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## **Training for Caregivers of Children and Adolescents with Trauma-Related Food Difficulties**

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# Training for Caregivers of Children and Adolescents with Trauma-Related Food Difficulties

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## BACKGROUND

- Children's exposure to trauma (sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse and neglect) can result in maladaptive habits (over- or under-eating, food hoarding, etc.) related to feeding, diet and mealtime routines (Barakat, 2011; Forkey et al., 2015; Rudzinski & Kaplan, 2020).
- The etiology of these feeding habits is unknown; it likely originates from physiological and psychological changes (Forkey et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2012).
- Trauma-informed care includes the awareness of trauma-related symptoms, identification of treatment strategies, and the ability to identify the need for professional help (Menschner & Maul, 2016).
- Education on trauma-informed care and nutrition training for caregivers can directly impact the children they care for (Kerns et al., 2016; Sunguya et al., 2013).

## PURPOSE

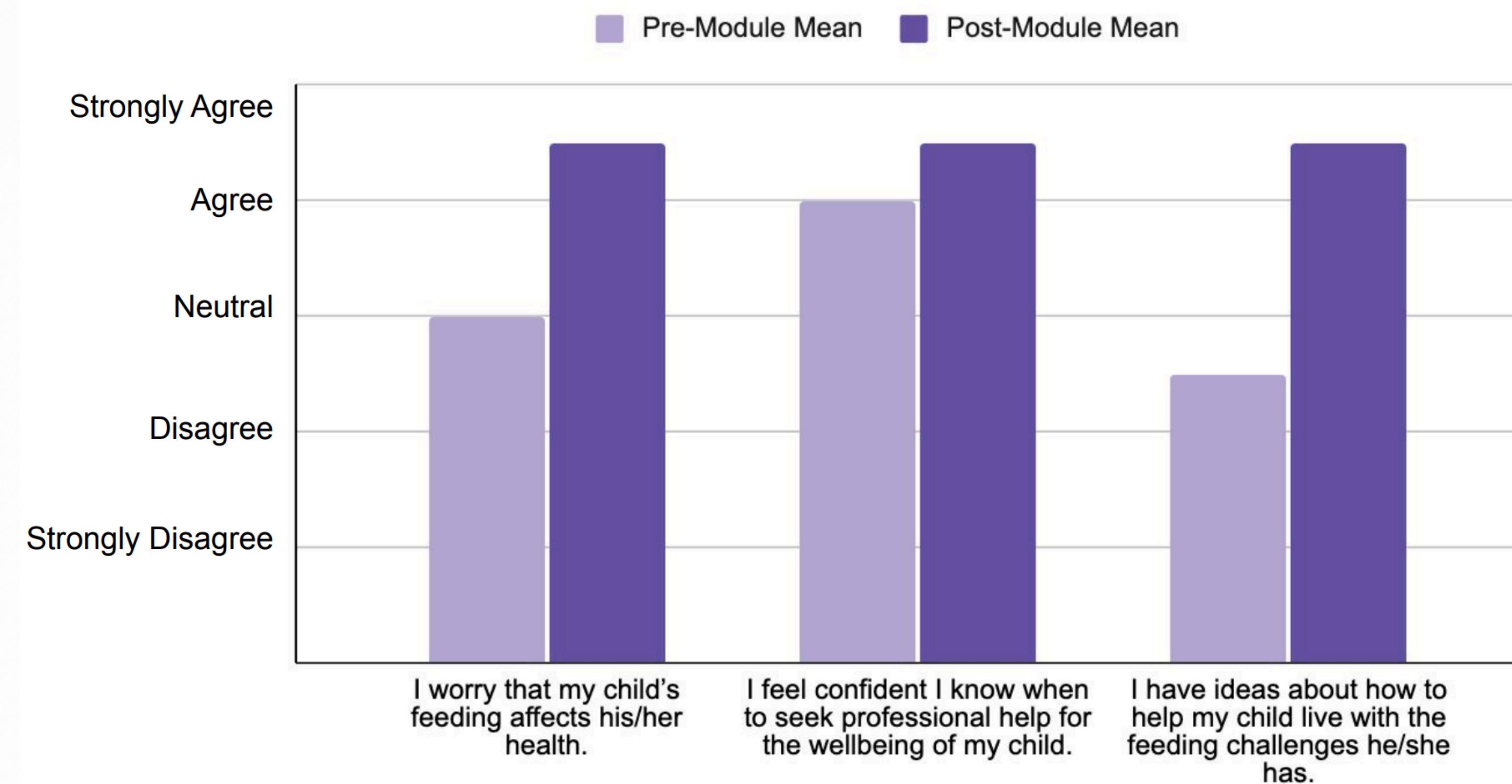
The purpose of this capstone project is to deliver trauma informed education related to feeding that results in confidence of caregivers for children with histories of trauma.

## APPROACH

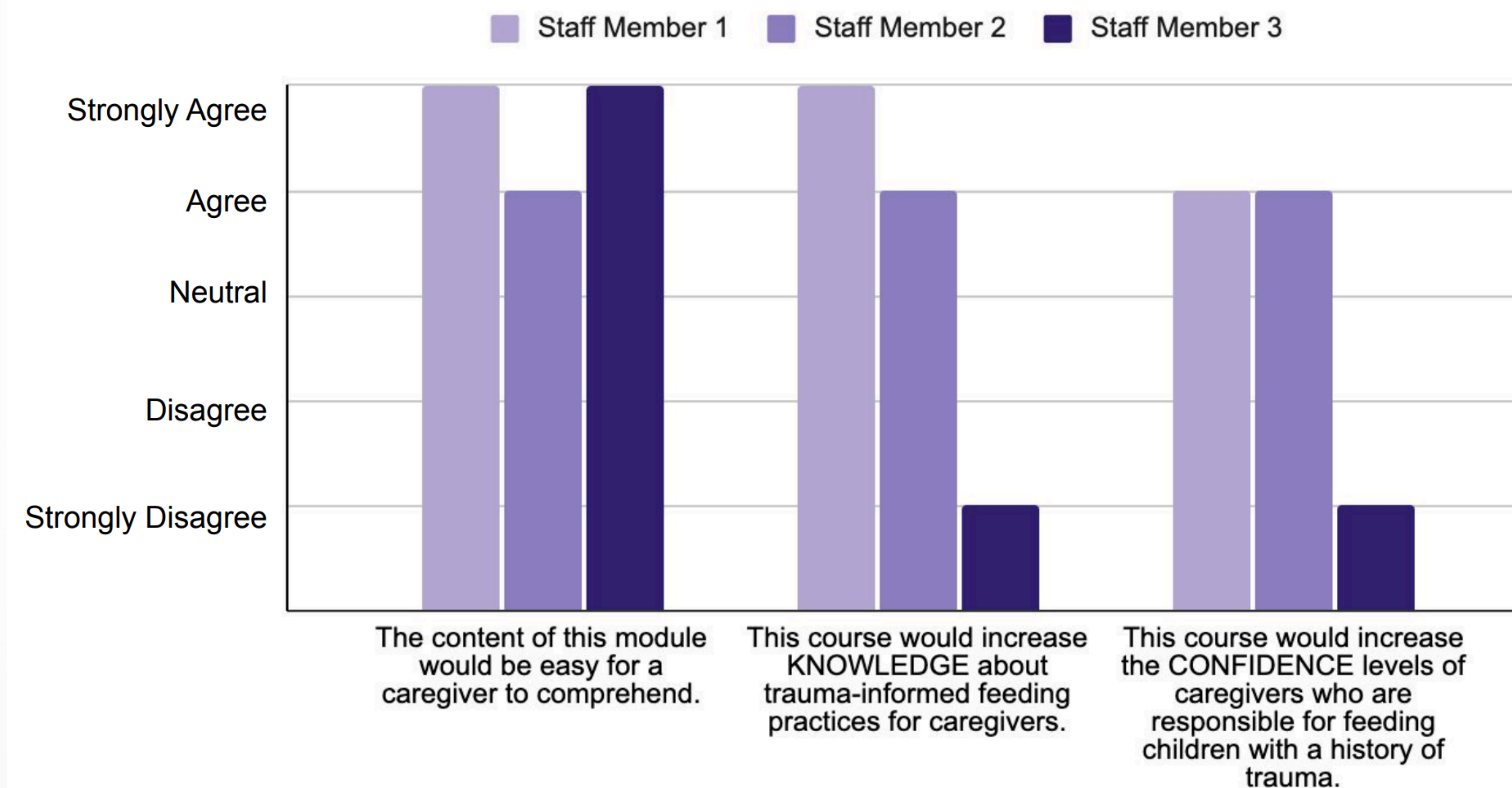
- The educational module consisted of 6 interactive lessons and supplementary documents that included evidence-based strategies for trauma-related feeding difficulties including what trauma is and how it impacts feeding, as well as strategies for improving maladaptive feeding behaviors.
- Caregivers of children and adolescents with a history of trauma completed surveys on confidence levels before and after participating in the educational module. Response averages were obtained for each question and change of 1.0 or greater between pre- and post-module surveys was determined to be relevant.
- SPOON Staff members completed a survey with open-ended and Likert-based questions after completion of the module to determine if they think this module would benefit caregivers. Responses were compared for each numerical question; subjective data was extracted through themes and quotations.

## OUTCOMES

### Caregivers



### SPOON STAFF



Positive Feedback	Constructive Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear description of trauma's impact on feeding</li> <li>- Generally adequate amount of information</li> <li>- Unanimously would recommend for caregivers</li> </ul> <p>"I think the module provides a nice overview to define trauma and the potential impact on feeding and some tangible strategies to try with the children in their care. I also think it provides some tangible, but simple strategies to address some mealtime challenges."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase number of interactive components, images, interviews, and/or case studies</li> <li>- Connect content to pre-existing SPOON courses</li> <li>- Avoid the occasional use of clinical jargon</li> </ul> <p>"Because it is online content more visual hooks, images or video, could help keep the participant engaged."</p>

## IMPLICATIONS

- The outcomes show some support in advancement of caregiver education on the topic. SPOON Foundation may be able to continue development of this program and disseminate the information further.
- There may be a lack of comprehension in the community about what behaviors are atypical and maladaptive. Increased education for caregivers on learning trauma's impact on feeding may increase awareness on the topic.
- Because maladaptive feeding behaviors are often overlooked or misunderstood, those attempting to become a foster parent may benefit from education on trauma-related feeding difficulties.
- Due to limited participation, further evaluation of efficacy of the module may be required.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommending SPOON take part in or independently launch a formal research study with a more representative population
- Encouraging SPOON continues to develop caregiver education and programming for trauma-related feeding difficulties, including the dissemination of this module
- OT should continue to advocate, educate & implement best practice services for this population

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and extend significant gratitude to Kate Miller at SPOON and Dr. Jennifer Hutson at St. Catherine University. Without their efforts, this project would not have been successful.

## REFERENCES

A full reference list of all articles used in the scoping review and assessment of organizational priorities that informed the project is available upon request.

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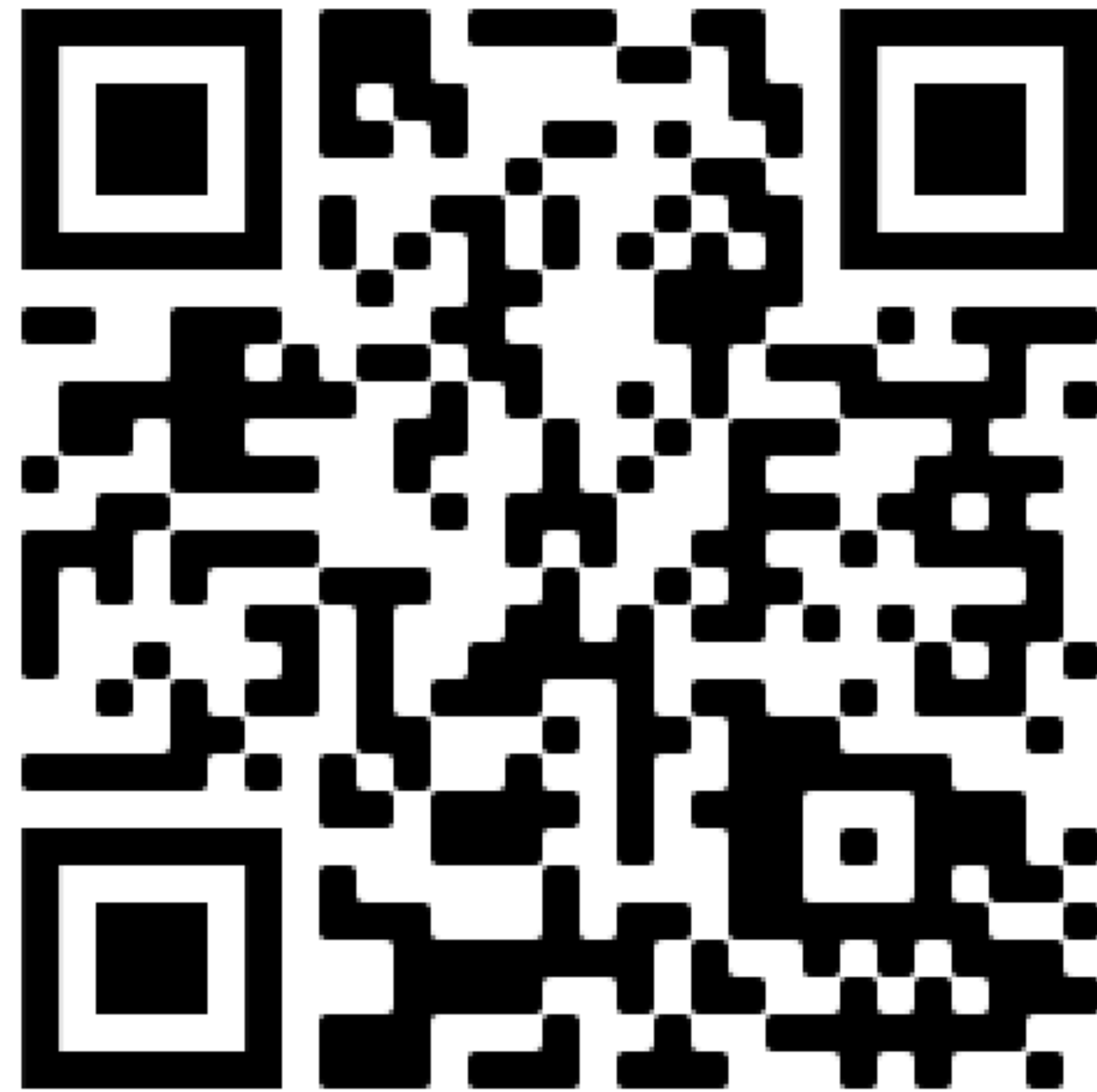
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