

Evaluation Report

Family Inclusion Project

2014

1st November – 6th December 2014 | Newquay,
Cornwall



An evaluation of a 6 week surfing based project to provide veterans and their families with additional opportunities to engage in outside physical activities and aid family engagement.

Surf Action Project

The Surf Action Project aims to change the lives of young people by using surfing, peer-mentoring, re-engagement with parents and friendship.

Our aim is to give clients the skills, confidence and self-belief they need to achieve their goals, no matter what additional challenges they face.

We recognise that every young person is different and each responds to challenges differently. But we believe that with the right assistance and support ***they can do it.***

Background to this project

Surf Action, the charity, has been running a surfing therapy programme for ex-service personnel with mental health difficulties and/or isolation issues since 2010. The aim is to provide an inspirational experience that helps to promote a healthier lifestyle by using the local environment as a classroom for therapeutic activity. This provision has been extended over the years to include their families and to try and give them more opportunities in which to engage with them and help to improve family bonding and dynamics. The Family Inclusion Project was designed as a 6 week project to give families extra opportunities at a time of year when fewer things tend to be available. The project was based at Seascape Lodge in Newquay and had easy access to the Great Western Beach

Project aims

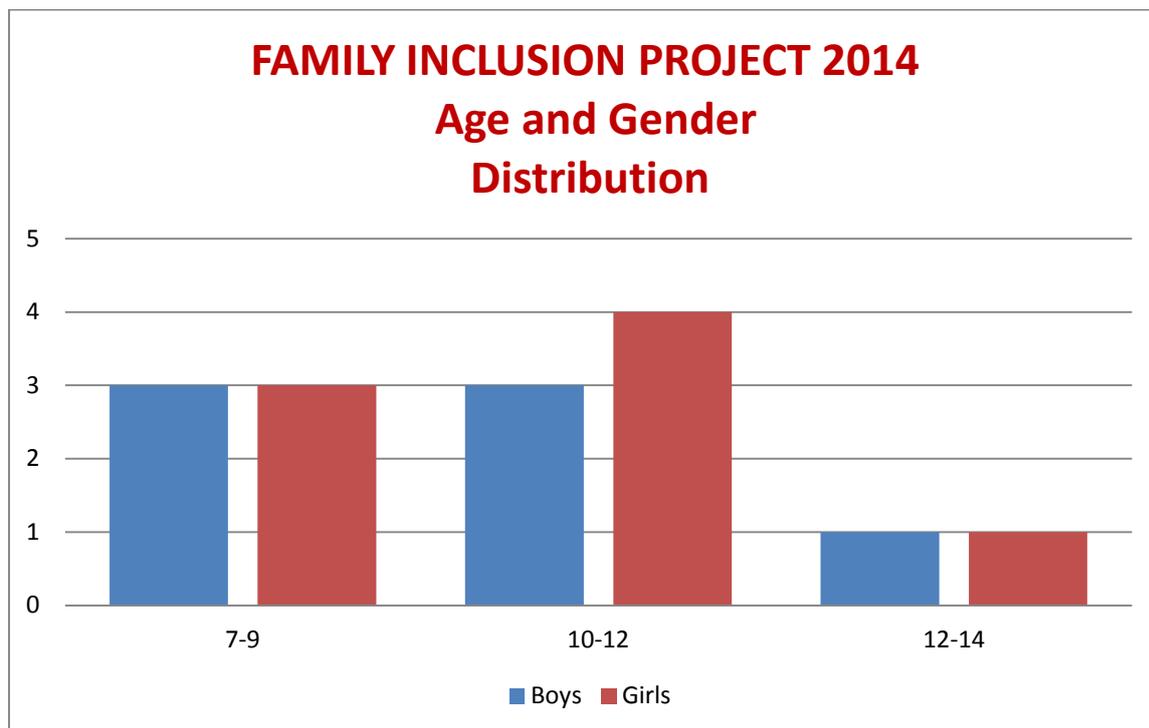
The aims of the project were:

1. To provide families with the opportunity to take part in surfing and beach based activities and help in developing stronger family ties.
2. To help build self-esteem and self-confidence in young people
3. To encourage participants to make friends, reduce isolation, build confidence and self-reliance
4. To enable the children to reduce possible psychological injuries upon themselves and their families after re-engaging with mum and dad post deployment (Long after the successful treatment for the symptoms of PTSD, the legacy of these psychological injuries can continue to affect the families and children who have also had their lives changed by their parent's injury).
5. To help build expertise for incorporation into later family focused projects.

Clients

The clients for the Family Inclusion Project were 15 children of existing clients of the charity through its work with ex-service personnel and those who have served with the blue-light services and their families. Their parents were also involved by being in the water with them and providing help and encouragement.

Client Gender / Age



Client Ethnicity

Due to the ethnic make-up of Cornwall, all the clients were white. This is consistent with the demographic of the county as a whole, in which 98.7% of the population define themselves as White (ONS, 2008).

Evaluation Measures

An important part of the project was evaluating whether the sessions had had a positive effect on clients. We used a validated tool, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWS), a positively worded measure developed by Warwick and Edinburgh Universities in 2006 in conjunction with NHS Scotland, measuring emotional and psychological wellbeing, validated with children aged 8 upwards. Because of the simplicity of the measure we decided to extend its use to the age of 7. In order to make the questionnaire easy and fun for the very young clients to complete we included facial emoticons within it to guide them.

We asked the clients to complete the simple questionnaire that used this scale to measure their self-esteem, self-confidence, relationships and achievements. This was completed pre- and post-project. Success was determined on measurable self-reported improvements in mental health and self-confidence, but also included qualitative feedback e.g. enjoyment of learning a new skill, meeting new people and being part of a community and improved family relationships. This qualitative data was then converted into quantitative data via the WEMWS scale. Gender based means and group means were then calculated (falling between 1 and 5) and the data analysed.



Results and Findings

1. Attendance

Overall attendance was 80% which was considered very good for November/December. Some inclement weather also intervened but it was pleasing to see the majority were happy to be out and having fun despite this.

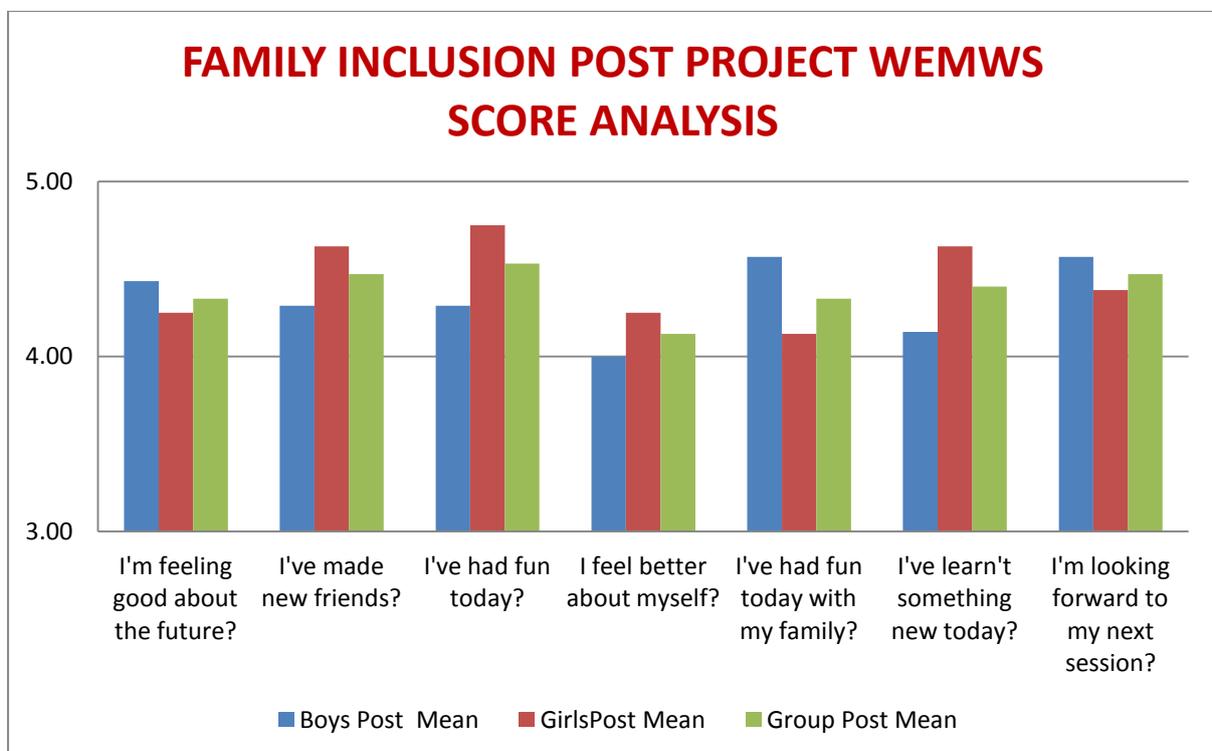
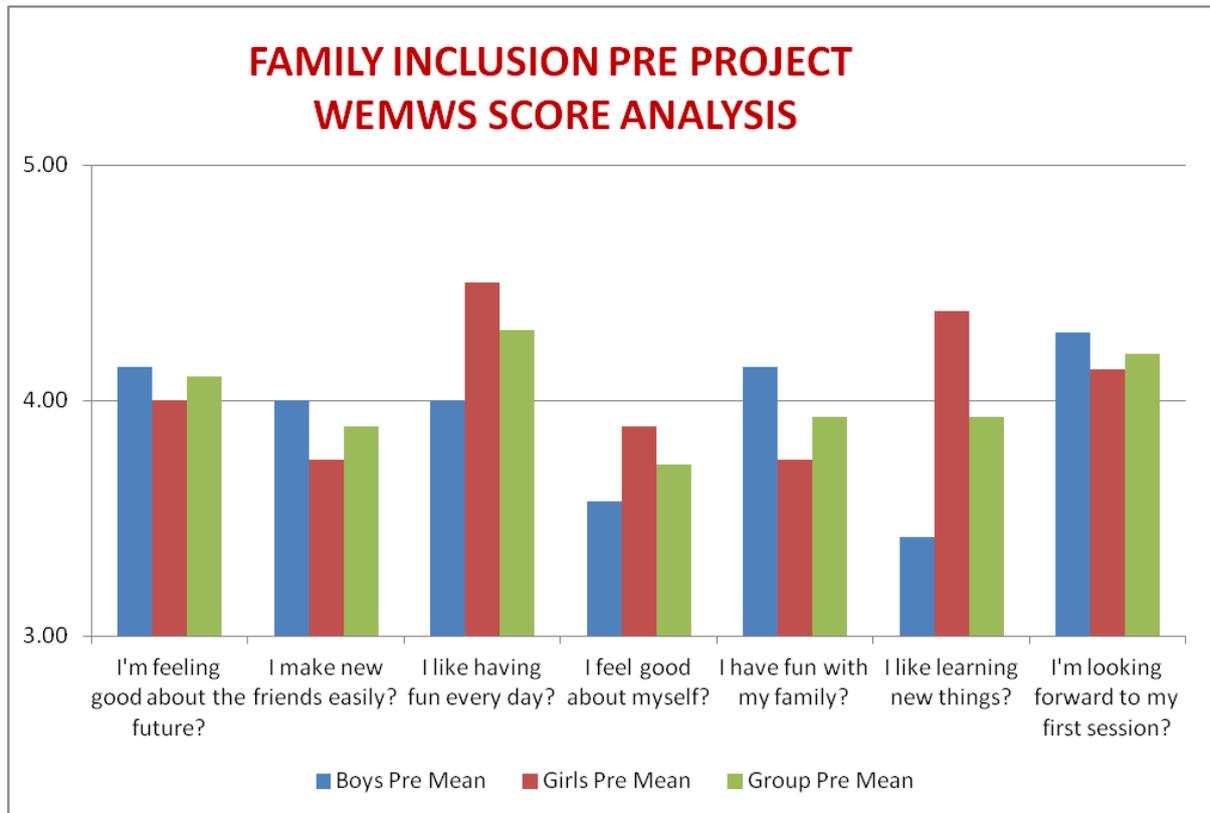
2. Clients Self Evaluation Scores

All 15 clients who took part returned the requisite paperwork. Surf Action had learned from the difficulties encountered with getting paperwork returned with the Kids Surf Squad Project in the summer. The pre-evaluation questionnaires were completed around 2 weeks before the clients started the course, while post evaluations were completed at the start of their final sessions.

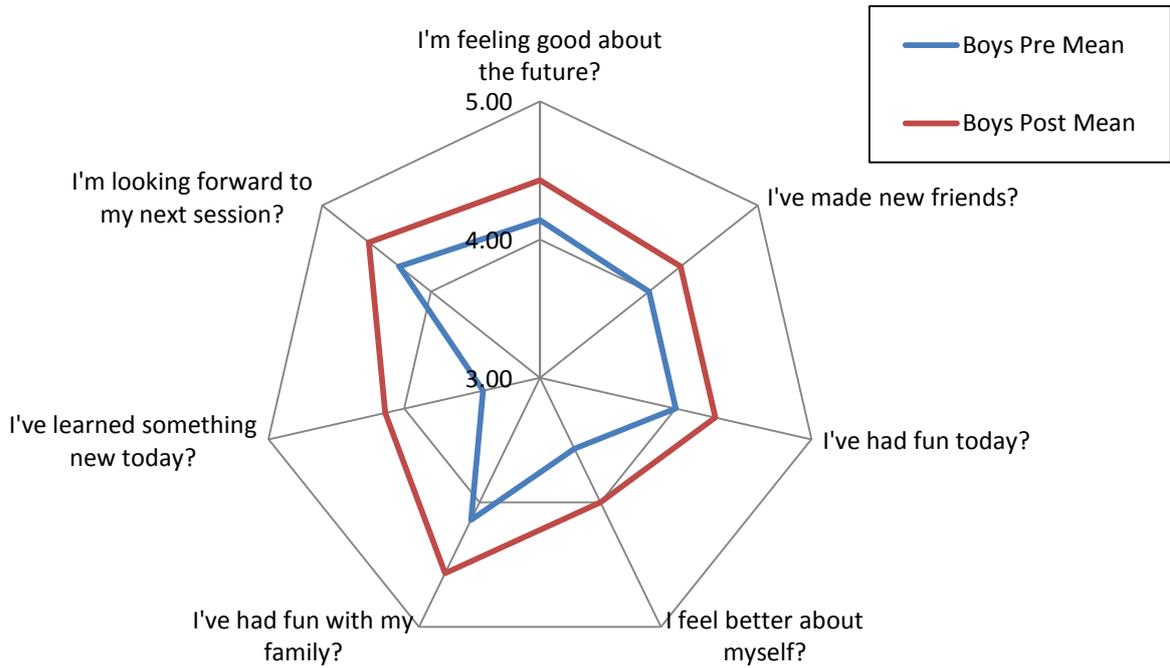
The tables and charts below show the separate gender and group mean scores of all clients. Clients were asked to rate their wellbeing using on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (good), using different evidence-based measures of wellbeing



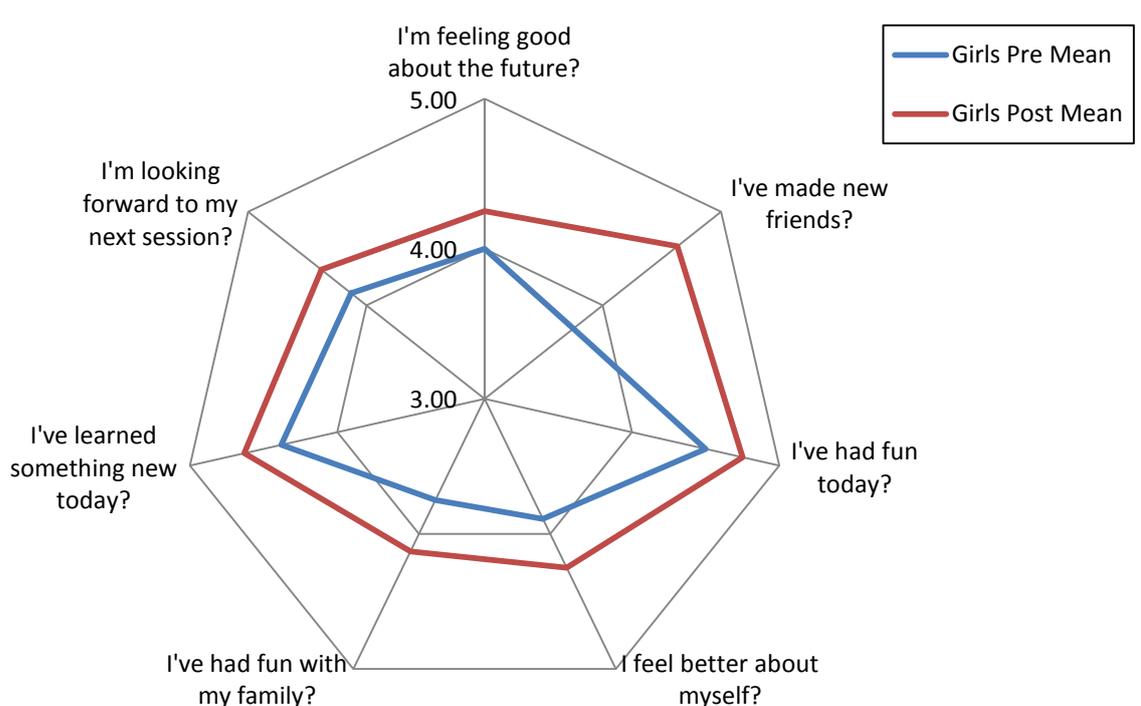
Project Scores by Gender



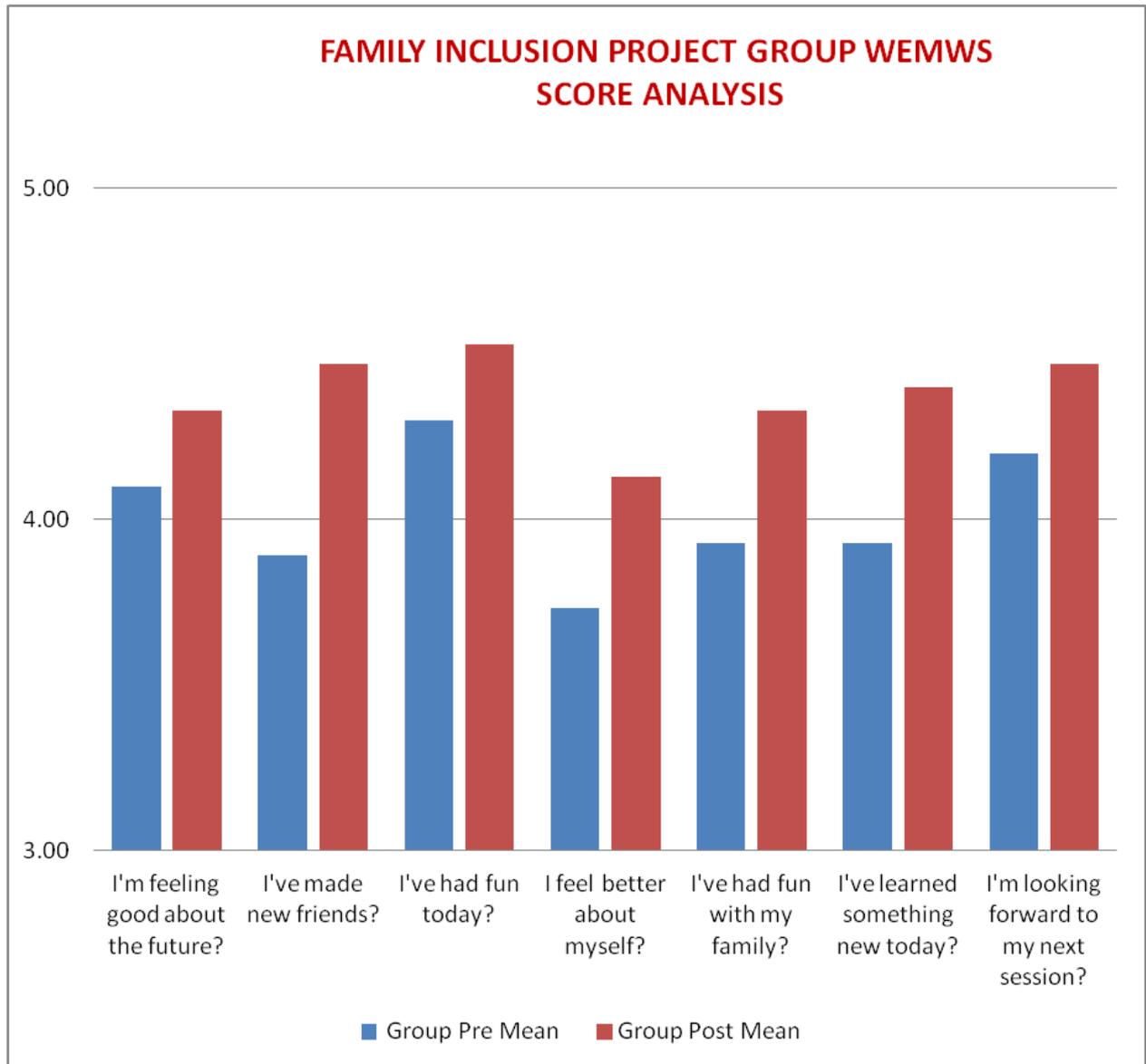
FAMILY INCLUSION PROJECT COMPARISON WEMWS SCORE ANALYSIS - BOYS



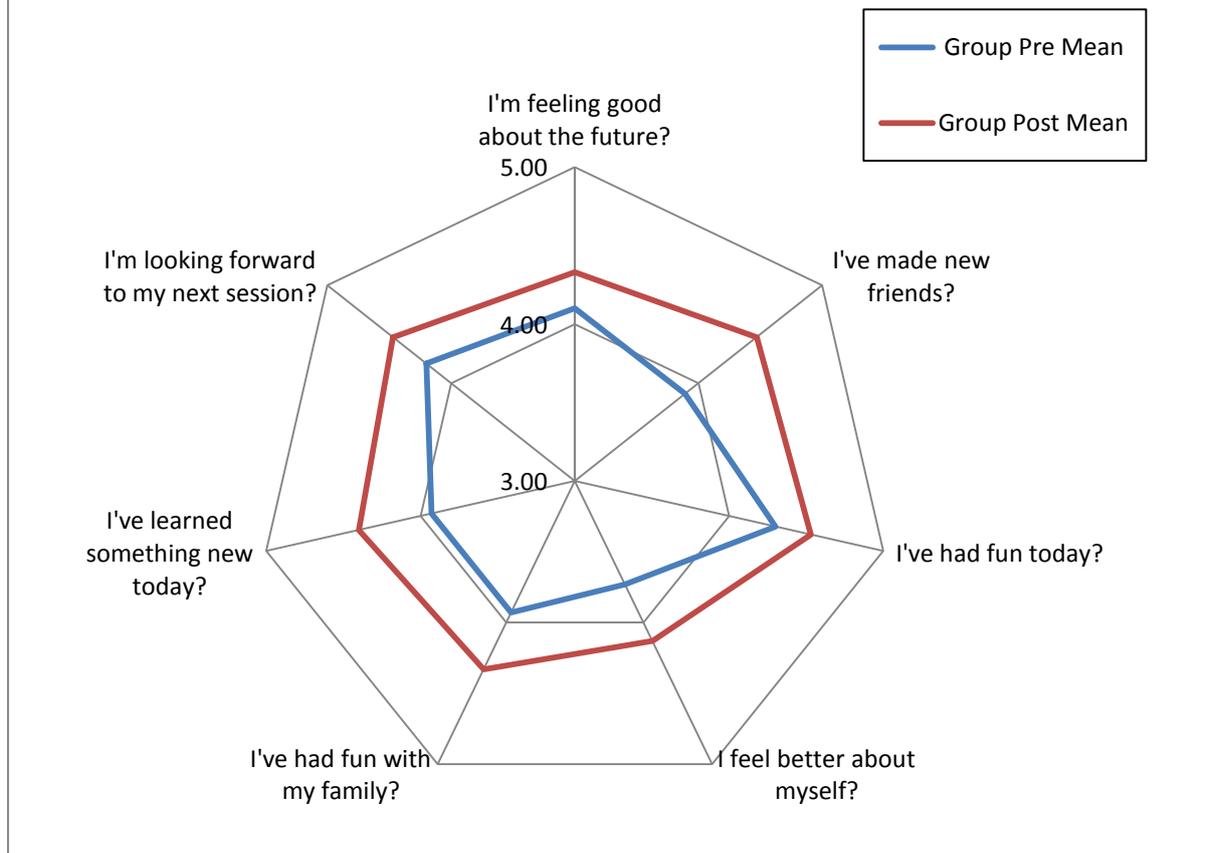
FAMILY INCLUSION PROJECT COMPARISON WEMWS SCORE ANALYSIS - GIRLS



Group Project Scores



FAMILY INCLUSION PROJECT GROUP WEMWS SCORE ANALYSIS



Conclusions

1. Main Findings

The results from self evaluation, client and parental feedback and attendance levels give a strong indication that the Family Intervention Project had a positive impact on the lives of clients who took part. All of the 15 clients showed positive change across at least one measure of wellbeing and in the vast majority they showed positive change across most of the measures. Group and gender mean WEMWS scores showed an improvement in all 7 areas of wellbeing.

Amongst the boys the biggest changes were in:

- I've learned something new – Up by 21%
- I feel better about myself - Up by 12%
- I've had fun with my family – Up by 10.4%

Amongst the girls the biggest changes were in:

- I've made new friends – Up by 23.5%
- I've had fun with my family – Up by 10.1%
- I feel better about myself – Up by 9.3%

For the group mean scores, the biggest changes were in:

- I've made new friends – Up by 15%
- I feel better about myself – Up by 10.7%
- I've had fun with my family – Up by 10.2%

These positive improvements in wellbeing help Surf Action to continue building and refining its methodology. Lessons learned will be built into future projects and within the day to day running of Surf Action. It also continues to build on the mass of evidence which shows that wellbeing can be improved by regular physical and social activity, particularly in the ocean environment.

