

# Embedded training for undergraduate children's nursing students to increase self-leadership, personal autonomy and emotional agility skills

Catherine Hewitt<sup>1</sup>, Annie Jennings<sup>2</sup>, Eleanor Braganza<sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Advanced and Integrated Practice, School of Health and Social Care, London South Bank University, London, UK  
2. Mental Health and Wellbeing Team, London South Bank University, London, UK



## INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Student nurses face a number of challenges during their undergraduate training, the nature of which is both emotionally and physically demanding. They are required to balance academic work with clinical placements, which can cause stress, anxiety and burnout.

The main barriers to seeking support are fear of experiencing stigma, and being judged and treated differently (Mitchell, 2018). In an attempt to eliminate these barriers, London South Bank University provided a mandatory two and half hour session, 'Self Leadership and Personal Autonomy for Children's Nurses', to 2<sup>nd</sup> year student children's nurses. Delivered by the student mental health and wellbeing team (MHWB), this session offered strategies to help cope in times of stress and pressure, and manage the competing demands.

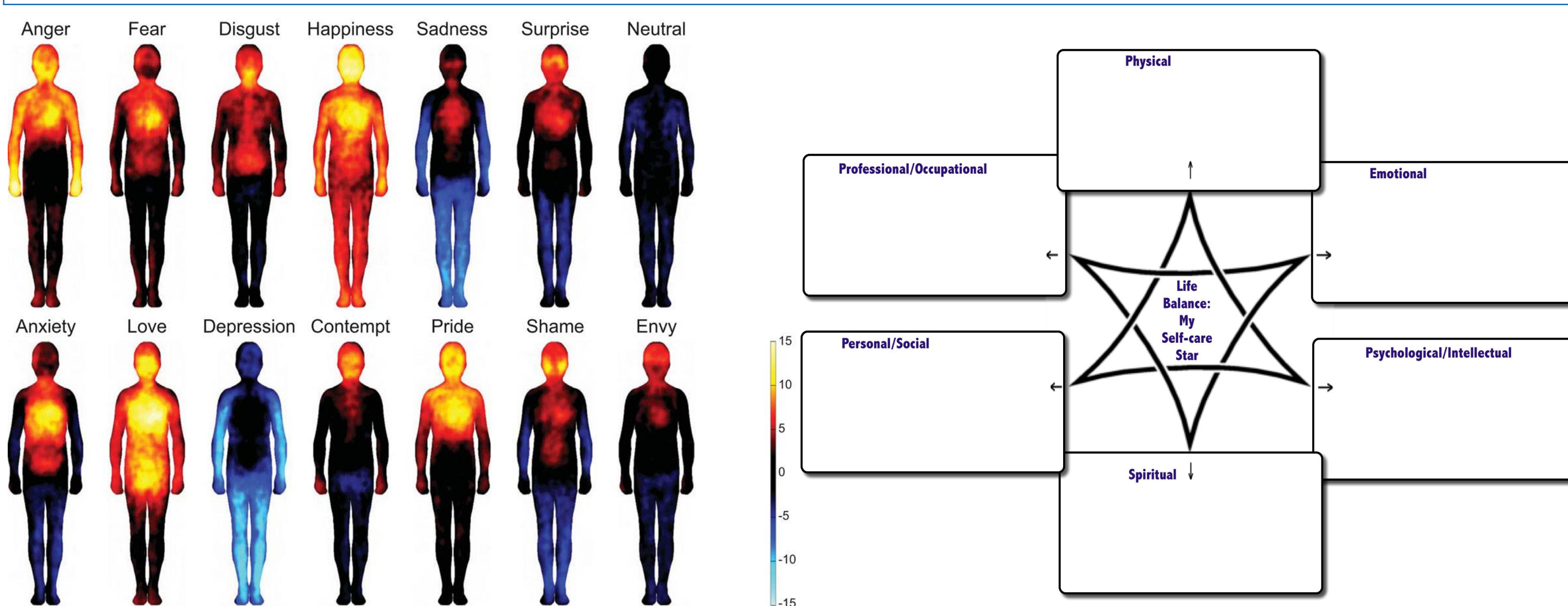
## AIM

This study aimed to investigate if and how:

- Students felt they benefitted from the session;
- Students felt better able to manage and understand their emotions;
- Students felt more able to succeed in their studies;
- Future support may be helpful as part of nursing training

## METHOD

This mixed methods study used questionnaires to collect feedback from the students who completed the session. Quantitative data were generated from questions answered using a 5-part Likert scale. Free-text questions generated qualitative data.



Examples of teaching resources used during the training session.

## RESULTS

All students (n=79) completed all quantitative questions. The qualitative element was less thoroughly completed, with 5 students providing no response, 11 students answering all questions and 63 students some questions. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed together and 3 themes were identified:

### Understanding and management of emotions

As a result of the session, 78% 'agreed'/'strongly agreed' that they had a better understanding of their emotions and 64% stated they learnt to manage their emotions (figure 1).

'Learnt about how different emotions can manifest and how these individual emotions differ from person to person.'

'I can communicate my emotions more productively.'

The session challenged students by encouraging discussion of emotions.

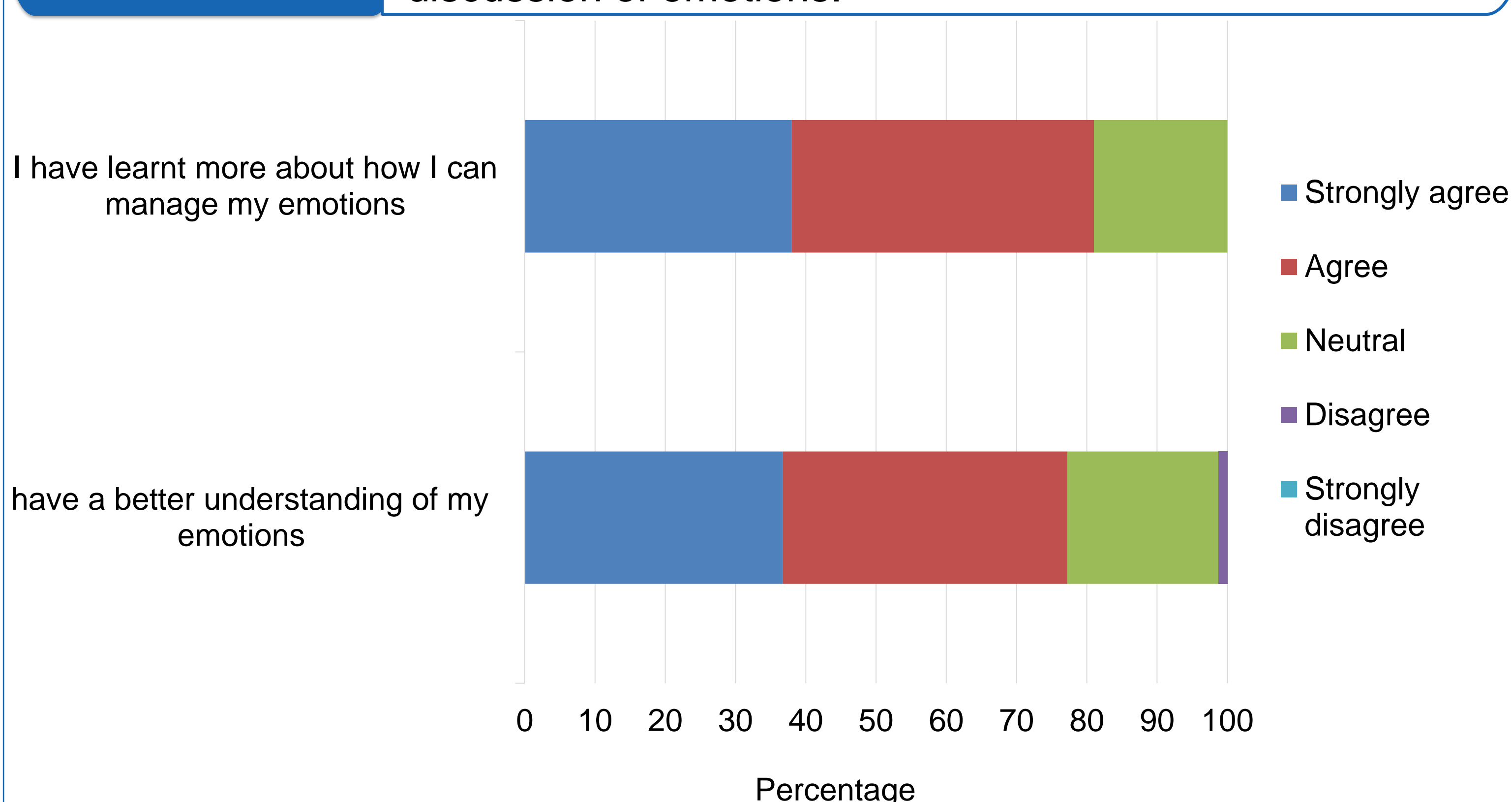


Figure 1: Students responses to questions relating to understanding and management of emotions

## RESULTS cont.

### Strategies to manage competing demands

61% 'agreed'/'strongly agreed' felt more confident in their ability to cope with placements and assessments. 68% 'agreed'/'strongly agreed' that they felt more confident in succeeding with their studies (figure 2).

'Learnt ways to manage stress and what help is available.'

'Reflecting on my life balance and reminding me to do mindfulness.'

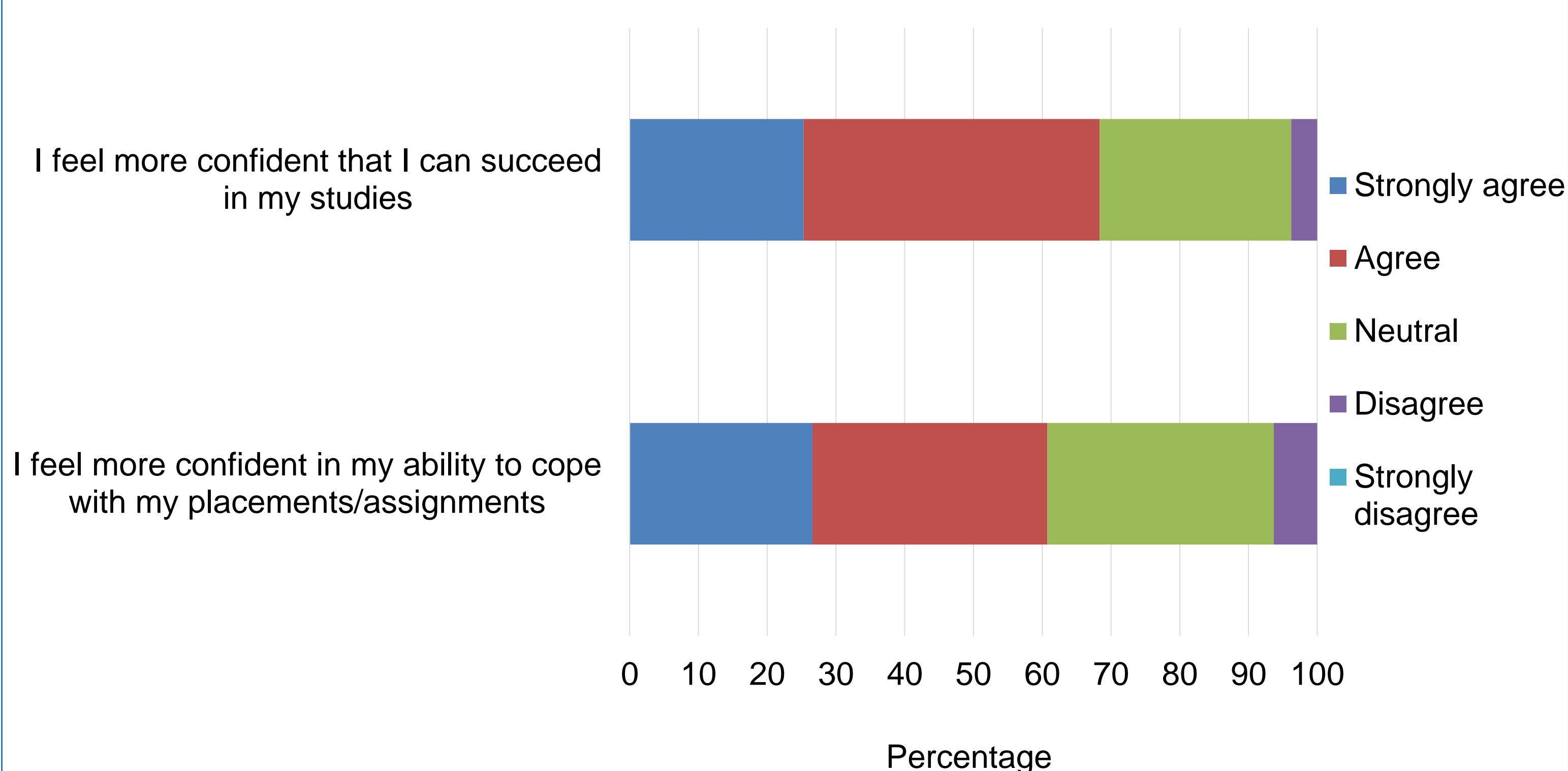


Figure 2: Students responses to questions relating to strategies to manage competing demands

### Recommendations for future training

Overall, students reported that they benefitted from this session. 94% 'agreed'/'strongly agreed' with recommending the session to others (figure 3).

'I wouldn't change a thing.'

'Not as long but very good.'

Students identified that further training on helping others would be useful.

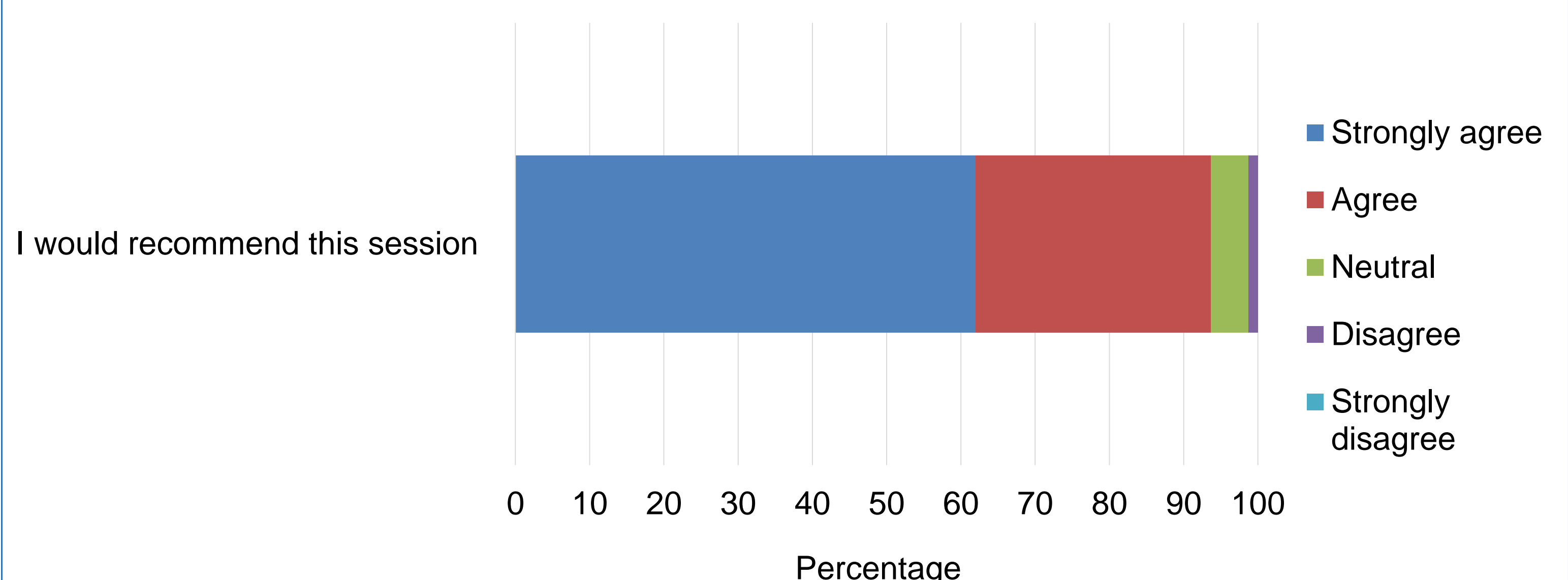


Figure 3: Students responses to the question about whether they would recommend the session to others

## CONCLUSION

The results indicate that embedding similar sessions into the curriculum will empower and prepare undergraduate student nurses to face the challenges they will encounter.

As a result of the positive feedback, this session will be repeated for the next cohort. The content has been amended in response to the feedback.

In addition, a further session relating to transition to newly qualified nurses has been developed and delivered to this cohort of now 3<sup>rd</sup> year student children's nurses.

## KEY MESSAGE

**Embedding this training into the curriculum develops a sense of responsibility, ownership and self-connection with student nurses emotional states. Teaching them to prioritise self-care whilst embarking upon a career in a caring profession aims to increase resilience and prevent burnout.**