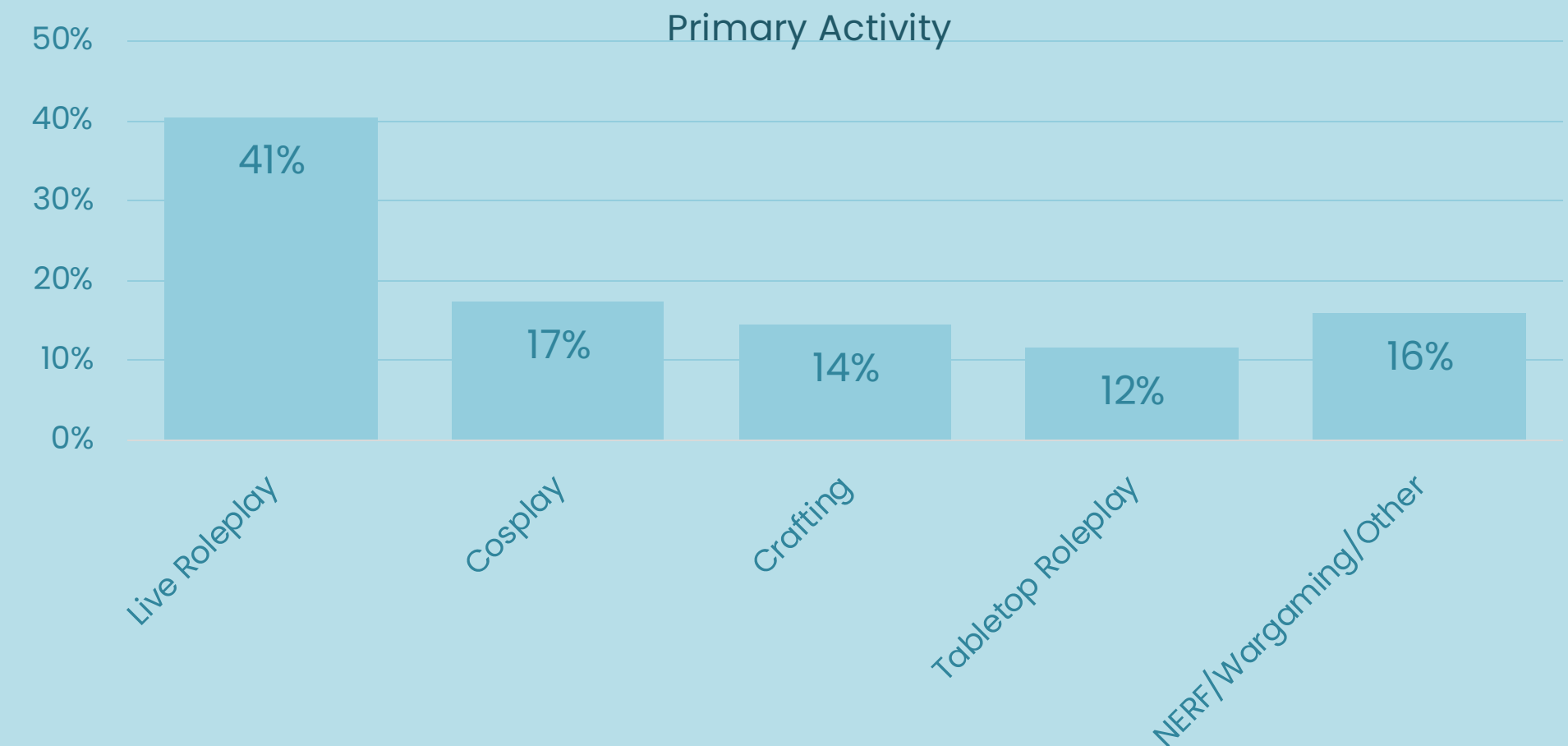
Bifrost meetings involve, and often combine, a variety of activities.

When asked about the **primary activity** of the local organization they attend, most survey respondents reported **live roleplay (41%)**, followed by **cosplay (17%)**, **crafting (14%)**.

When asked whether they also take part in any secondary activities during meetings, **certain activities were more or less likely to be reported together.**

For instance, among participants that reported both primary and secondary activities:

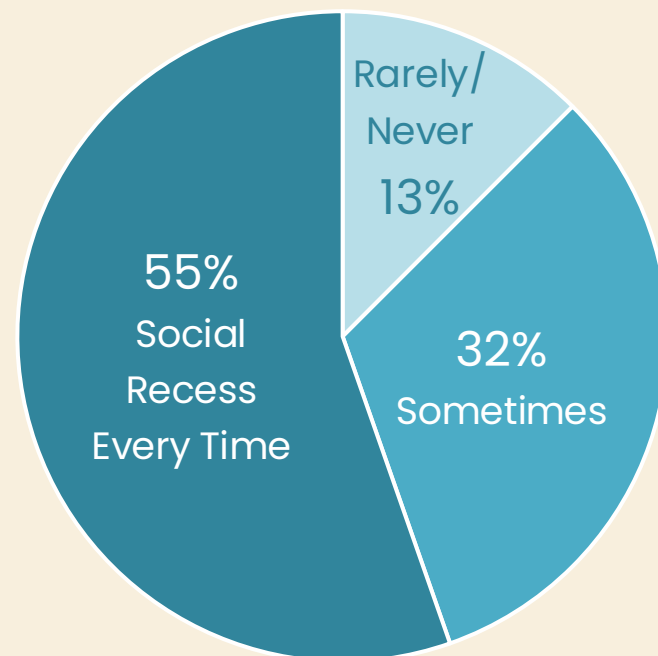
- 50% of tabletop role-players reported crafting as their secondary activity, whereas the other 50% reported live roleplay.



Meeting structures

Social recesses

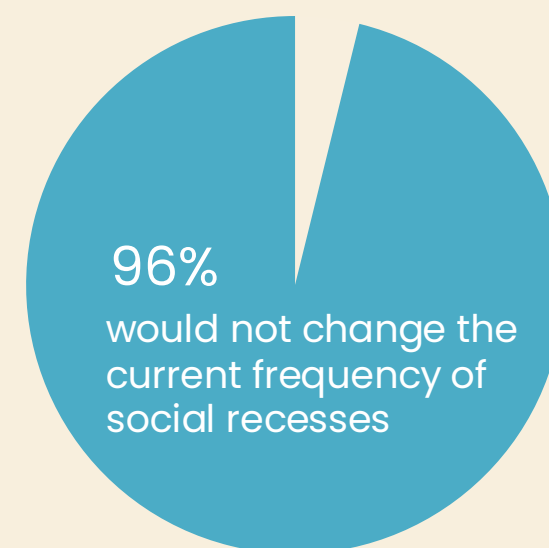
Some Bifrost groups organise a **social recess** during meetings, wherein the group takes time to connect with and talk to others outside of the organized game.



- For the majority (55%), a **social recess is part of every meeting.**
- This is followed by 32% who report having social recesses during **some meetings.**
- Only 13% report **never or rarely** having a social recess.

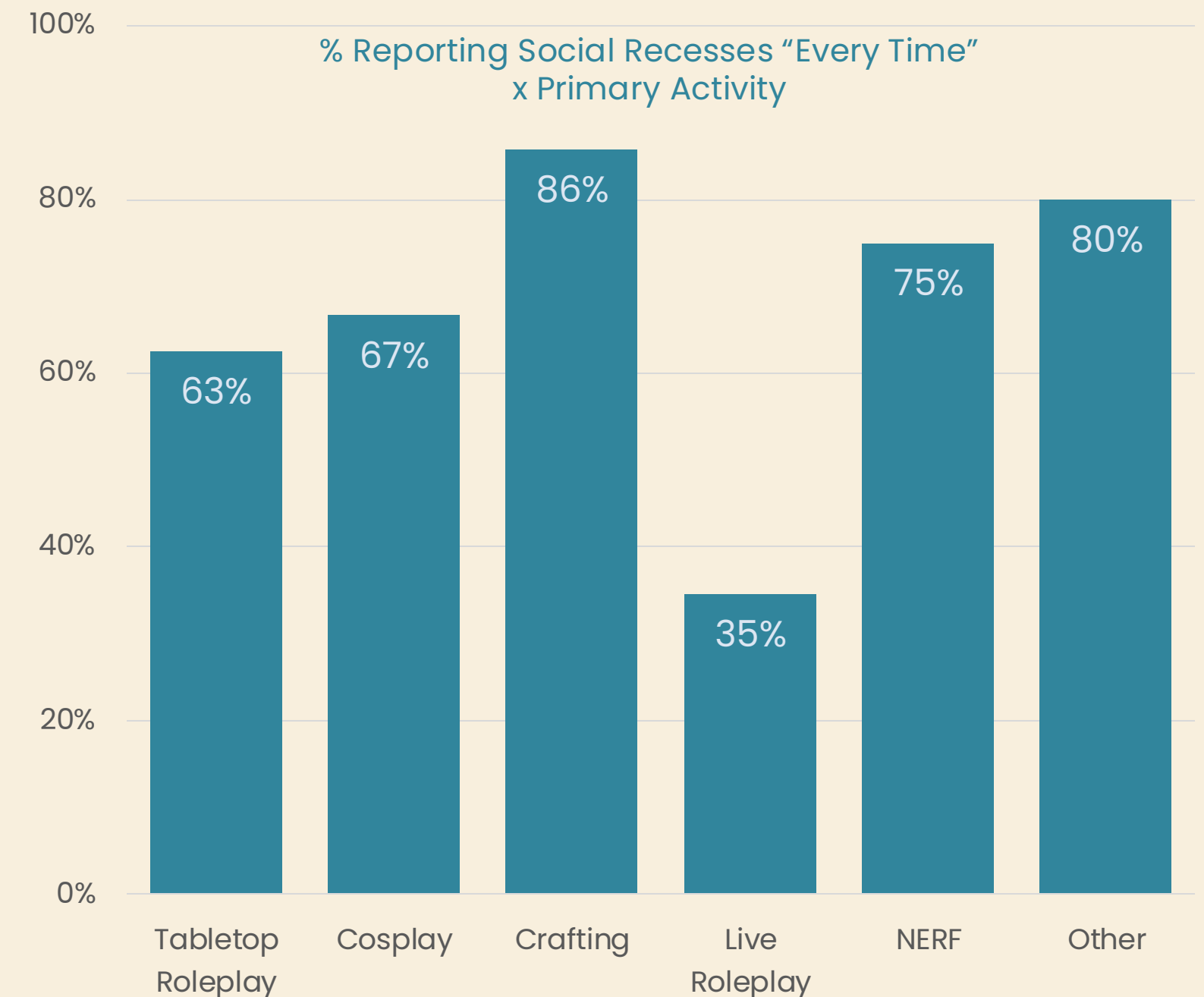
When asked if they would prefer more or less time to informally socialize during meetings, nearly all participants reported being content with the current structure:

96% of participants would not change the current frequency of social recesses (4% want more; 0% want less).



Certain activity types are more or less likely to incorporate social recesses.

For instance, crafting groups were the most likely to report social recesses during meetings (86%), whereas live roleplay groups were the least likely (35%).

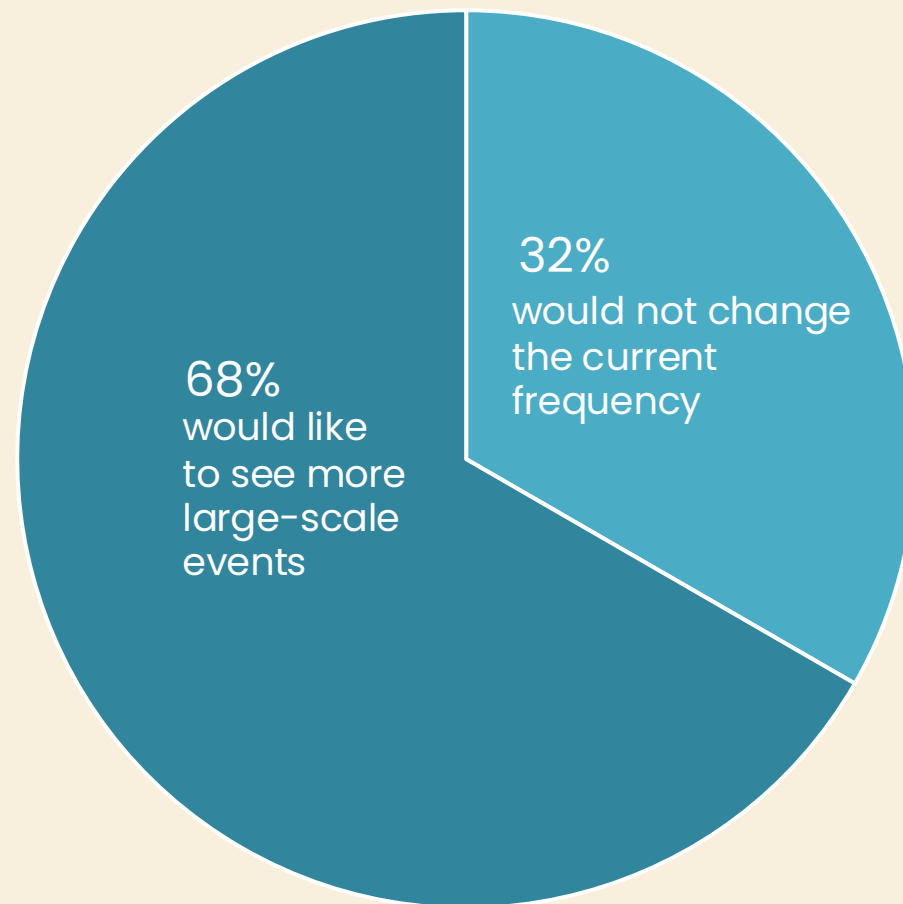


Meeting structures

Regional & national meet-ups

Periodically, Bifrost organizes **large-scale regional and national events**.

We asked older respondents (aged 16 years and older) if they had ever attended a large-scale event, of which the majority (79%) had.



The survey results suggest that these large-scale events are greatly appreciated by the participants.

Of those who previously attended a regional or national Bifrost event:

68% reported **wanting to see more large-scale events in the future**.

(**32%** are content with the current frequency; **0%** would like to see less).

"I like that there are a few big events to look forward to many months in advance without it taking up my week-to-week weekdays."

- Older participant (age 16+)

"We are unique in how divided we are so seeing everyone is a good idea."

- Older participant (age 16+)

"[The large-scale events are] fun and they give me some freedom."

- Older participant (age 16+)



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Attendance

How long have participants been attending meetings?

30% have been attending Bifrost meetings for less than 1 year

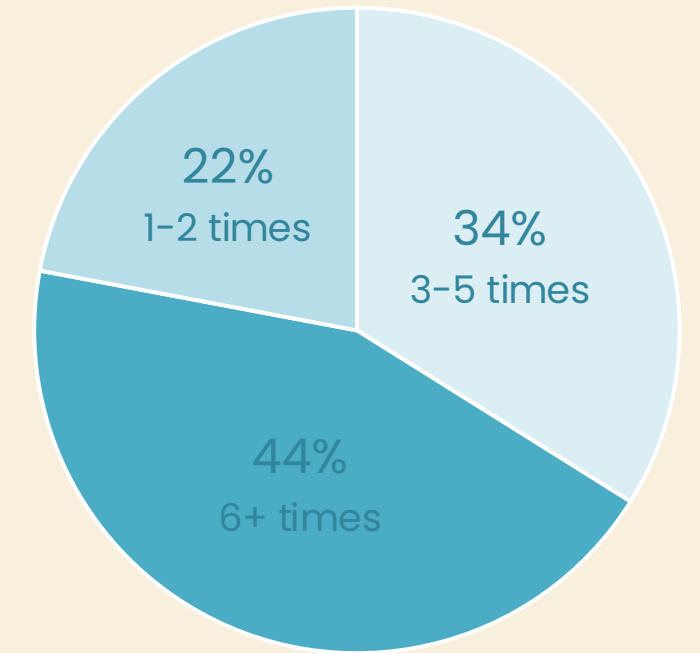
33% have been attending Bifrost meetings for 1-2 years

37% have been attending Bifrost meetings for 3 or more years

How often do participants attend Bifrost meetings?

We asked respondents how many times they had attended a Bifrost meeting over the *past 2 months*:

- **Most (44%)** reported attending a meeting **6 or more times over the past 2 months** (roughly once a week)
- This was followed by **34%** reporting attendance **3-5 times** over the past 2 months (roughly once every 2 weeks)
- Lastly, **22%** reported going **1-2 times** over the past 2 months (roughly monthly)



"How often have you attended a Bifrost meeting over the past 2 months?"

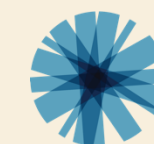
What about other recreational activities?

We asked respondents about their involvement in other recreational clubs/organized leisure activities (i.e., arts, sports, e-sports, or other clubs).

On average **71% of the sample attends at least 1 other club/leisure activity.**

This means that for 29% of participants, Bifrost is the only organized recreational community they are a part of.

Among those that attend at least 1 other recreational activity, the frequency of attendance was similar (i.e., 43% attend their other activity at least once a week).



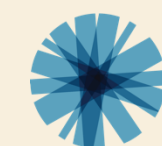
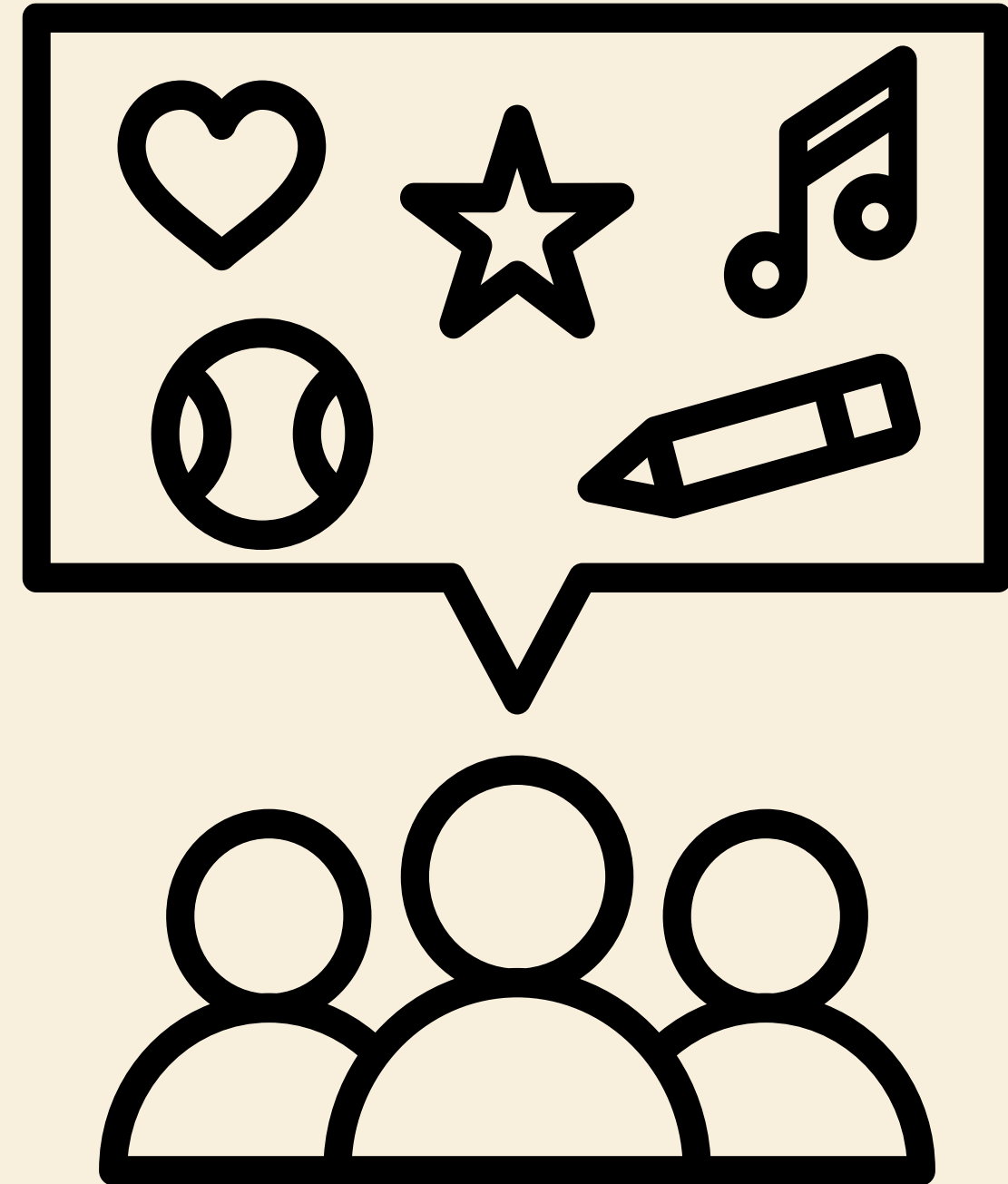
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bifrost

02.

Recreation & wellbeing



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Recreation & wellbeing

Why do participants attend Bifrost meetings?

Here are the top 3 reasons:

1. BELONGING



88%

"... because I feel like I belong here"

2. FUN



87%

"... because of the fun activities we do"

3. CREATIVITY



73%

"... to be creative"

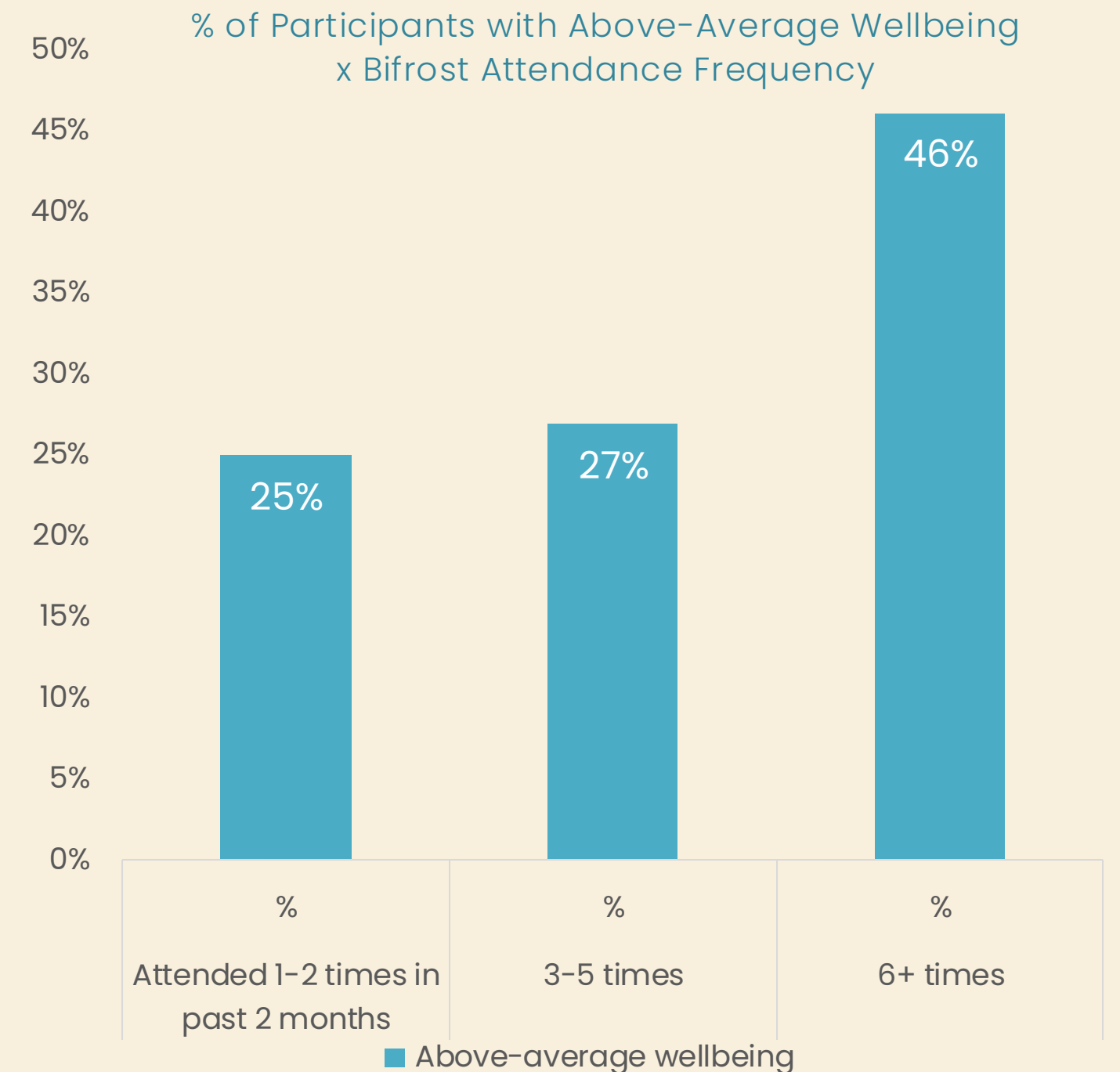
Studies indicate that engaging in leisure activities, ranging from sports to arts and social clubs, is associated with: reductions in stress and depressive symptoms, fewer behaviour difficulties, and stronger overall wellbeing.^{1,2}

Looking to young Danish populations specifically:

- Young people active in associations report higher life satisfaction.³
- Participation is also linked to reduced loneliness.⁴

This observed relationship, wherein recreational club participation is linked to better life outcomes, served as a key motivation for this project evaluation.

As a first look: we indeed see evidence of the relationship between club engagement and wellbeing in our sample: Bifrost participants reporting **higher meeting attendance** over the past 2 months (1-2 times vs. 3-5 times vs. 6 or more times) were **more likely to report above-average life satisfaction**.



1. Leversen, I. et al. (2012). Basic psychological need satisfaction in leisure activities and adolescents' life satisfaction. Journal of Youth and Adolescence.
2. Trainor, S. et al. (2010). Leisure activities and adolescent psychological wellbeing. Journal of Adolescence.
3. DUF (2023). Unges deltagelse i foreningslivet. p.4.
4. LEGO Foundation (2023). Børns trivsel i fritidsaktiviteter. p.49.



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Pathway to wellbeing

Theory: How might recreation enhance life outcomes?

Multiple pathways link participation in recreational clubs to better life outcomes.

Wellbeing research tells us that this can be attributed to the fulfilment of basic social and psychological needs, such as connection, competence, and autonomy.



"Becoming a part of Bifrost has exposed me to many people who have supported me through difficult times."

- Older participant (age 16+)

"I am happier and more positive and have more valuable things in my life. This means I see people more consistently than before."

- Older participant (age 16+)

"[Participating has] made me more confident and helped with my anxiety."

- Older participant (age 16+)



Considering discrimination:

A critical factor in the pathway

As introduced, participating in organised recreational activities can broadly support wellbeing through social connection and skill-building.

The nature of Bifrost's activities introduces another important layer to this pathway: **cosplay and roleplay offer controlled environments for practicing social interaction. In these settings, rules and expectations for behaviour are clearer and more predictable.**

As such, participation in Bifrost activities may be particularly enticing to, and supportive of, people who face higher instances of social exclusion in more mainstream settings (such as at school, work, or other recreational clubs) due to factors such as neurodivergence.^{1,2}

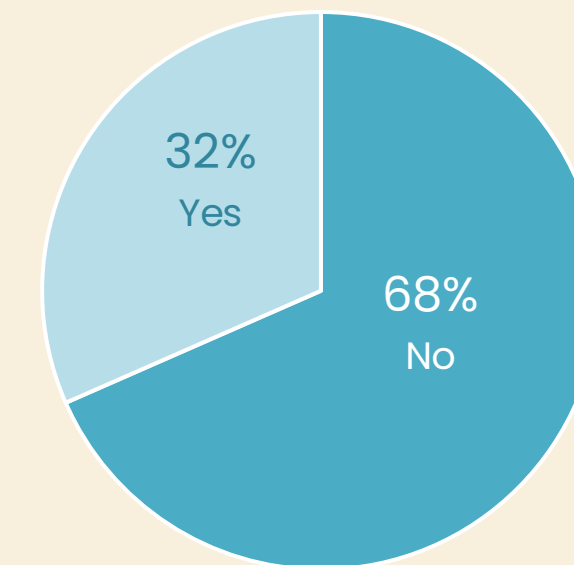
This informs another key motivation for this evaluation: exploring whether groups that are at higher risk of social exclusion (such as those that experience discrimination), differ in terms of program engagement and the benefits derived.

"It's nice to have a community where we practice playing, because it feels like we're also practicing being with each other in a good way, at the same time."
– Bifrost Participant

How common is discrimination among participants?

Most participants (68%) did not experience discrimination in the past 2 months, while 32% reported sometimes or often experiencing discrimination.

Have you experienced discrimination in the past 2 months?



i.e., being treated worse than others because of, for example, gender, appearance, country of birth, skin color, religion or disability?

To examine whether Bifrost participants are more likely to face discrimination or exclusion compared to their peers, we restricted our sample to match the age ranges reported in an external sample of school-aged Danish children.³ We then compared the proportion of participants experiencing discrimination to that of this age-matched subsample.

- The percentages were very similar, suggesting that Bifrost participants do not necessarily experience higher levels of discrimination.

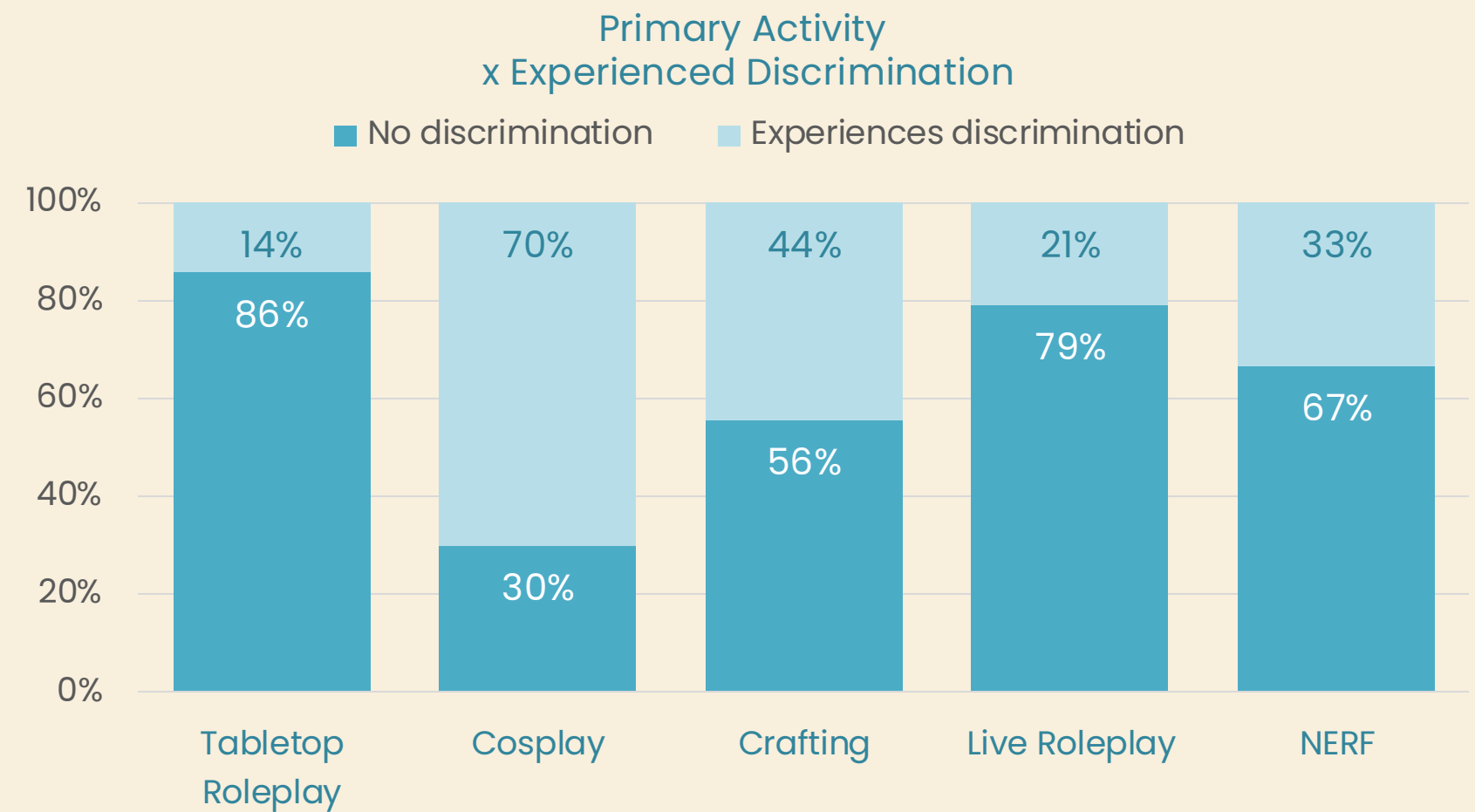
**Note: Due to small sample size, this comparison should be interpreted as a preliminary insight indicative of a trend, rather than a statistically rigorous comparison.*



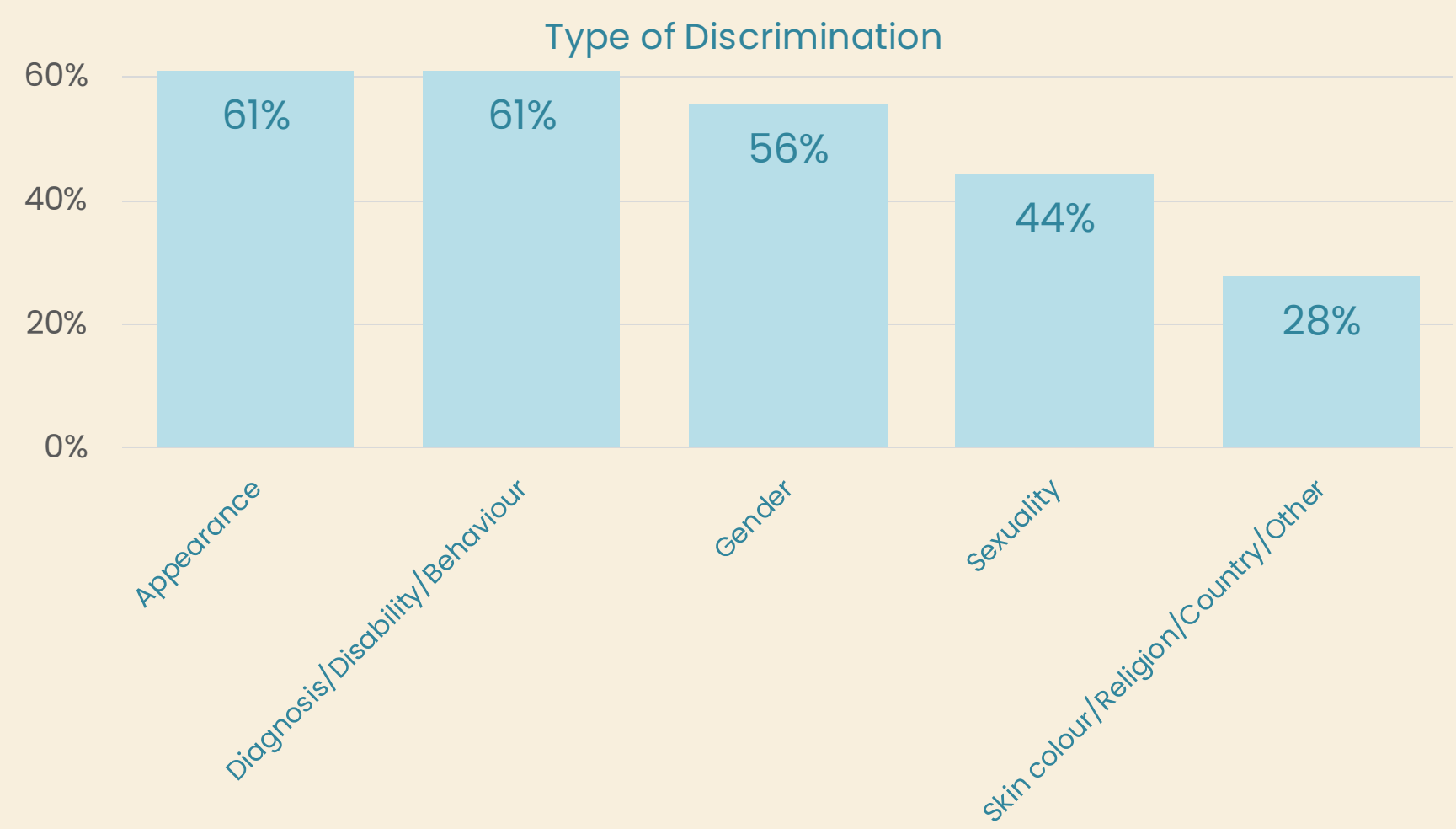
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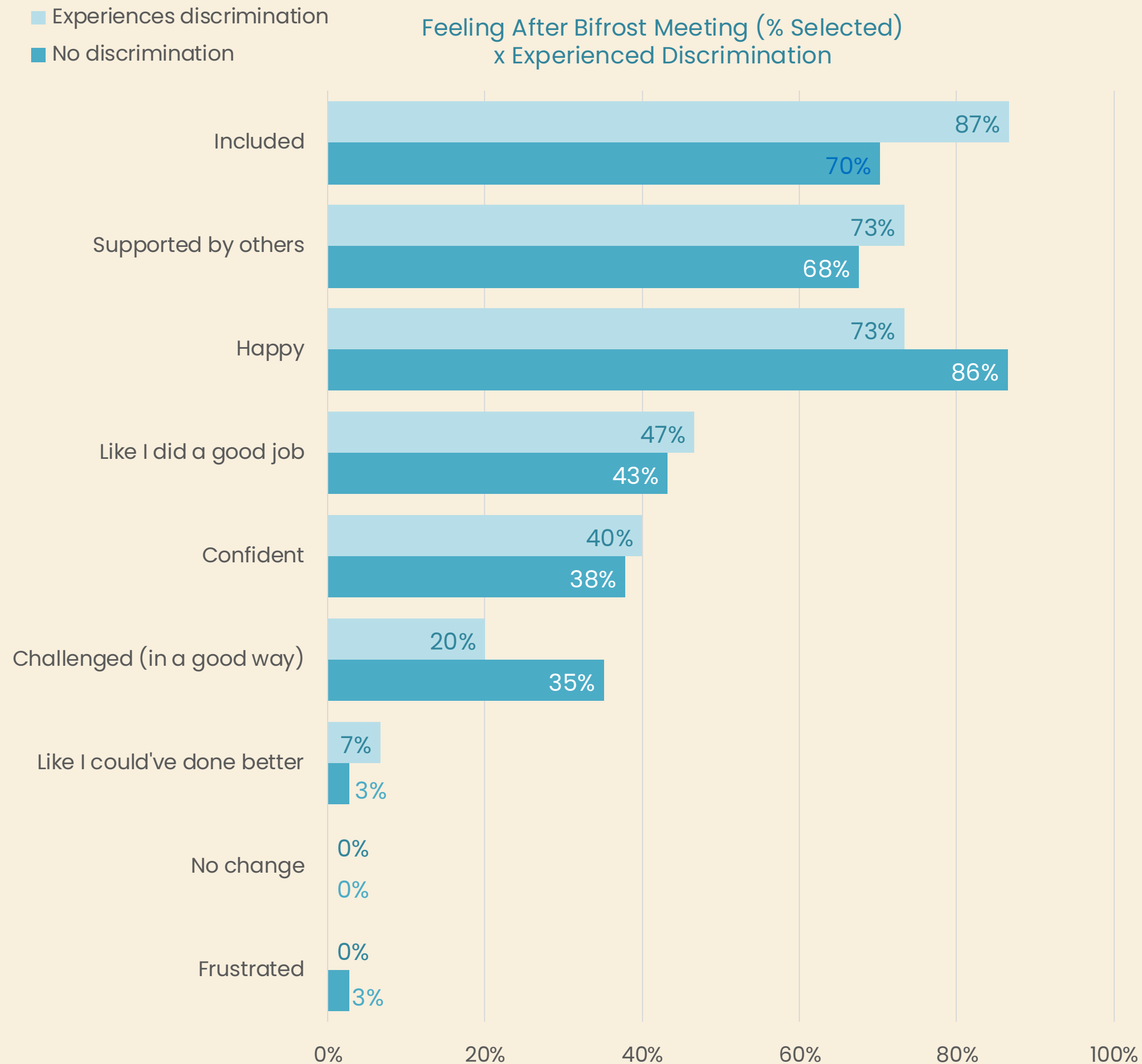
1. Visuri, I (2024). Autistic re-creation: Live action role-play as a safe and brave space for social learning. Thinking Skills and Creativity.
2. Cross, L et al. (2025). Game changed: Exploring the role of board games in the lives of autistic people. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.
3. Børnesundhedsprofilen 2023. (2023). København. Københavns Kommune.



Interestingly, comparing proportions across activity types, participants experiencing discrimination were more likely to report cosplaying as their primary activity (70%).



Among those that reported some form of discrimination over the past 2 months, appearance (61%) was the most reported single reason.



Participation may help reduce the harms of discrimination

Participants who experience discrimination tend to report poorer wellbeing overall. Among Bifrost participants, this was evident: those who reported experiencing discrimination were nearly **3 times less likely to report coping well at home** (compared to reporting either coping "okay" or "poorly").

In a similar vein, when asked how they feel after attending a meeting, participants who experiencing discrimination were **less likely to report feeling happy** (73% vs. 86%, respectively).

On the other hand, they were **more likely to report feeling included** at Bifrost meetings (87% vs. 70%, respectively) – a key factor on the pathway linking recreational activity participation and higher wellbeing.

This highlights the potential of Bifrost activities to buffer against the social exclusion that discrimination can cause.

"Great emphasis is placed on communities that everyone can participate in, regardless of age, gender, religion, etc."

- Older participant (age 16+)



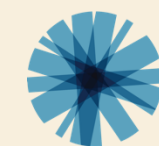
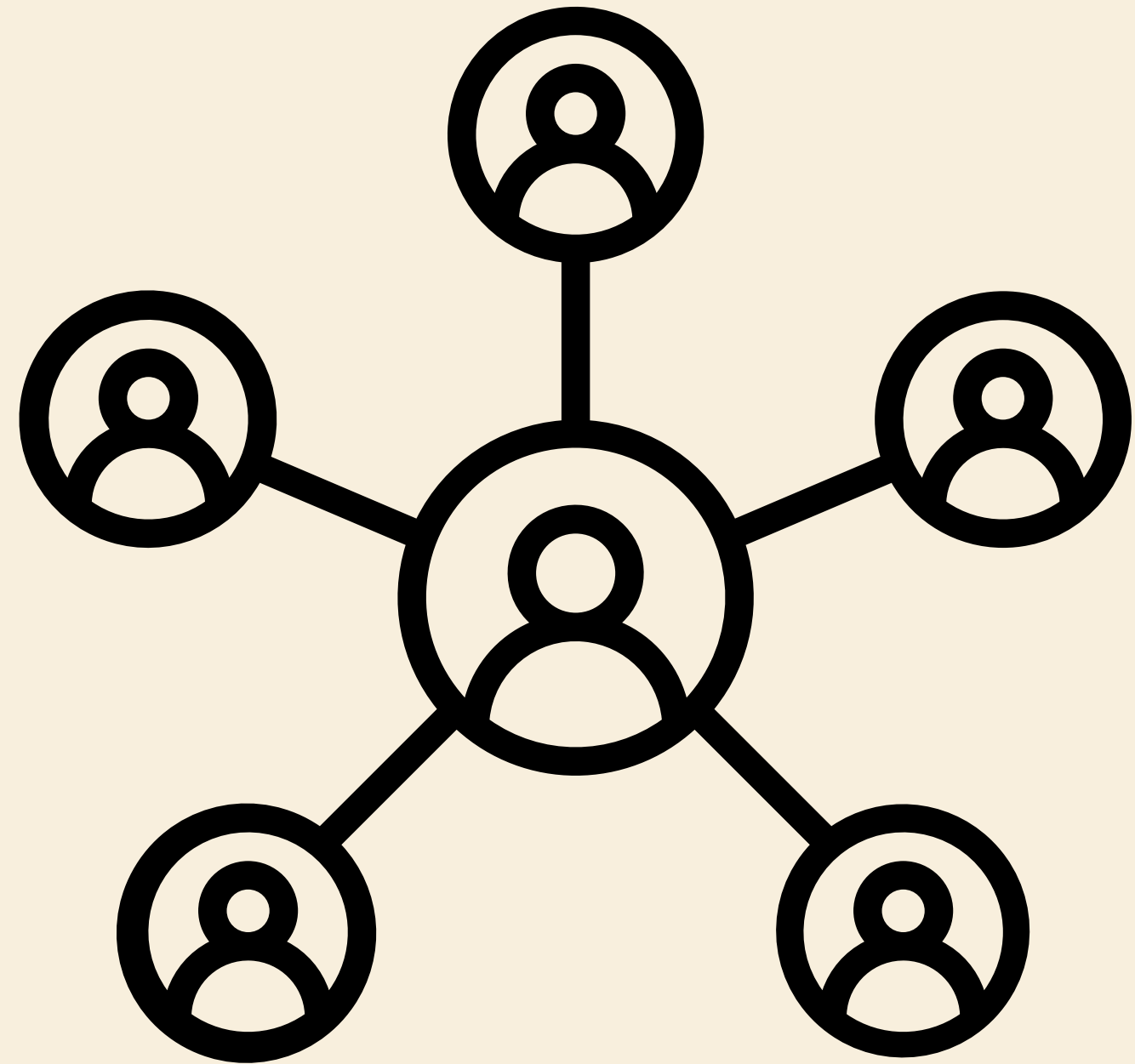
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03.

Connection & belonging



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Who/where: Feeling part of a community

Participants were asked where they most feel part of a good community, and could make up to three selections from the following options: friends, family, work, school, free-time activities, online communities, or never.

To explore whether similarly aged Danish youth report the same patterns, we matched our sample (16–29 years) to an external comparison group.¹



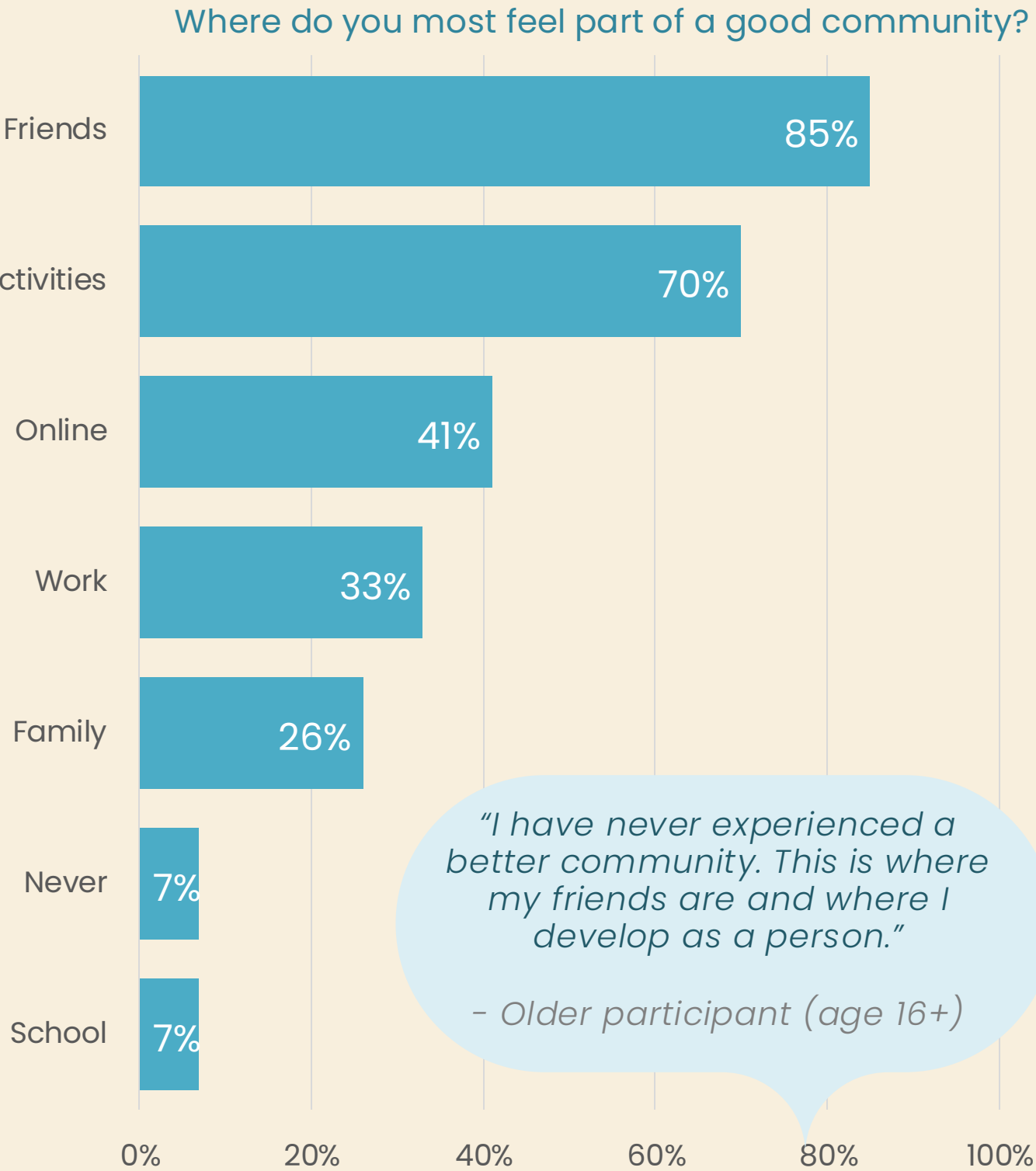
Among Bifrost participants aged 16–29 years, the top 3 most commonly selected communities were:

- 1. Friends (85%)
- 2. Free-time activities (70%)
- 3. Online communities (41%)

In comparison, the top communities reported by the external group (a representative sample of Danish adolescents aged 16 to 29 years of age) were:*

- 1. Friends
- 2. Family
- 3. Work

"[I have made] new close friends that I love and trust. They have helped me love myself and learn to push boundaries."
– Younger Participant (age 8–15)



¹DUF (2023). Unges deltagelse i foreningslivet. p.4.
*Note: Due to small sample size, this comparison should be interpreted as a preliminary insight indicative of a trend, rather than a statistically rigorous comparison.



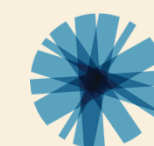
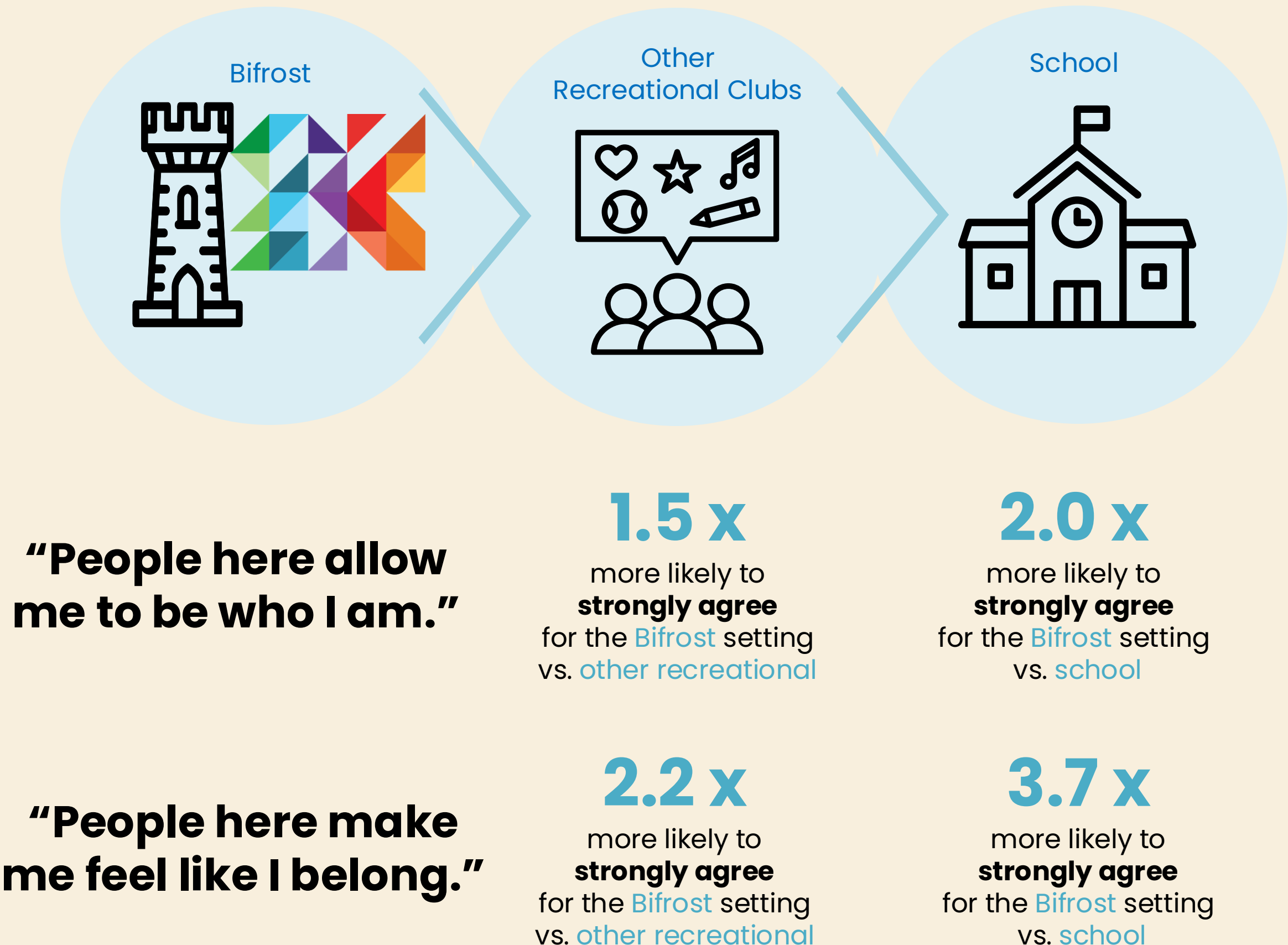
Setting comparison: belonging & acceptance

In a similar fashion, participants were asked to indicate their **level of agreement** with statements concerning their sense of belonging and acceptance across 3 settings:

- (i) Bifrost,
- (ii) Other recreational clubs,
- (iii) School.

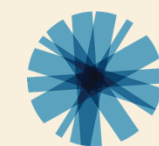
Responses were captured on a 5-point agreement scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The likelihoods that participants selected "strongly agree" for the given statement in the Bifrost setting versus either the school or other recreation settings are reported on the right.



04.

Confidence & skill-building



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Who/where: Feeling confident

Once again, prompted with a statement, respondents were asked to select up to three choices among: friends, family, work, school, free-time activities, online communities, or never.

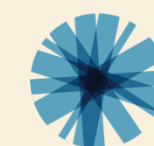
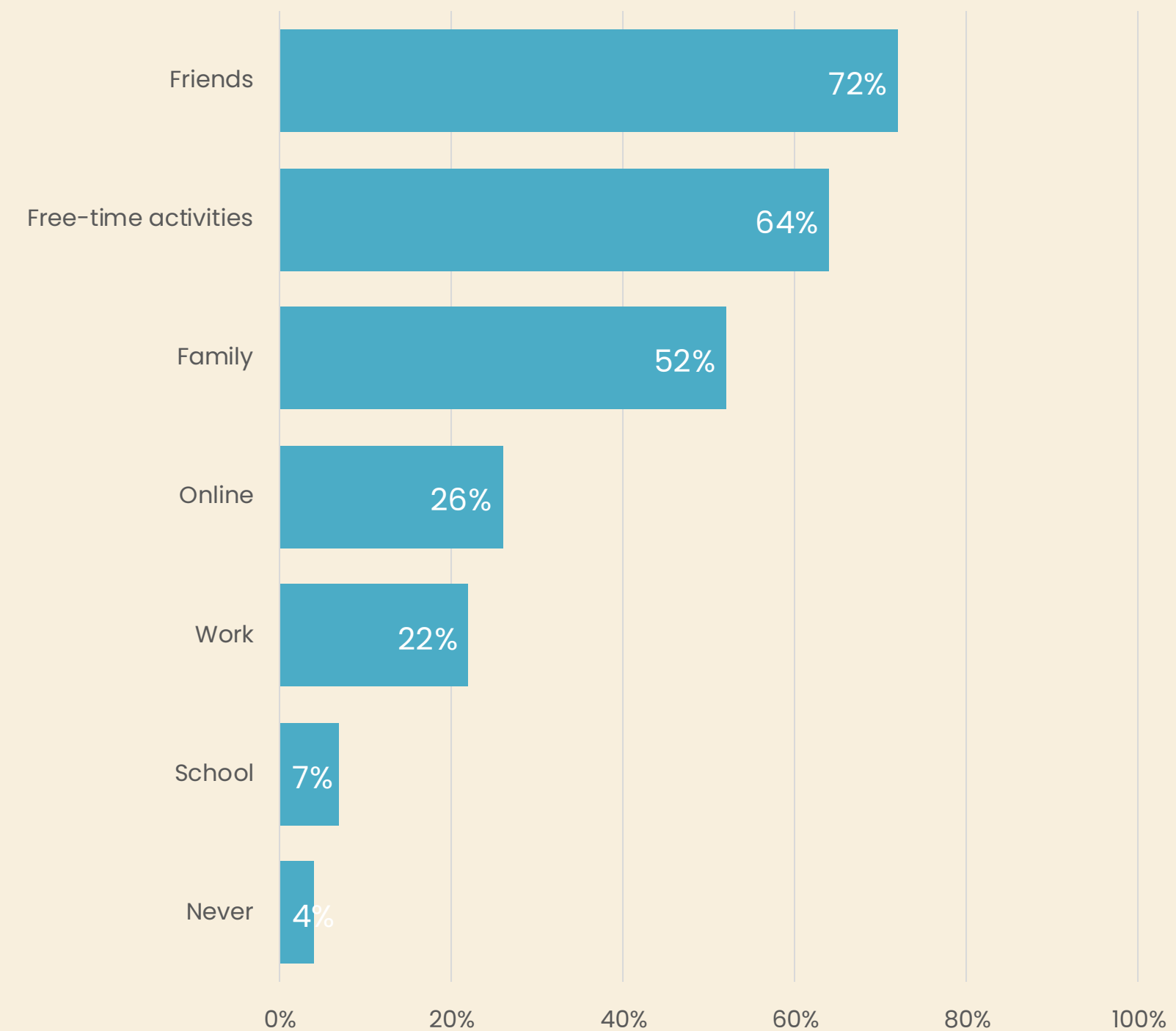
This time, the prompt asked **where they feel most confident**.



Among Bifrost participants of all ages (8+), the top 3 most commonly selected communities were:

1. Friends (72%)
2. Free-time activities (64%)
3. Family (52%)

Where do you most feel most confident?



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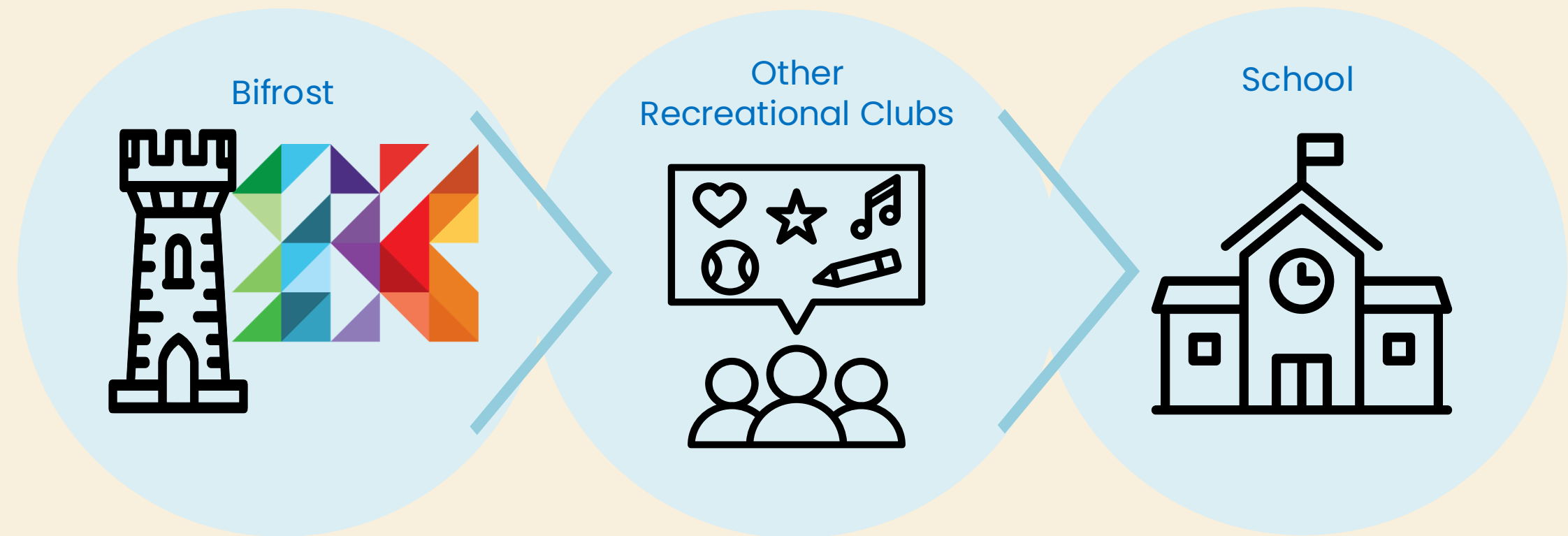
Setting comparison: confidence & speaking

Participants were also asked to indicate a frequency for a given behaviour, across 3 settings:

- (i) Bifrost,
- (ii) other recreational clubs,
- (iii) school.

Responses were captured on a frequency scale ranging from "always" to "never."

The likelihoods that participants selected "always" for the given statement in the Bifrost setting versus either the school or other recreation settings are reported on the right.



"How often do you join in on group discussions?"

2.1 x

more likely to **select "always"** for the Bifrost setting vs. other recreational

5.3 x

more likely to **select "always"** for the Bifrost setting vs. school

"How often do you feel comfortable speaking in front of others?"

1.6 x

more likely to **select "always"** for the Bifrost setting vs. other recreational

2.0 x

more likely to **select "always"** for the Bifrost setting vs. school

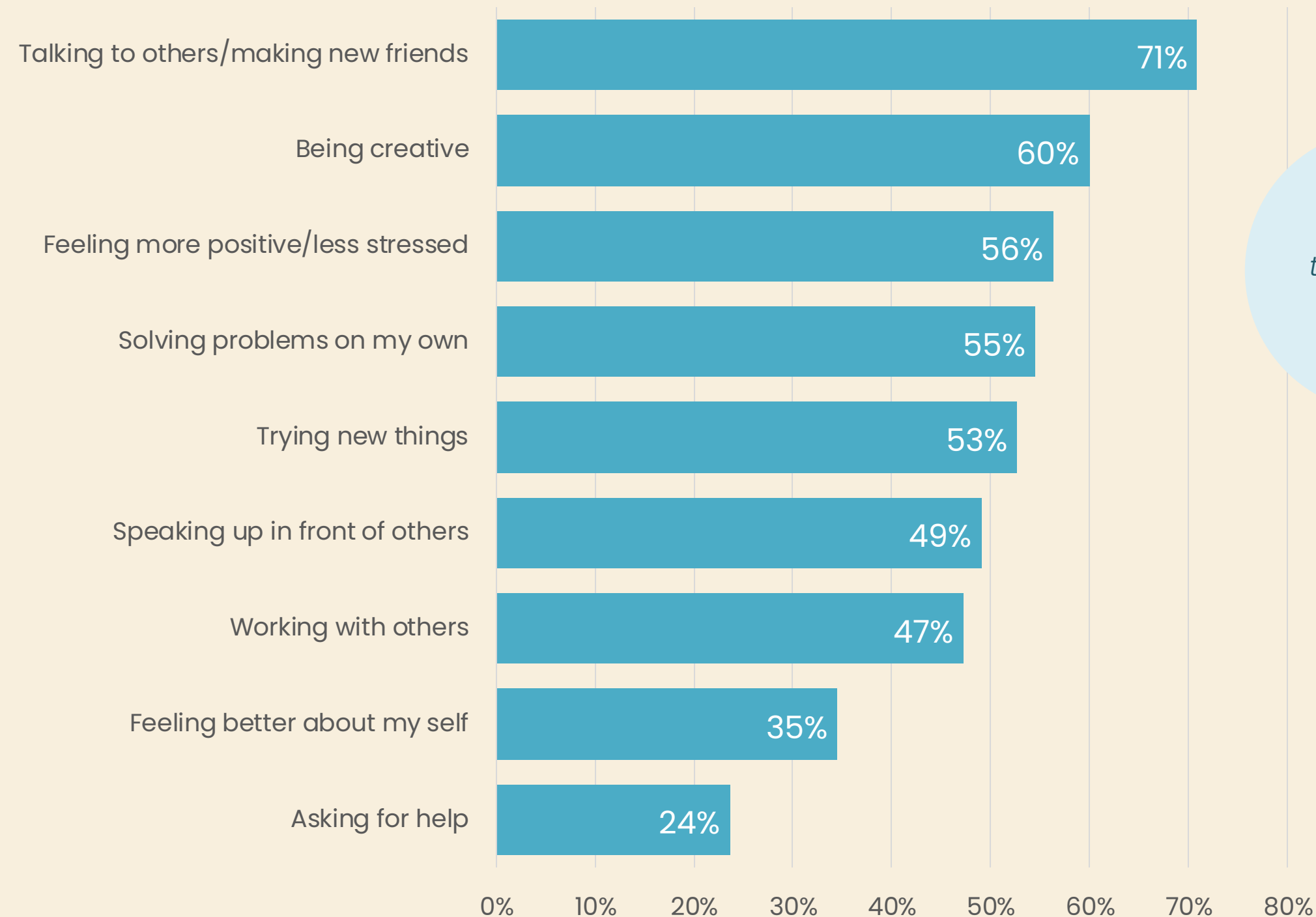


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What skills, if any, have Bifrost meetings helped participants develop?



"I have learned to be more spontaneous and that trying new things is not as dangerous as I thought, this has opened up many new experiences and friends."

- Older participant (age 16+)

"It has made me more courageous and helped me be proud of who I am."

- Younger participant (age 8-15)



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Participant recommendations

Finally, we asked participants what they would like to see **more of or less of during meetings.**

Here are the most common themes that came up:

More role playing

"More role-playing. There is often time pressure for regular activities."

"More hygge and more role-playing in the camps."

"Less rule riding and more focus on the role play itself"

More rules explanation

"Better at including newcomers in the game."

"More explanation for players on how to play well."

"I would like us to do more knowledge sharing in connection with game mechanics and experiences."

"Listen to those who speak softly."

No change!

"Everything is amazing."

"I think it's just fine the way it is."

"Nothing. It's perfect."

"I think it works really well the way it is right now, it doesn't need to be changed."

"Good as it is now."

More combat scenes/novelty

"New campaigns."

"Times where our characters are put in a bit of danger."

"Fighting games."



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Highlights



1. Recreational communities are powerful wellbeing engines

*Particularly important for young people that face exclusion in traditional settings (such as at school)



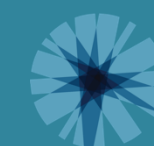
2. Participants report exceptionally high levels of belonging and inclusion within the Bifrost community

*More so than in other recreational club/school settings



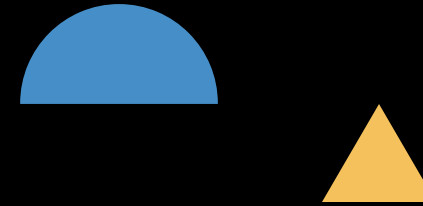
3. Participants feel that this inclusive environment fosters real-world skill development

*By offering safe spaces to explore, participants report e.g., an increased sense of confidence, greater comfort speaking in front of others, and social life improvements (to name a few)



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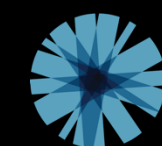
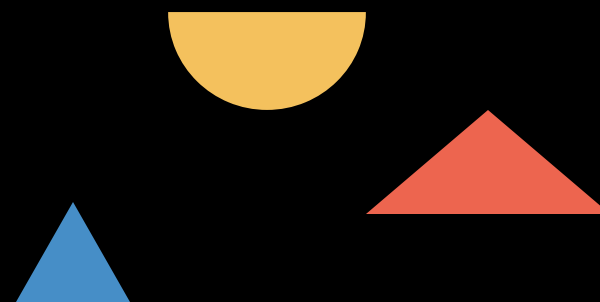
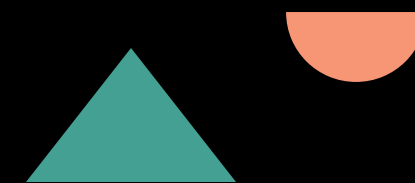




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