

# Harford County Therapeutic Recreation

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Recreational therapy, also known as **therapeutic recreation**, is a systematic process that utilizes recreation and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions, as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery and well-being.

--American Therapeutic Recreation Association

# Karaoke



CD TRK 11/15 ← CD6 ⌵

I'm glad I got the chance  
say that I do believe  
I love you

And if I should ever  
away,



Like



Comment



Share

Options

Send in Messenger



Valentine's Day Social Dance



## Craft Club

# Outline

- ▶ Overview
- ▶ Data Collection
- ▶ Results: Past Performance and Future Participation
- ▶ Results: Improvements and New Directions

# Overview

## ▶ Study Aims:

- ▶ Determining behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes of the community, people with disabilities and their caregivers, toward therapeutic recreation in Harford County
- ▶ Examining environmental and social factors that influence therapeutic recreation patterns among citizens with disabilities in Harford County

## ▶ Data Collecting Strategy

- ▶ Qualitative data: descriptive
- ▶ Quantitative data: can be described numerically

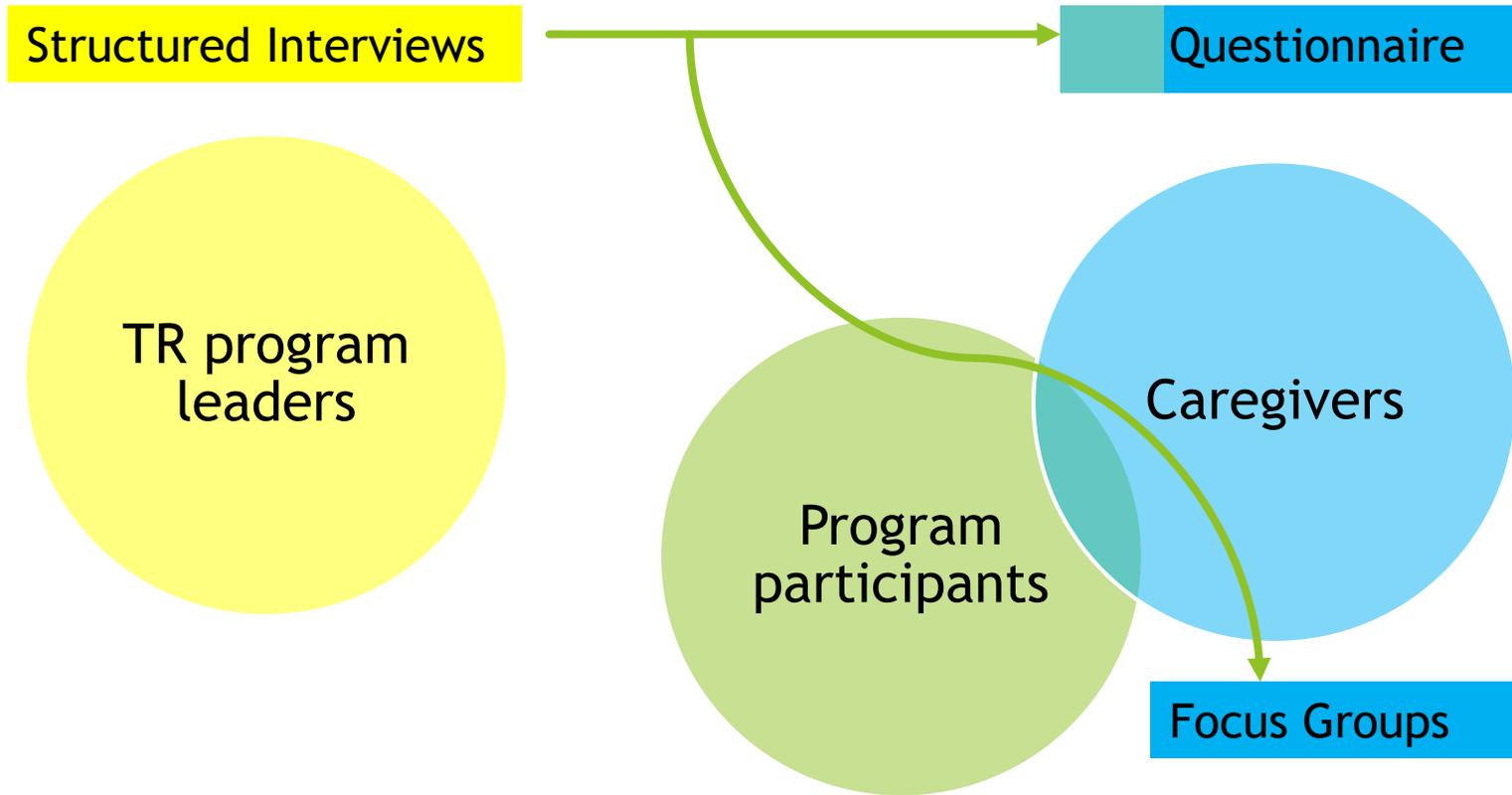
## ▶ Results

- ▶ Evaluated the effects of Harford County's Therapeutic Recreation program on the psychological and physical health, recovery and well-being of citizens with disabilities in Harford County
- ▶ Analyzed data to design implementable changes for the County's Therapeutic Recreation program

# Data Collection

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# Harford County Therapeutic Recreation Study Participants



# Participants' Characteristics: Focus Groups and Structured Interviews

- ▶ Focus groups (n = 13)
  - ▶ In-person (n = 11)
  - ▶ Telephone (n = 2)
- ▶ Structured interviews of therapeutic recreation program leaders (n = 3)

	Harford	St. Mary's	Baltimore City	Montgomery
Population	244,826	105,151	620,961	971,777
Per capita income	\$37,972	\$37,528	\$28,488	\$51,162
With a disability, under 65	7.60%	8.40%	11.70%	4.90%
Population per square mile	560	294	7,672	1,978
Square miles	437	357	81	491

source: U.S. Census (2019) *Quick Facts*

# Participants' Characteristics Questionnaire

(n = 50)

	Questionnaire Participants	All Harford County Citizens with Disabilities*
TOTAL POPULATION		11.4%
SEX		
Male	62%	50%
Female	38%	50%
RACE		
White	78%	80%
African American	6%	12%
Asian	6%	4%
Two or more races	8%	
Hispanic	2%	4%

	Questionnaire Participants	All Harford County Citizens with Disabilities*
AGE		
Under 18	36%	7%
18-21	13%	52%
21-64	49%	
65 and older	2%	41%
DIFFICULTY		
Hearing	10%	30%
Vision	14%	29%
Cognitive	78%	44%
Ambulatory	16%	53%
Self-care	42%	39%
Independent living	56%	43%

source: U.S. Census Bureau (2019). 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

# Data Analysis: Qualitative Data

STEP 1

Conduct data cleaning



STEP 2

Upload data into NVivo



STEP 3

Start coding relevant information in the data



STEP 4

Reorganize the data according to research questions



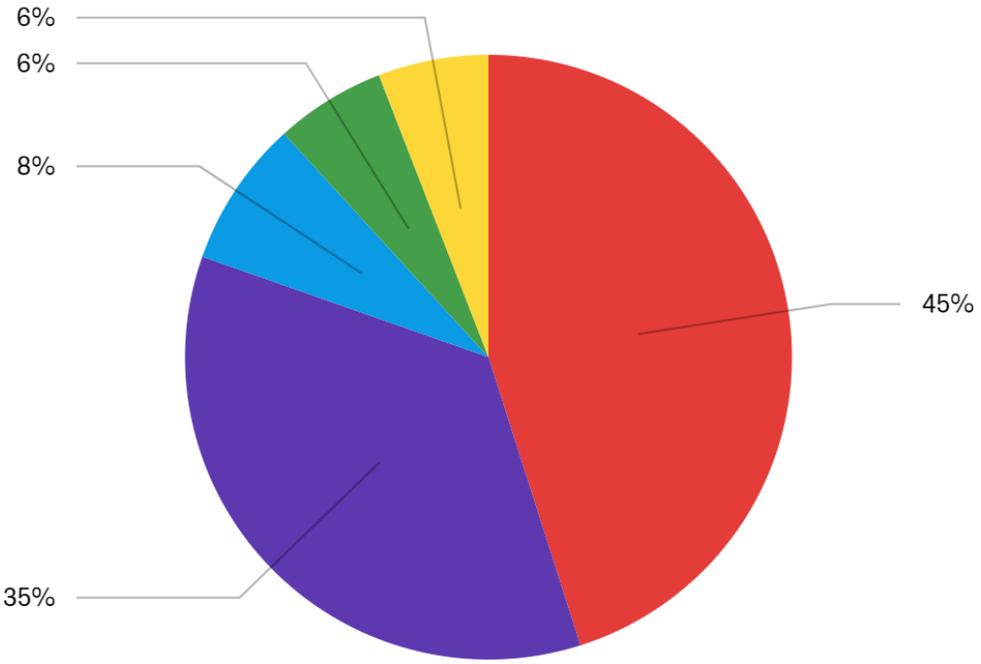
STEP 5

Generate themes to address the research questions

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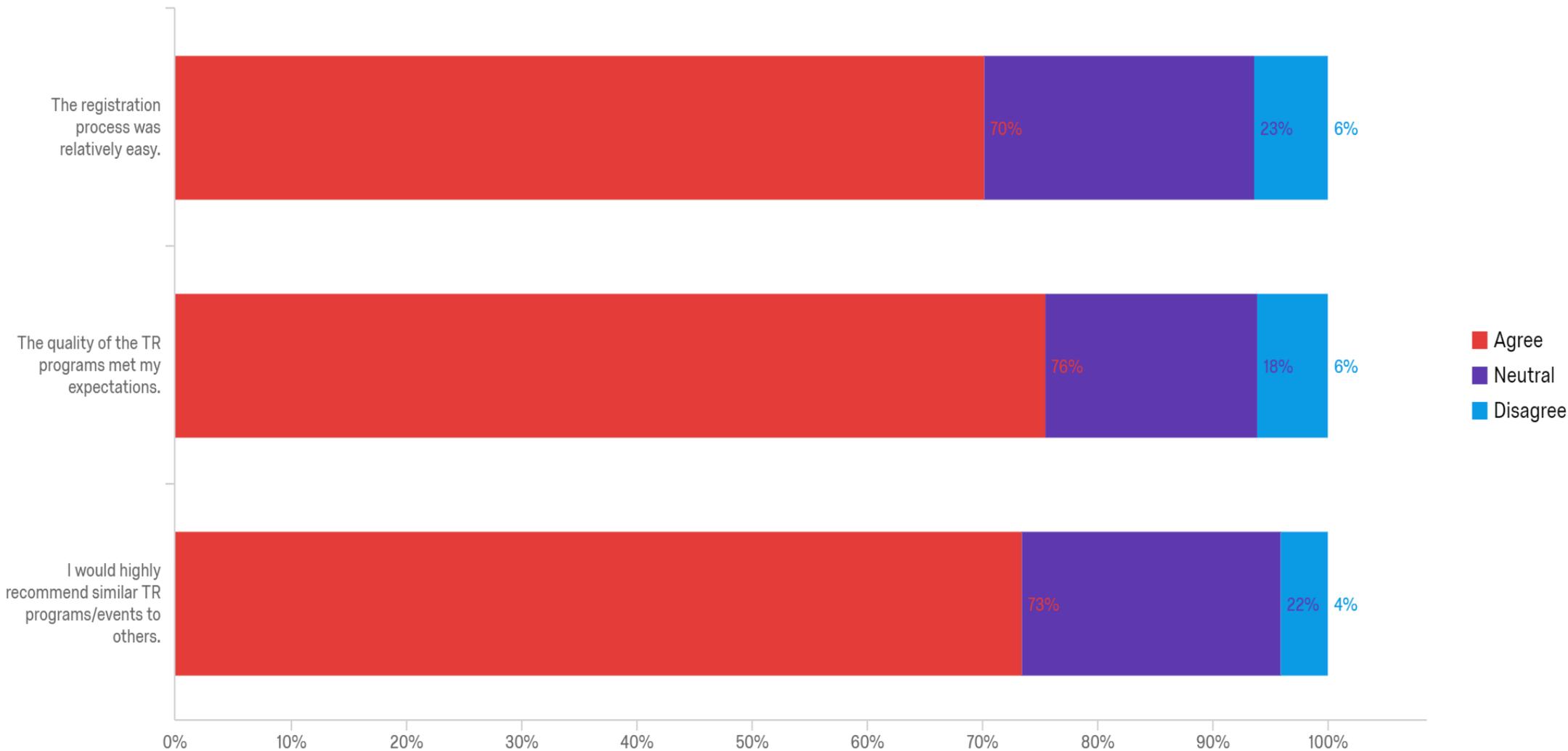
Results:  
Past Performance, Future Participation

# What are your overall feelings about Harford County TR programming? (n = 51)

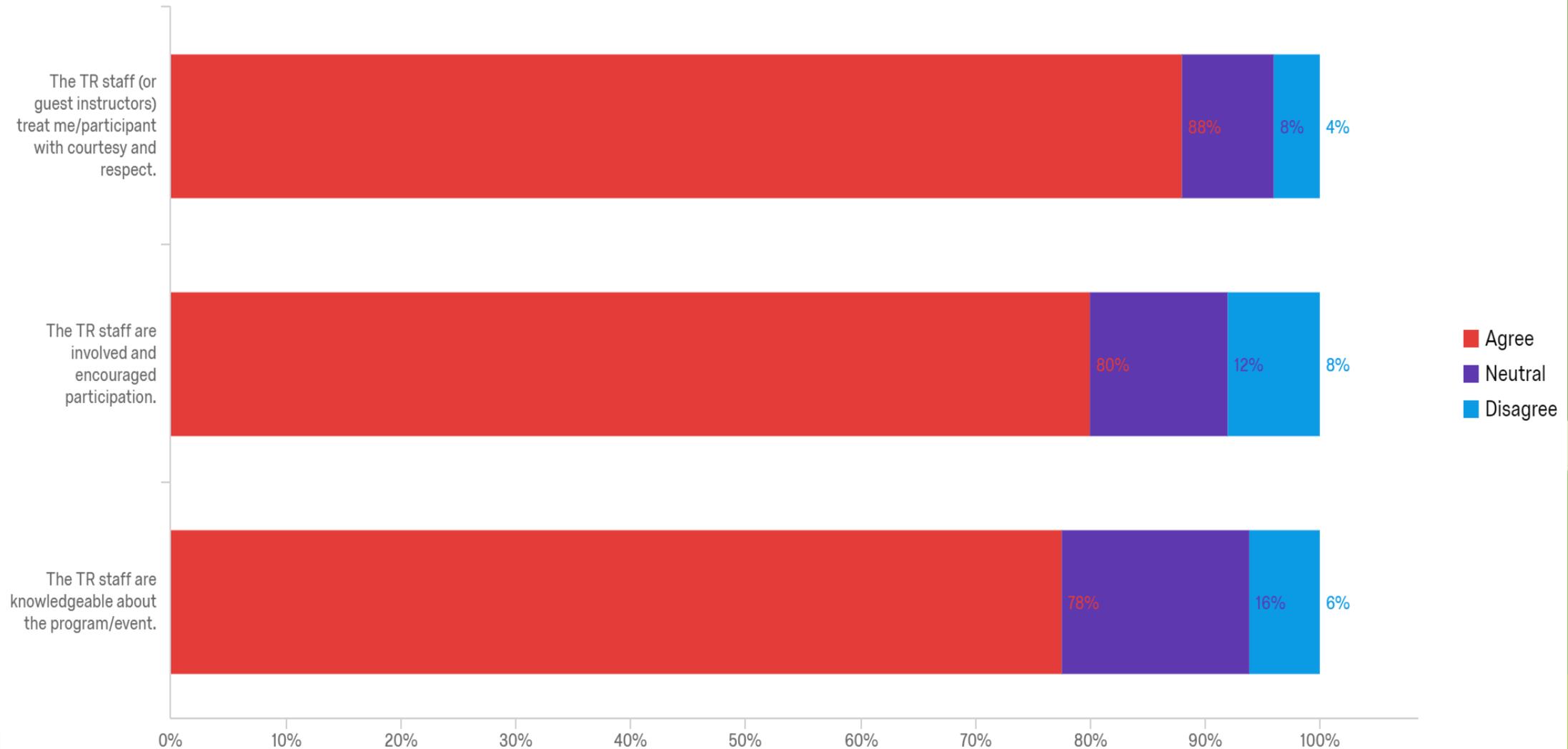


Extremely satisfied   Somewhat satisfied   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   Somewhat dissatisfied   Extremely dissatisfied

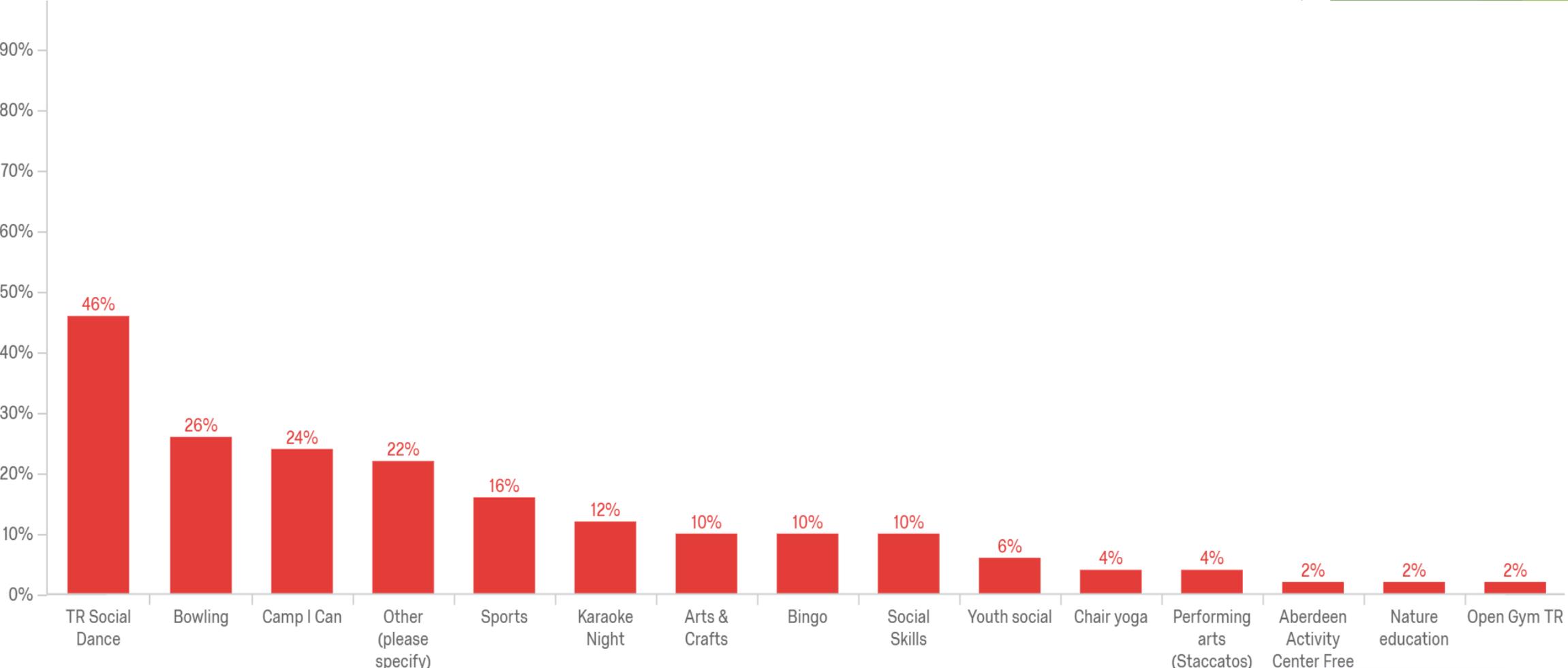
# What are your opinions of the program? (n = 47, 49, and 49)



# What are your opinions of the staff? (n = 50, 50, and 49)



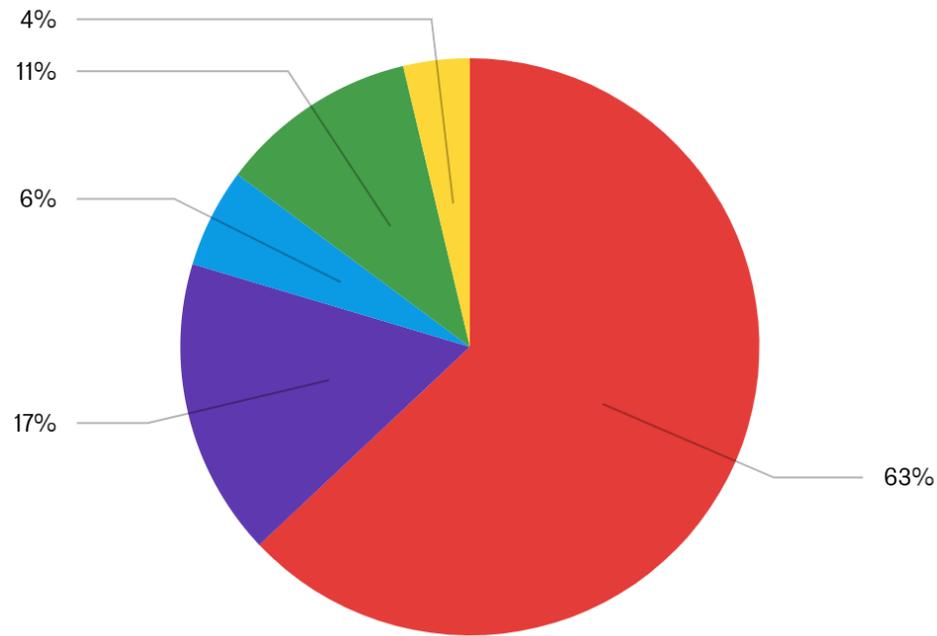
# In what TR programs did you participate? (n = 50)



# Summary of Past Performance

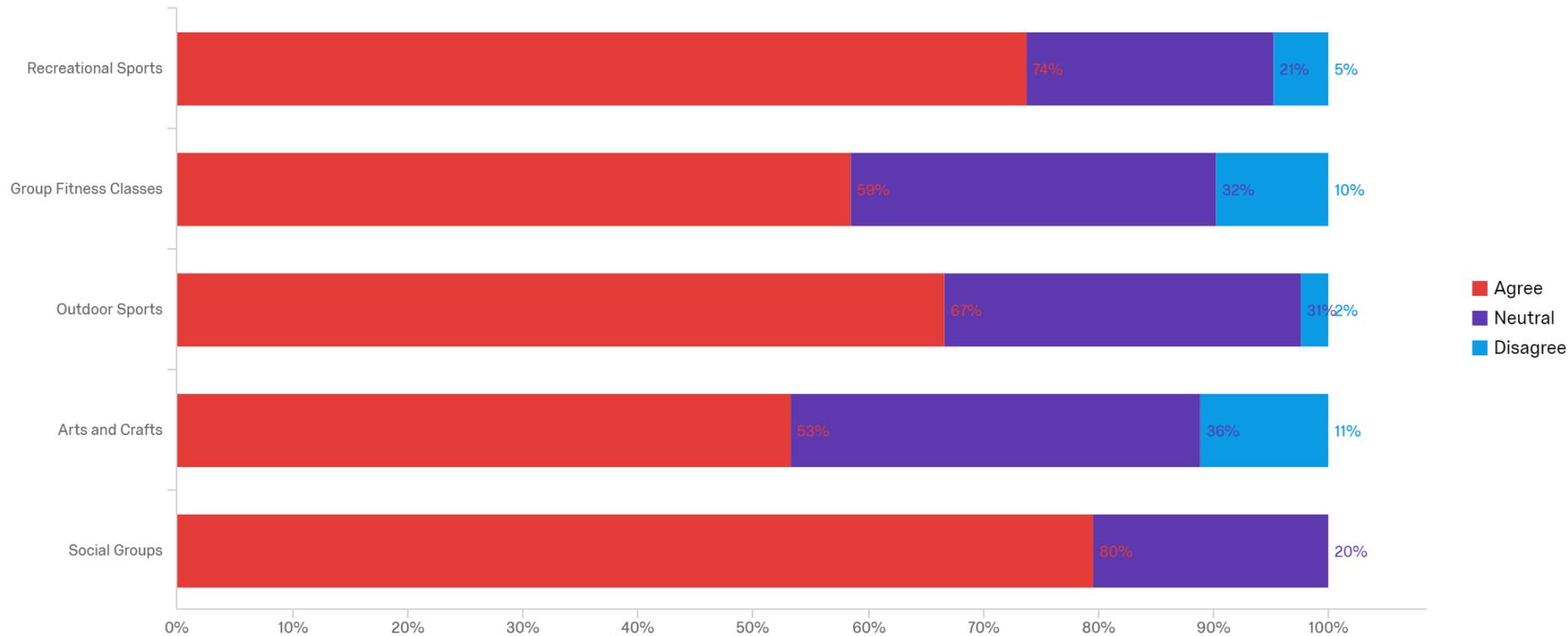
Theme	Frequency	Meaning	Evidence
Communication	12	Email and social media communication are effective, and staff are responsive in person, but some are still relatively uninformed about Harford County's TR programming	<p>"I'm on the email list, and so there's regular emails that are sent out."</p> <p>"This past year they've done a little bit more with getting it onto Facebook and onto social media. I see it a little bit more frequently."</p> <p>"[Staff name] has been really great about communicating with me and emailing with me and meeting with me and all of this ..."</p> <p>"Um, but since I don't get the newsletter, I have to go online to find it"</p>
New programs	6	New and more diversified activities are being offered	<p>"Things that were never offered before are being offered"</p> <p>"I've heard good things about more programs are offered"</p> <p>"So I think they're trying new things"</p>
Staff	5	Staff is creative, welcoming, engaging, and nice	<p>"I think that she does have some really good ideas. She's very creative."</p> <p>"Person running program is excited to see the participants, knows their names, and actually engages in the activities with them."</p> <p>"She's so nice."</p>

# How likely are you to participate in Harford County TR in the future? (n = 54)



Extremely likely   Somewhat likely   Neither likely nor unlikely   Somewhat unlikely   Extremely unlikely

# In what types of TR activities are you interested? (n = 42, 41, 42, 45, and 49)

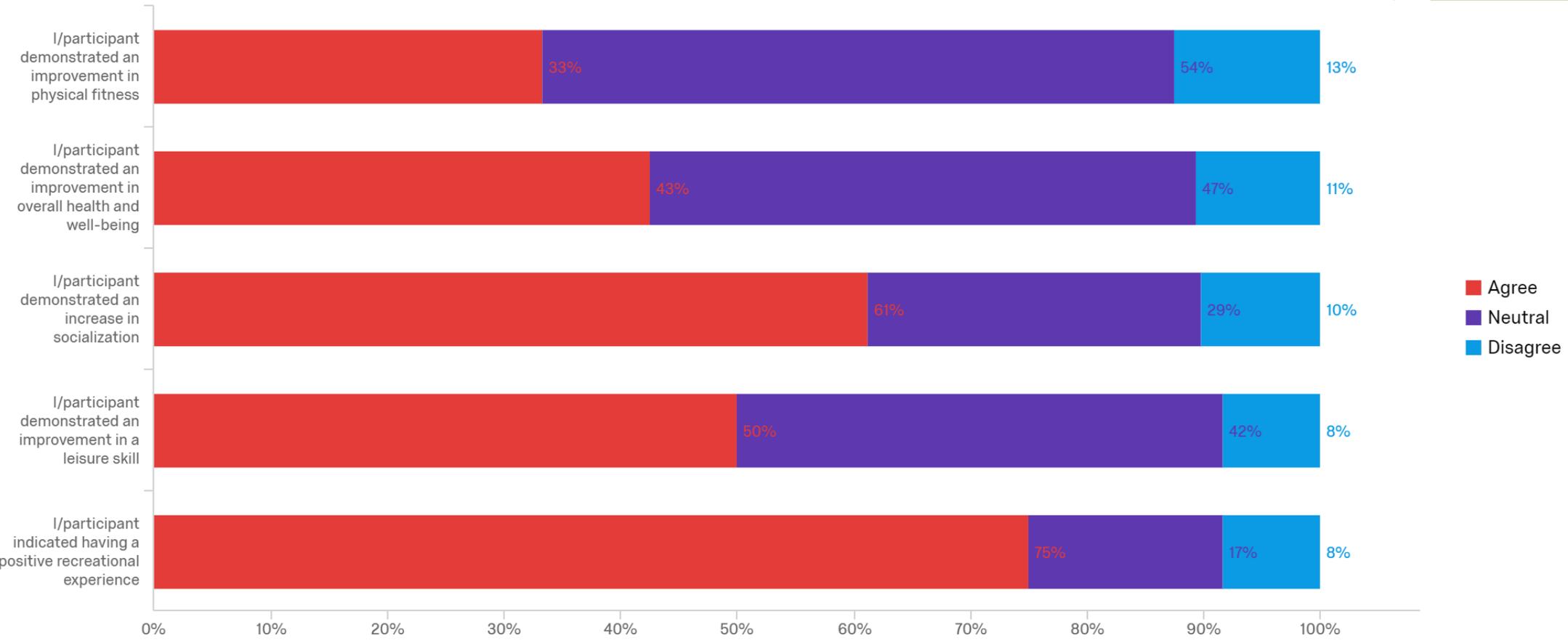


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# Results: Improvements and New Directions

# What were your therapeutic outcomes?

(n = 48, 47, 49, 48, and 48)



# Summary of Needed Improvements

Theme	Frequency	Meaning	Evidence
Registration system	20	The registration system needs improvement because it is difficult to use, especially for people with visual/reading disabilities, and it requires a computer.	<p>“It can be confusing to figure out what is available”</p> <p>“I had a headache after I signed up this last time.”</p> <p>“The guys that I sign up, they don’t have computers.”</p> <p>“online access is limited by visual/reading disabilities.”</p>
Credit card requirement	19	The credit card requirement is a barrier for low-income families and takes away independence from clients.	<p>“Yeah, and I’ve worked with some that have been taken away by the state, you know. They don’t have connections with family members. All they have is their caregivers, you know, the people who help to manage their money ...”</p> <p>“It takes away their independence. I mean, [Name of client] doesn’t have a lot of independence, but he can go to his piggy bank, he can pull out \$5.00 for a dance, and he can go and he can pay for the dance and get his ticket or whatever.”</p> <p>“My daughter earns her own money, and we keep it in an envelope at home ... She counts it out, and now that we have this stupid credit card, she doesn’t know the cost of anything.”</p> <p>“Like, you know, managing their money and learning to pay for things, which is also a great way of independence ...”</p>
Communication	18	Communicating about programming only through social media and the website without a newsletter is confusing and not optimal.	<p>“I’m not on Facebook”</p> <p>“And I know that the website could be maybe a little more user-friendly”</p> <p>“it was confusing even trying to find just the dances.”</p> <p>“And I tried to go on and get it and then I would look online for activities, but it’s different if you don’t get the newsletter.”</p>

# What improvements would you suggest?

Theme	Frequency	Meaning	Evidence
New activities	88	A range of activities was suggested, with walking, open gym, Special Olympics, and nights out being most cited.	<p>“Like a walking club would be super cool. I mean there’s so many people that need exercise”</p> <p>“it’d have to be like really great staff to run it, like to have an open sports time where they can come and hang out”</p> <p>“Then they have bowling tournaments; they have horseback riding, which there used to be a place in Cecil County that did that for therapeutic; then they have softball, which they actually just started. So, I mean, really getting Special Olympics back would be something that would be interesting.”</p> <p>“I know they would be interested in maybe having a Girl’s Night Out or a Guy’s Night Out”</p>
Outreach	56	A range of ways to promote County TR were suggested, including email blasts, PSAs, and school-assisted publicity.	<p>“Have an email blast to send out info.”</p> <p>“That’s another way: TV and radio.”</p> <p>“If you’re talking about 0-21, the only way that, I mean, to me it just seems like the way that you would reach people would be: what is the one system we all share? It’s the education system.”</p>
Targeted activities	17	More targeted activities aimed at specific groups was seen as desirable.	<p>“Please offer evening activities for people 21 and over on weeknights”</p> <p>“Suggest adding autism to the list of disabilities.”</p> <p>“More programs for children who are school aged-elementary.”</p> <p>“As long as it’s going to state 3-16 years old, it’s worthless to me. It’s worse than worthless. It’s damaging. It’s damaging to the population.”</p> <p>“If it’s for families then call it families-otherwise offer age-appropriate groups and programs”</p>

# What practices do other counties follow?

Theme	Frequency	Meaning	Evidence
Outreach	16	Leaders serve on boards and commissions, attend resource fairs, and distribute information through schools.	<p>“...the Commission for Disabilities and the Southern Maryland Center for Independent Living. There are other boards and commissions that I sit on but those two are focused directly on people with disabilities.”</p> <p>“And then other than that we go to we are invited to a lot of resource fairs. A lot of different things in the County. So whenever we do that we take a lot of our brochures and booklets and actually can talk one on one with a lot of parents.”</p> <p>“For kids, we go through the school system, [Name of public school system] within the Special Education department. We have a number of contacts there who do outreach for us”</p>
New activities	14	New activities are continually introduced based on research, community demand, and staff availability.	<p>“I try to typically set aside one day a week like two hours and just go online and look at things, particularly like around North Carolina, Indiana, Illinois, which are big therapeutic recreation states, and see the kinds of things that they offer.”</p> <p>“Most of that is going to come through agencies and parents as opposed to us surveying and things like that ahead of time.”</p> <p>“So I am kind of stuck on whatever I can get a qualified instructor for.”</p> <p>“Between me and the other full-time person, we kind of just kind of tag team the inclusion part of our job, of our program, which has kind of taken us away from being able to develop other new [activities]”</p> <p>“so many different things. you try and try and try and try”</p> <p>“I like to offer at least one new thing each season in each program guide”</p>
Targeted activities	9	Programs primarily serve people with intellectual, developmental, or learning disabilities, not those with physical disabilities.	<p>“So primarily adults with intellectual disabilities. That's the majority. Probably 85%.”</p> <p>“So we've found that our little niche is adults with intellectual disabilities, there's just not a lot of programming in [County name] for them, so we focus on that specifically. We do a lot for during the day, for people who are in the like the adult day care programs because there isn't a lot of programming for them.”</p> <p>“[Adults with physical disabilities] might come to a dance here and there and maybe a class in there but it's a really small group for us.”</p>

# Summary

- ▶ The community has a strongly positive perception of Harford County's TR program
- ▶ And a large proportion of the community plans to participate in the future
- ▶ But the community noted room for improvement in :
  - ▶ therapeutic outcomes for physical fitness, overall health, and well-being
  - ▶ participation barriers (i.e., registration system, credit card requirement, and communication)
- ▶ Therefore, the community suggested new activities, improved outreach, and more targeted activities, which are in line with best practices of other TR programs

# Thank you

- ▶ Meghan Denhard
- ▶ Rachel Harbin
- ▶ Donna Keen
- ▶ Rachel Kollasch, CTRS
- ▶ Jennifer Roberts, MPH, DrPH
- ▶ Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability
- ▶ Harford County citizens with disabilities and their caregivers

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