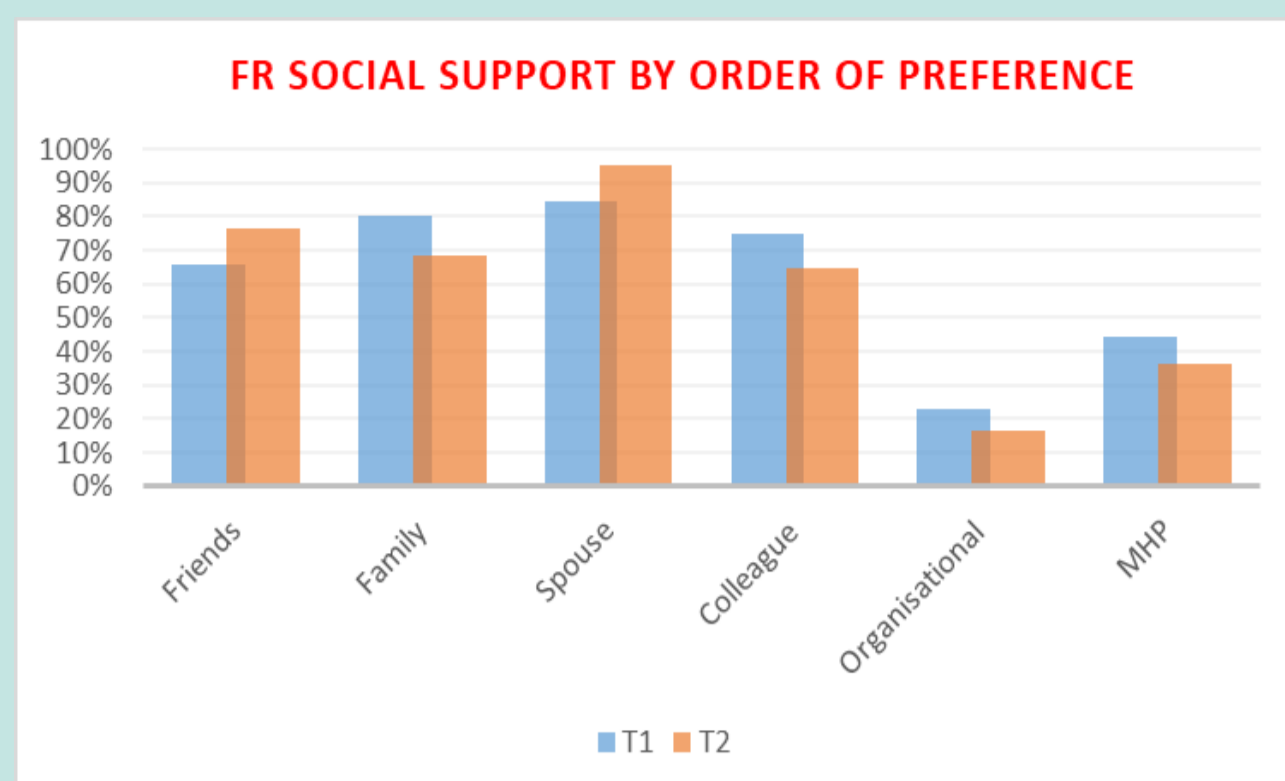


## Why we need HUGS@Home

Emergency services personnel experience both operational and organisational stressors. While formal and informal workplace supports exist, research suggests that emergency services personnel lean on their families and friends for emotional support.



Traditionally, this supportive role has been perceived as a burden to families and friends, with caution advised regarding vicarious/secondary trauma. Gaps in the literature include if and how these non-emergency services family/friend supporters are trained to provide this help, and what support systems are available to them?

## What did HUGS@Home do?

Funded by Movember's Veteran and First Responder grant, the HUGS@Home programme aimed to address this issue by co-designing, implementing and evaluating a simulation-enhanced psychological first aid training (PFA) programme.



Participants learned how to:

1. Identify stress in their loved one and
2. Begin an early, supportive conversation using three simple PFA principles: Look, Listen & Link.

## How did we achieve our aims?

Using a mixed methods, participatory action research approach, we implemented 10 iterations of training, impacting approximately 80 family members/friends.

We collected survey and interview/focus group data from both family members/friends and their corresponding first responders in Ireland and UK, at three time points.

T1=pretraining, T2=immediately post training and T3= 3 to 6 months post training. Analysis included descriptive statistics and reflexive thematic analysis. This poster focuses on survey findings.



## Who participated in our training?

Variable	Family Member (N=82)	First Responder (N=33)
Gender	Male=27 (32.9%) Female=55 (67.1%)	Male=26 (78.8%) Female=7 (21.2%)
Age	Mean =43.4yrs Range 20 to 77	Mean =41.4yrs Range 27 to 62
Marital status	Married=48 (58.5%) Living with a partner =10 (12.2%) Single =18 (22.0%) Separated=2 (2.4%) Divorced=2 (2.4%) Other=2 (2.4%)	Married =25 (75.8%) Living with a partner=8 (24.2%)
Education	Primary school=2 (2.4%) Secondary/high school=16 (19.5%) Diploma/Cert=25 (30.5%) 3rd level degree =23 (28.0%) Post-grad=14 (17.1%)	Secondary/high school=5 (15.1%) Diploma/Cert=11 (33.3%) 3rd level degree =12 (36.4%) Post-grad (level 9)=5 (15.1%)
Related to FR	Spouse/partner=42 (51.2%) Adult child=7 (8.5%) Sibling=4 (4.9%) Friend=20 (24.4%) Other=3 (3.7%)	N/A

# HUGS@Home: A psychological first aid programme for families and friends of first responders.

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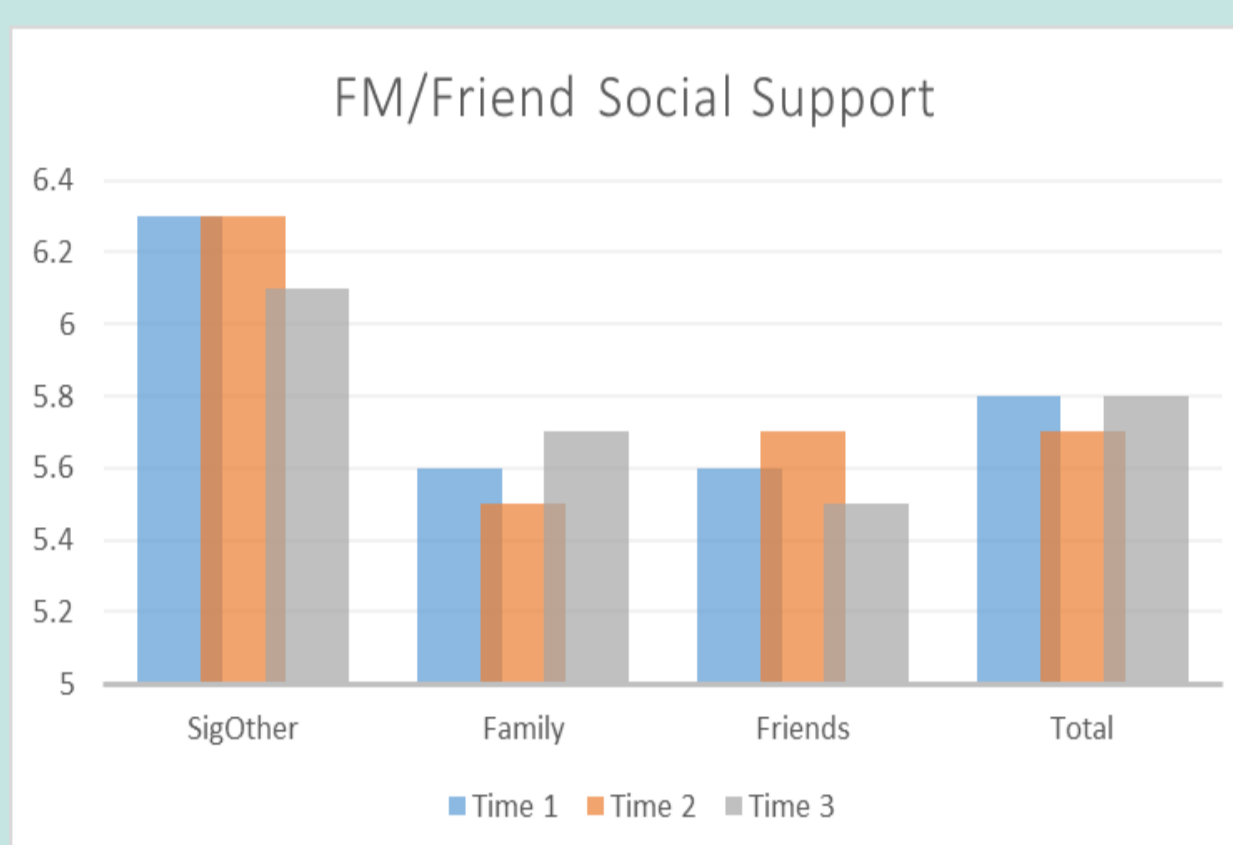
2.Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

3.University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia.

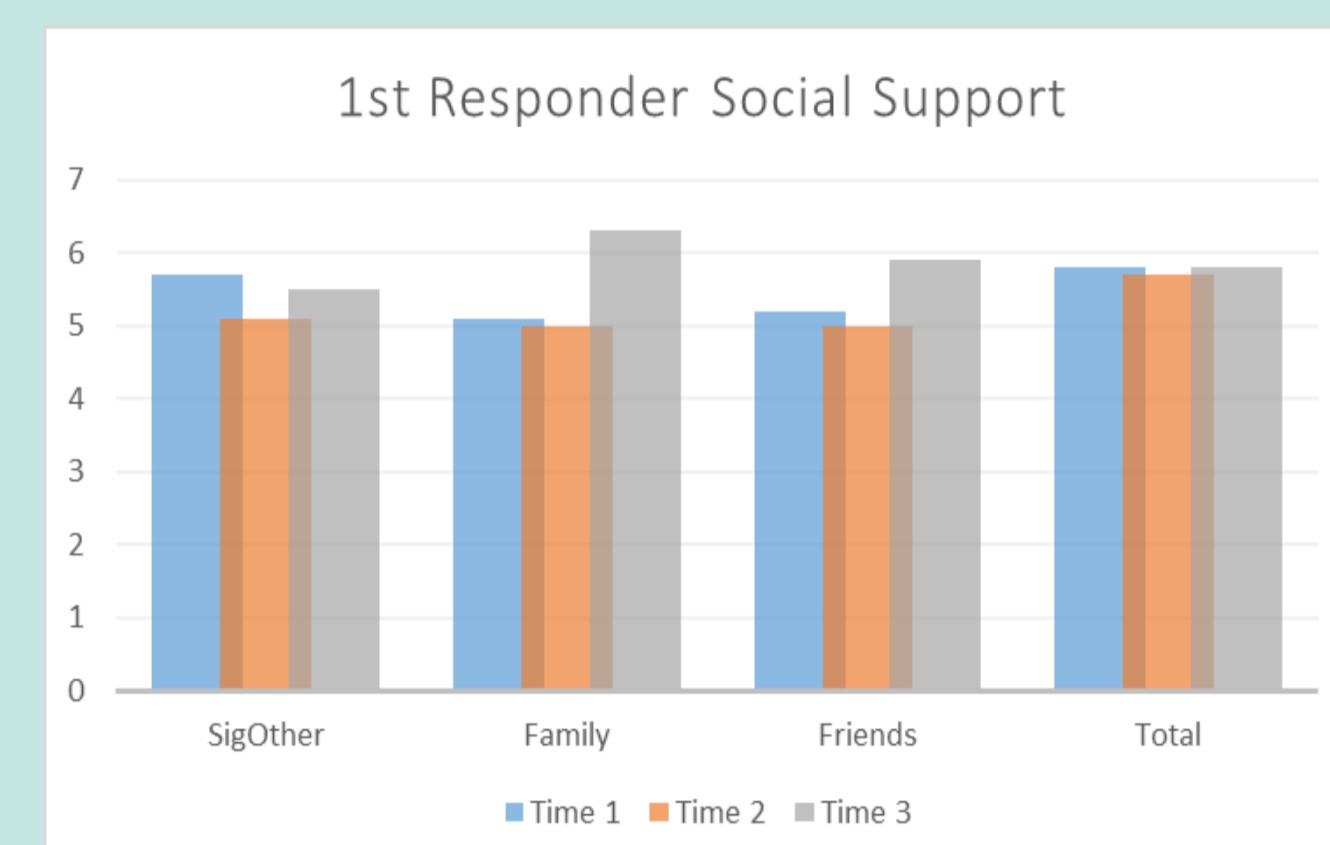
## Results

Results indicate that the HUGS@Home programme made a positive impact on participants' perceived social support, resilience, post-traumatic growth, with significant others cited as the strongest source of social support. Participants report using the training in their everyday lives, not just for emergency work-related stressors, with 95% suggesting they would recommend this training to a friend.

### 1. Social Support



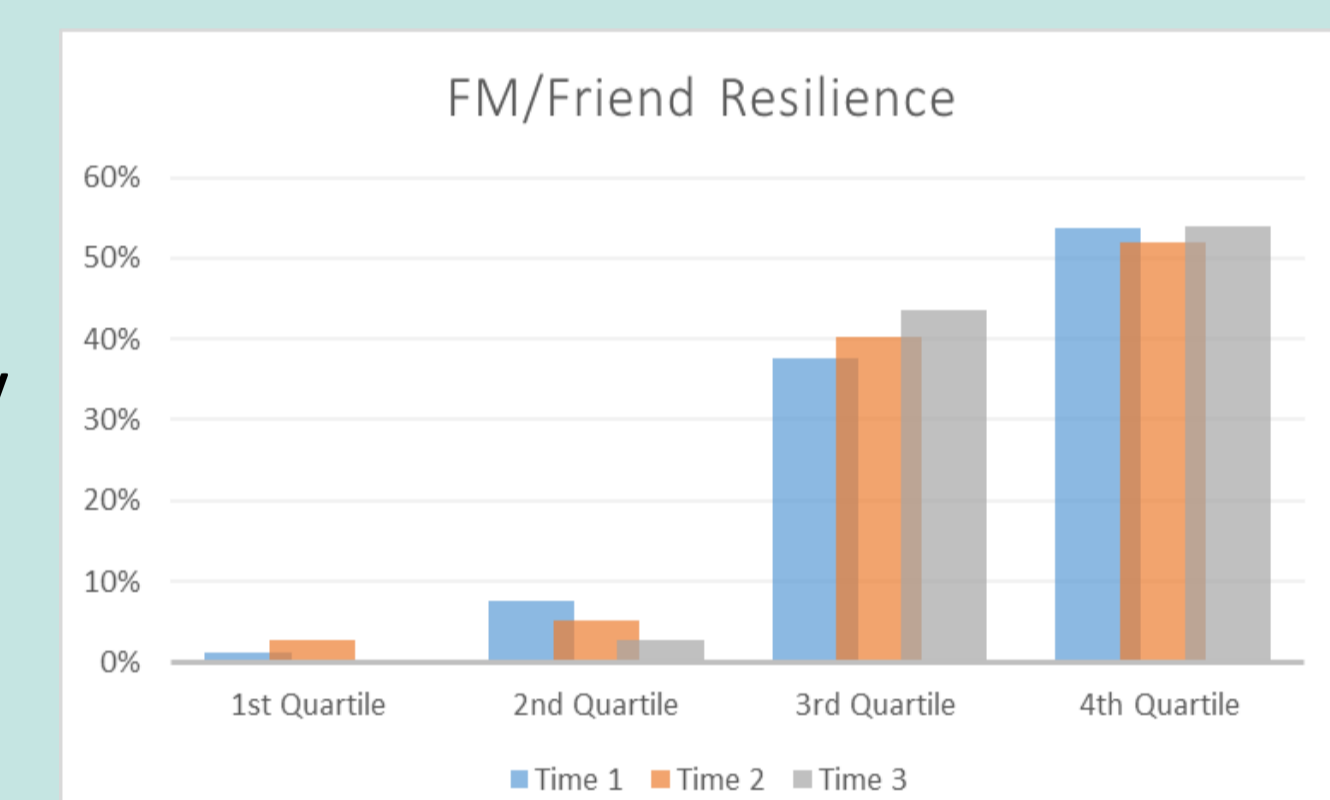
Levels of social support for both our family members and first responders were relatively high from T1 To T3. Family members perceived their significant other as their strongest form of support, and first responders rely relatively equally on all three forms of social support.



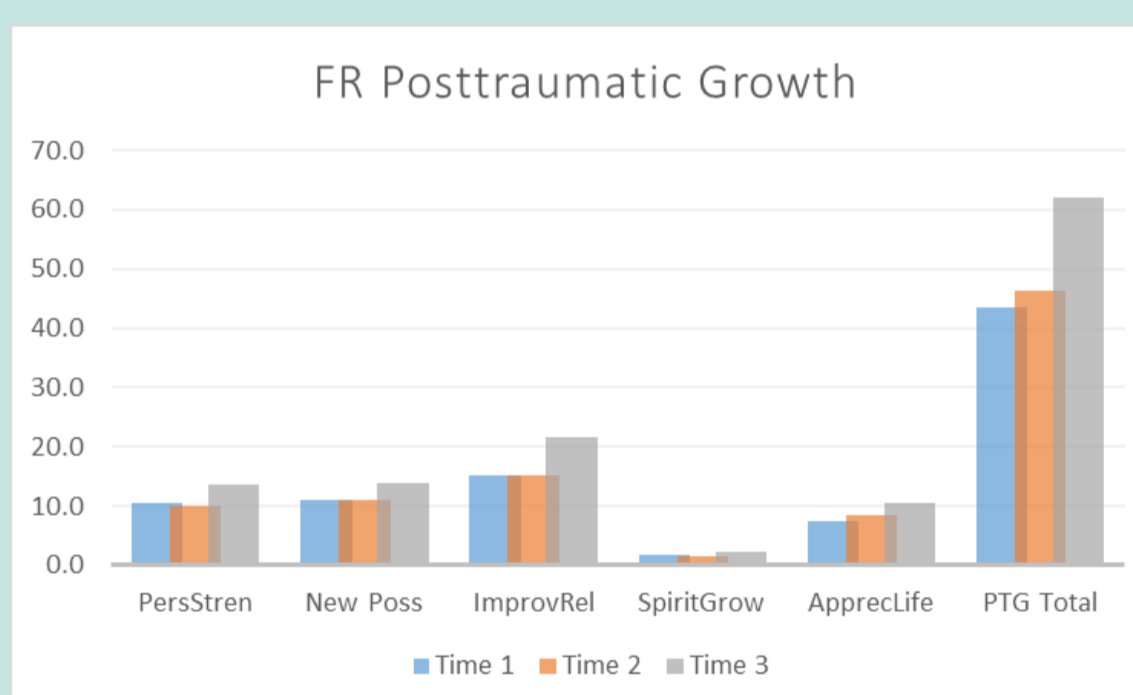
### 2. Resilience



While overall levels of resilience were relatively high for our participants, approximately 8% scored below 50% on a resiliency scale (CDRS). Results at T3 of our evaluation showed this had reduced to 2.6%.



### 3. Post-traumatic growth (PTG)

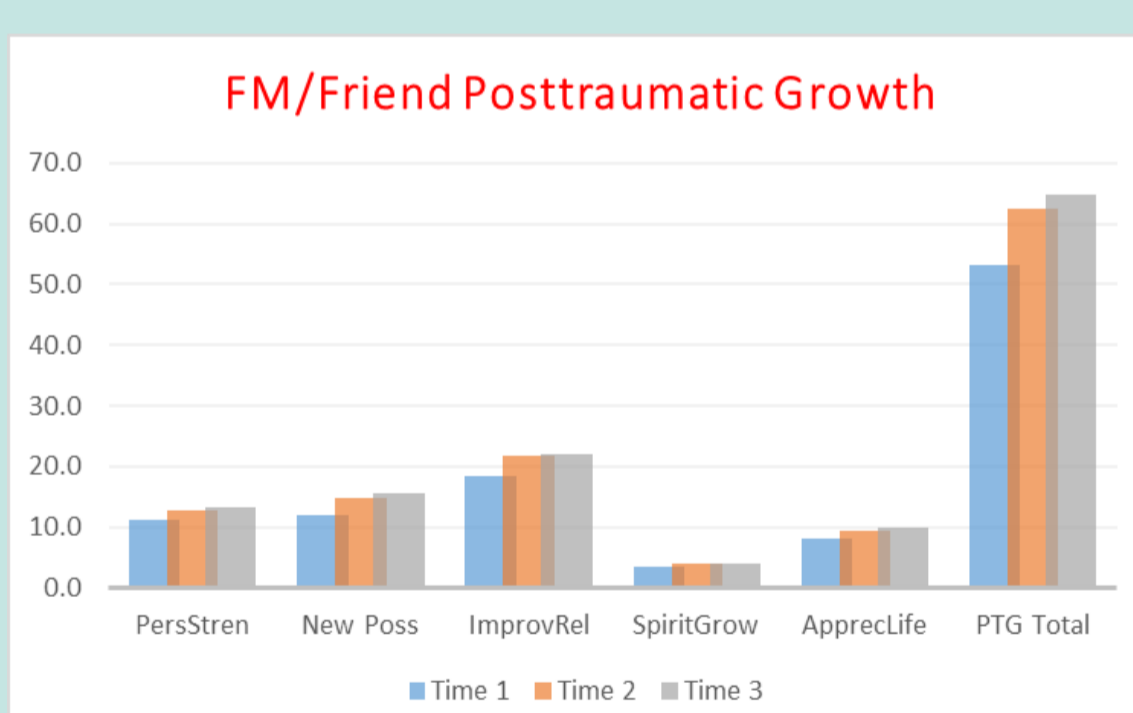


**Outcomes of Post-Traumatic Growth**

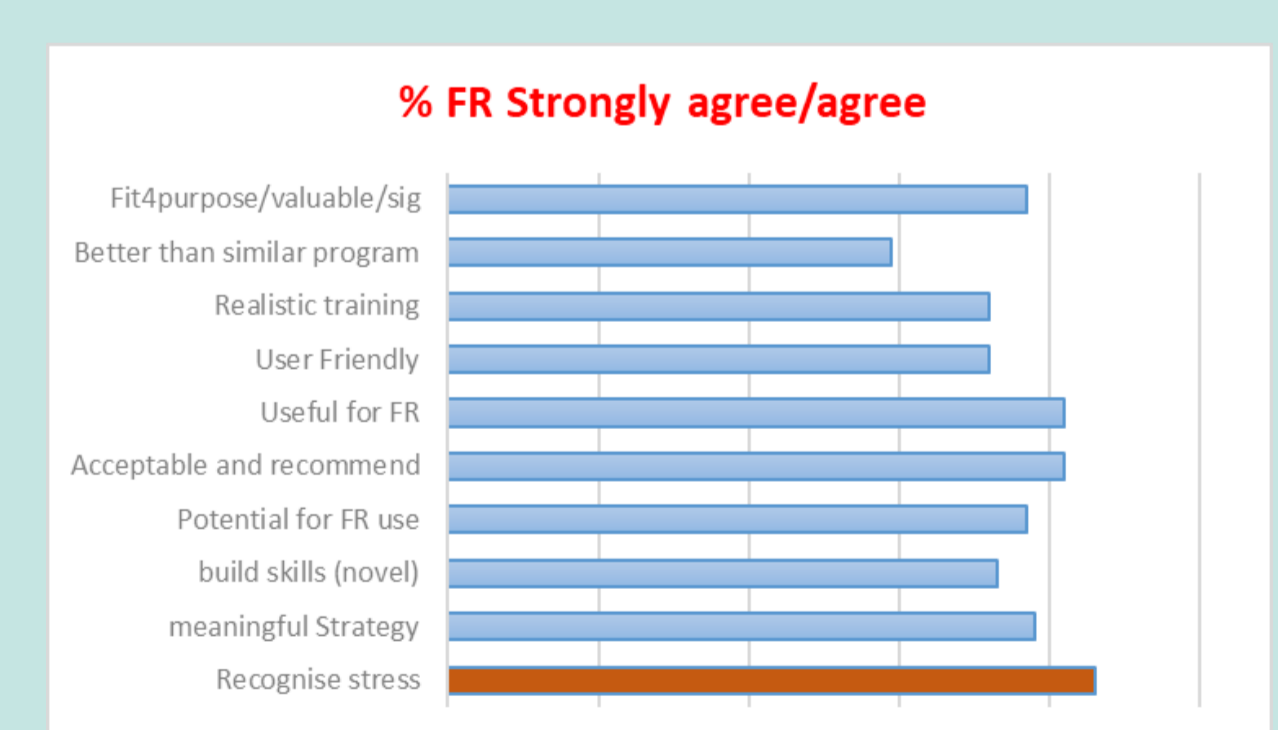
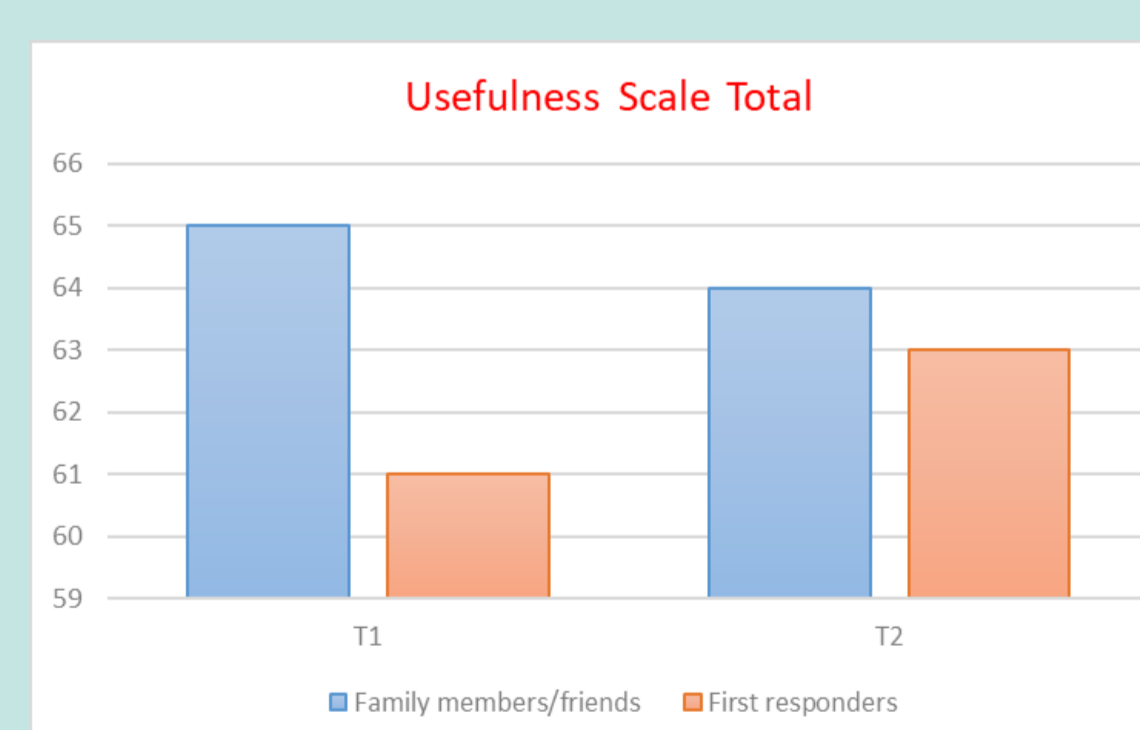
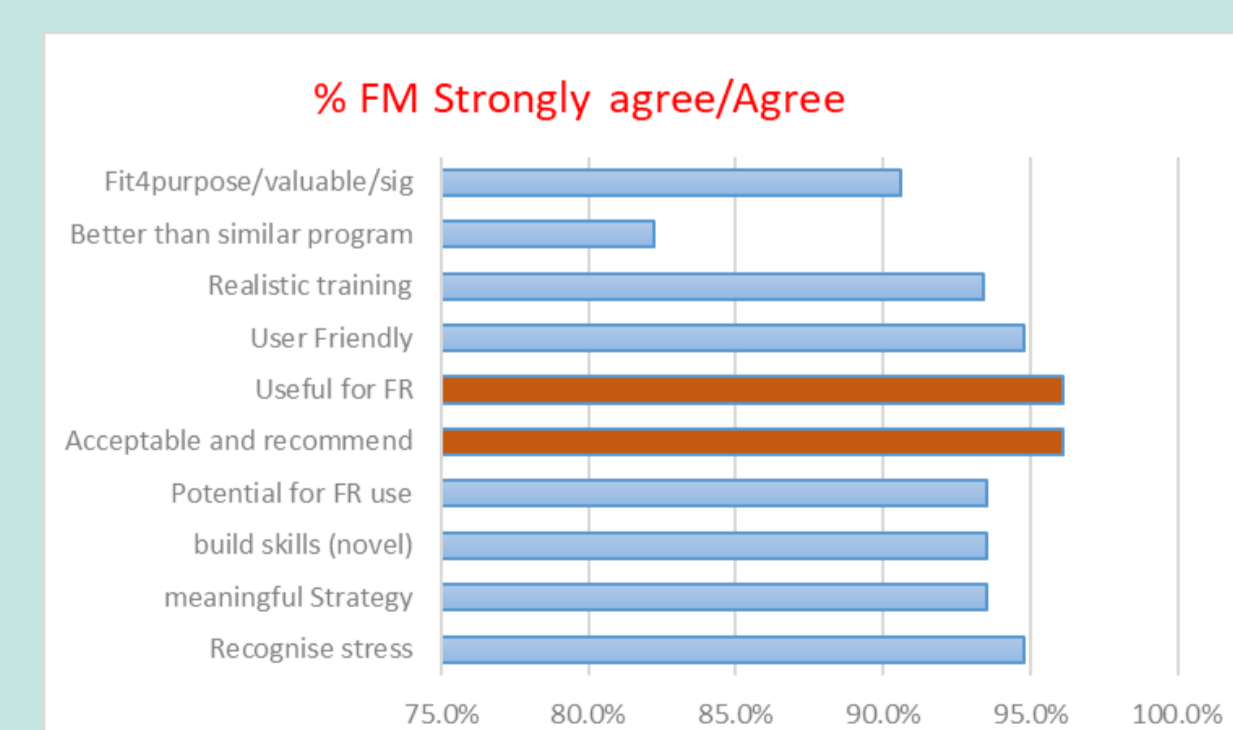
- A GREATER APPRECIATION OF LIFE**: appreciating the value of each day in a way you didn't before
- IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS**: a sense of closeness, compassion, and knowing you can count on others
- NEW POSSIBILITIES**: new interests, a new life path, or a willingness to make positive changes
- PERSONAL STRENGTH**: knowing you can handle difficult things and rely on yourself
- SPIRITUAL CHANGE**: a deeper understanding of spirituality, or stronger faith than before

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The biggest impact of our training programme was in relation to PTG with family members experiencing statistically significant positive growth for **ALL DOMAINS** of PTG across all time points. First responders also experienced statistically significant positive growth in relation to **Improved Relationships and New Possibilities** again across the 3 time points.



### Did participants find their new skills useful?



According to an external evaluation,\* our participants considered HUGS@Home to be significant, meaningful and of value, with family members rating HUGS@Home highest on **"Applicability"** and **"Acceptability"**. First responders rated **"Recognising stress"** highest, closely followed by **"Applicability"** and **"Acceptability"**.

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