

Deeper Dive: Café Activities and Café People

JF&CS Memory Café Percolator

Exhale Collaborative Workshop 3, April 3, 2024



For more than 150 years, Jewish Family & Children's Service has been helping individuals and families build a strong foundation for resilience and well-being across the lifespan.

Where I am coming from

- Clinical social worker, JF&CS in Greater Boston
- JF&CS Memory Café
- JF&CS Memory Café Percolator
www.jfcsboston.org/Percolator
- EMC2: www.emc2project.org



Any burning questions?





What to do at a Memory Café and Who does it (deeper dive)

We will discuss:

- Room set-up
- Arrival/Welcome
- Main activity period
- Closing

fun

support

friendship

community

Room Set-up

- Dementia-friendly room set-up (limited background noise, clear signage and wayfinding, not too many choices)
- Information table off to the side
- It's great to share information about additional memory cafés!



Arrival/Welcome

- Encourage interaction - use volunteers AND sociable participants as greeters and “minglers”
- Allow for a flexible start time
- Establish a welcome “ritual”
- Limit distraction. Space between seating. Instrumental music.



Create an ambience

fun
friendship
support
community



Aroma de Café in Lawrence, MA

Café de los Recuerdos in Elgin, IL

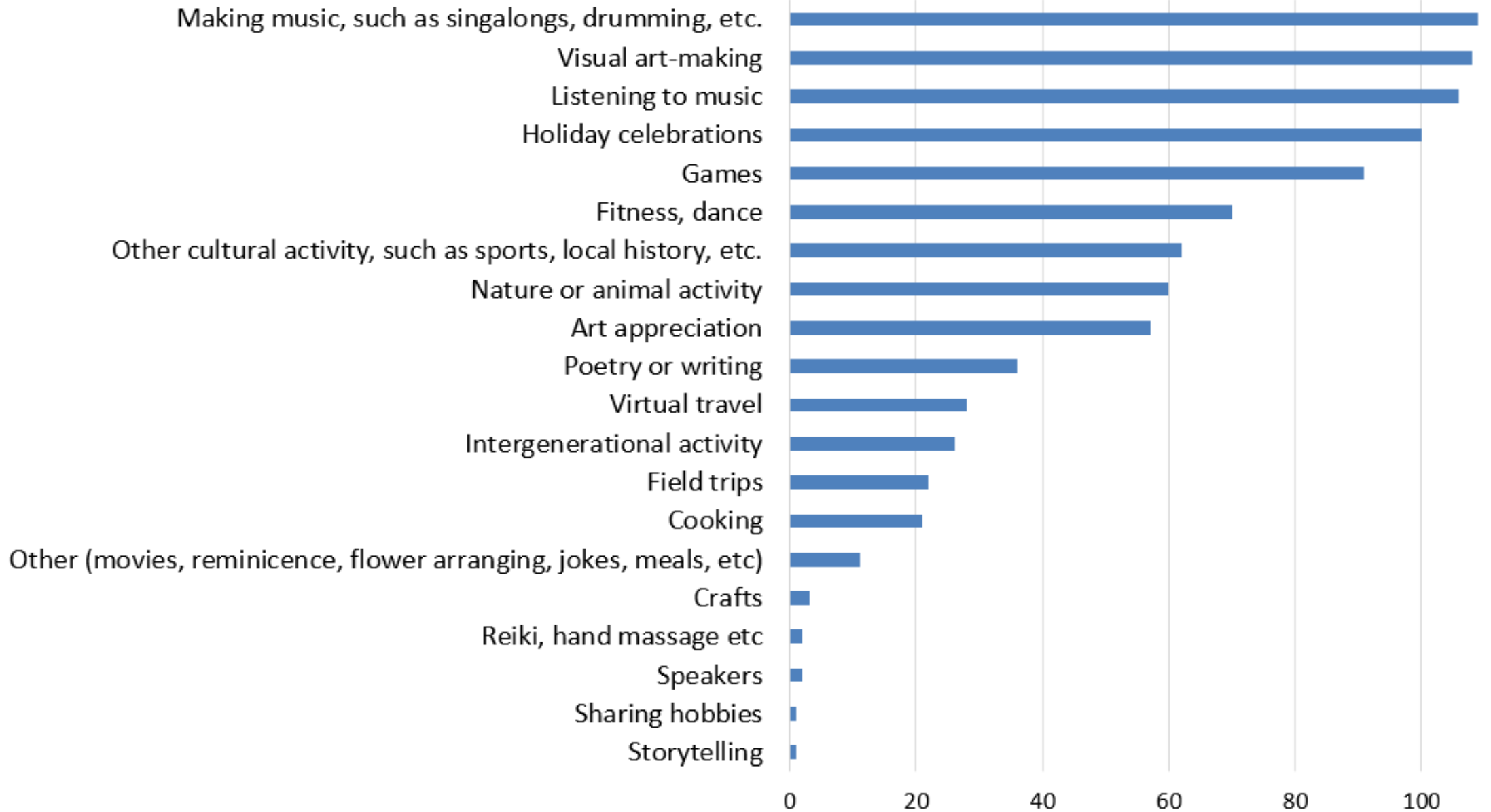


Main activity period

- TimeSlips
- I'm Still Here
- West Falls Center for the Arts



Main Activity Period





“Sports vs. Arts”



JF&CS Memory Café: Talking Red Sox with Jim Kenton, Mike McNulty, and Bill Nowlin (3/5/21)



Set a Theme

- Include a few (three-four?) elements
- Make it multi-sensory
- One of Jim, Mike, Reg and Michael's themes: "When We Were Young"
 - Film or TV clip
 - Music
 - Game
 - Participants share their stories (real or imagined)

For each activity: How will participants engage?

- Can participants with varying cognitive needs take part?
- Sometimes there is a conflict – the Improv Conundrum



DIY vs. Guest Presenters

- Either works
- Guest presenters take the pressure off you while you settle into the operational routine
- You can do the same type of activity every time, or mix it up

fun support
friendship community

Improvise

- If everyone's loving it, extend it
- If it isn't working out, move on
- Focus on the feelings, not the agenda



The specter of childishness

- Adults need to play and may love to play
- Antenna are up for being treated as children
 - Older adults
 - People living with disabilities
- Tends to come up most with visual arts





Closing

- Hand out information for next time – plus extra copies
- The formal closing and the “real” closing –
 - Some participants will leave early
 - Some will stay and socialize if that is allowed





Let's talk about people: staff, volunteers, and participants (deeper dive)

Roles

- Set up food/materials
- Greeter
- Buddy for new participants
- MC
- Activity facilitator
- Share poems, jokes, artwork, etc. (“Poet in Residence”)

These roles can be performed by staff, volunteers, or participants

“Keep in mind the value of feeling a sense of purpose. Even a small task, like handing out pencils, gives the person a sense of importance and belonging.”

– Laurie Scherrer, Advocate

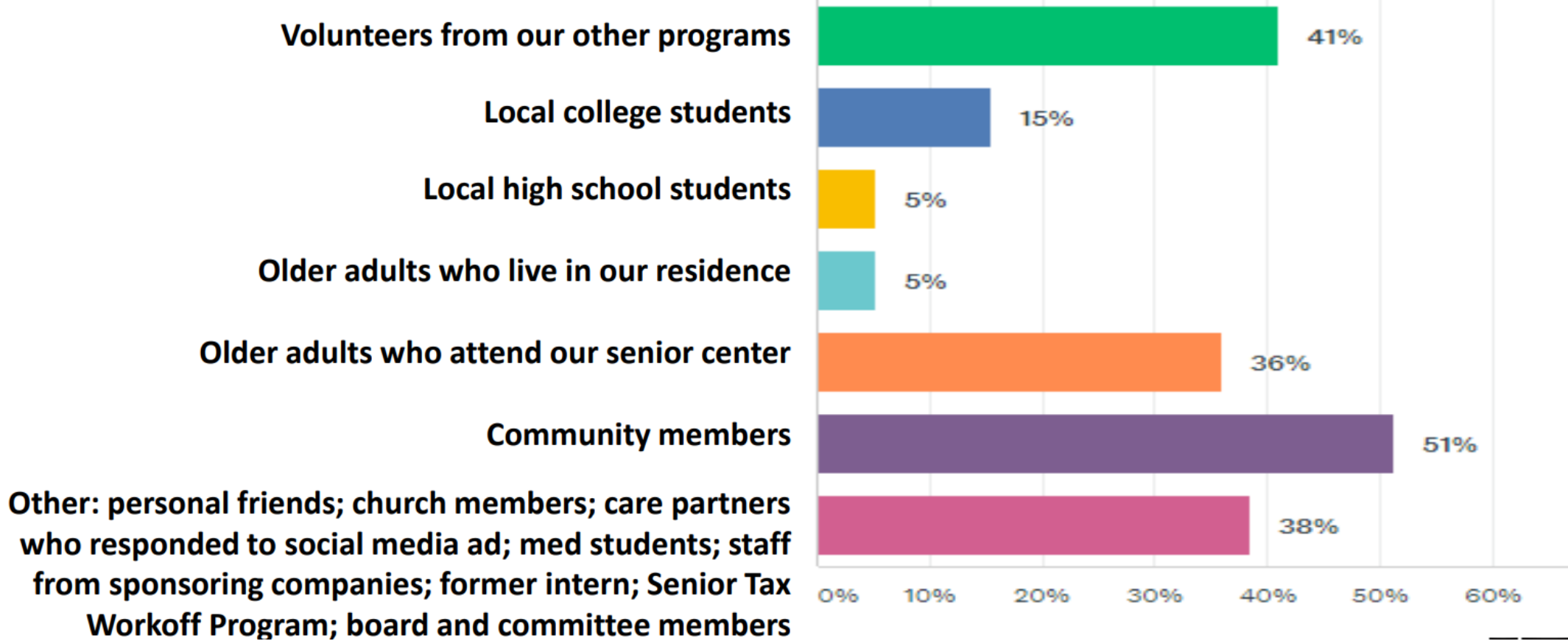
Stay open to unique roles, such as “decorator”

Most important mindset for staff, volunteers

- Hospitality
- Create a feeling of home
- It's like hosting a party
- Encourage volunteers to spread out around the room!

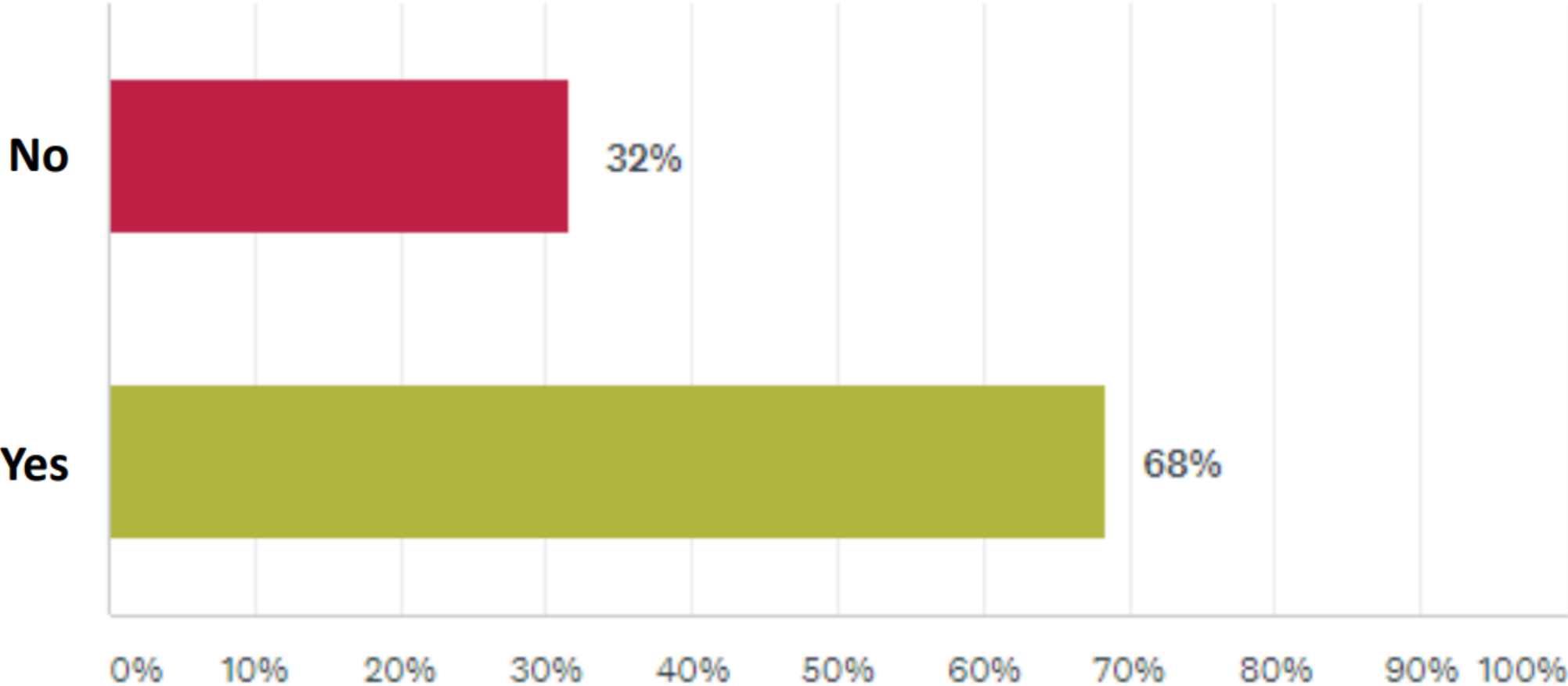


Where to find volunteers?



Percolator survey, December 2018, 48 respondents

Do you do a CORI/background check?



Training

- Tailored to the memory café context
- Available as needed for new staff, volunteers

Resources:

- Attend another memory café
- Alzheimer's Association NY Chapter
- Dementia Friends NY – PSS Circle of Care, Dona Giannotti at DGianotti@pssusa.org
- Write your own tip sheet/short video
- EMC2 training modules - to be developed

Grief and loss at the Café

- Supporting staff and volunteers
- Supporting other café participants
- Roles for care partners who wish to continue attending



Supporting staff and volunteers

- Expectations: Let them know that this is a natural part of memory cafés
- Training: Let them know how your memory café handles transition and loss, and give them an opportunity to express concerns
- For you: remember that staff and volunteers are impacted emotionally and benefit from acknowledgement, support, and rituals



How do memory cafés address loss?

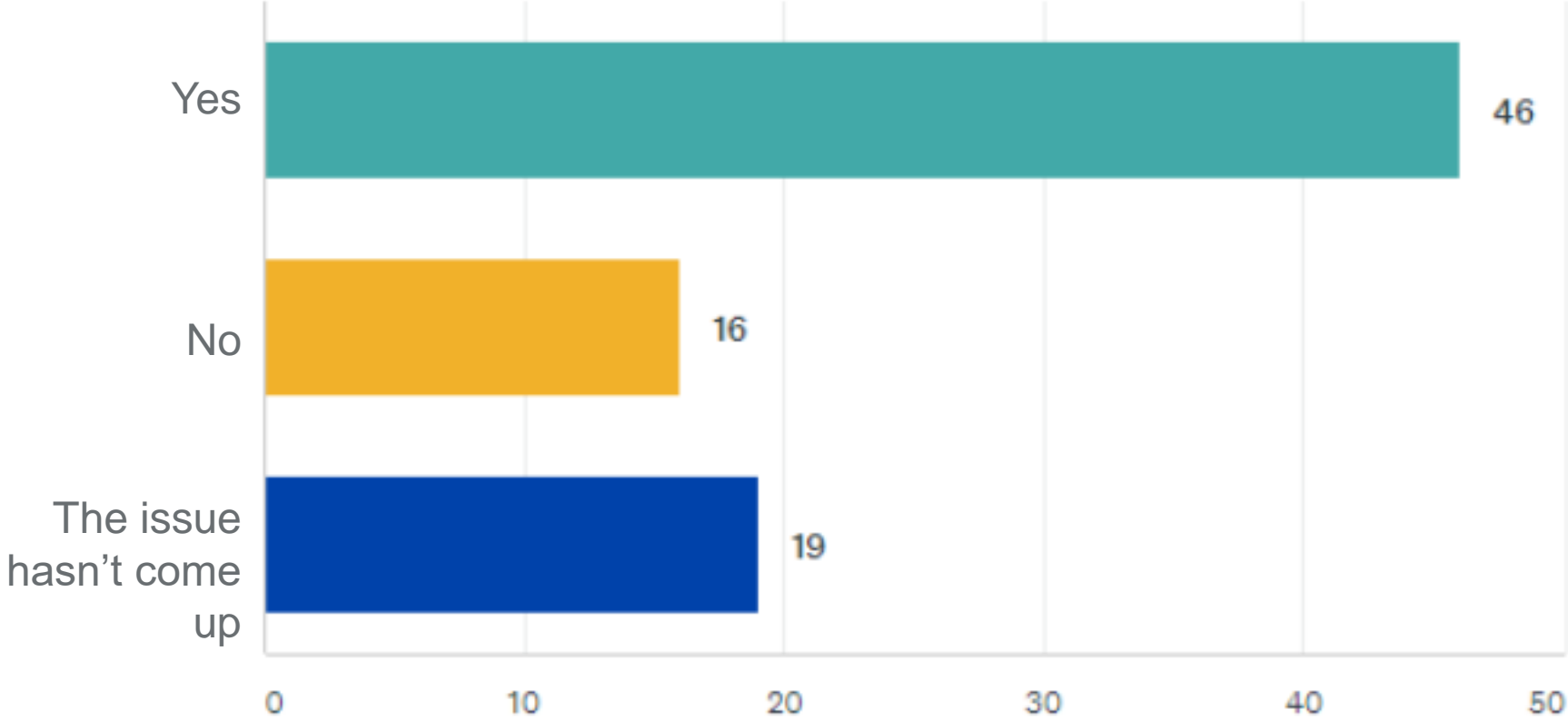
- Percolator survey, September 2019
- 81 respondents
- Two schools of thought:
 - Don't remind participants of disease progression and death
 - Share and normalize disease progression and death, and establish structures of mutual support

Which is right?

- **It depends! Some considerations:**
 - How bonded are your café participants?
 - What is the sector in which your café operates? A museum...a church...etc.
 - What are cultural patterns of your participants regarding talking about and coping with death and loss?



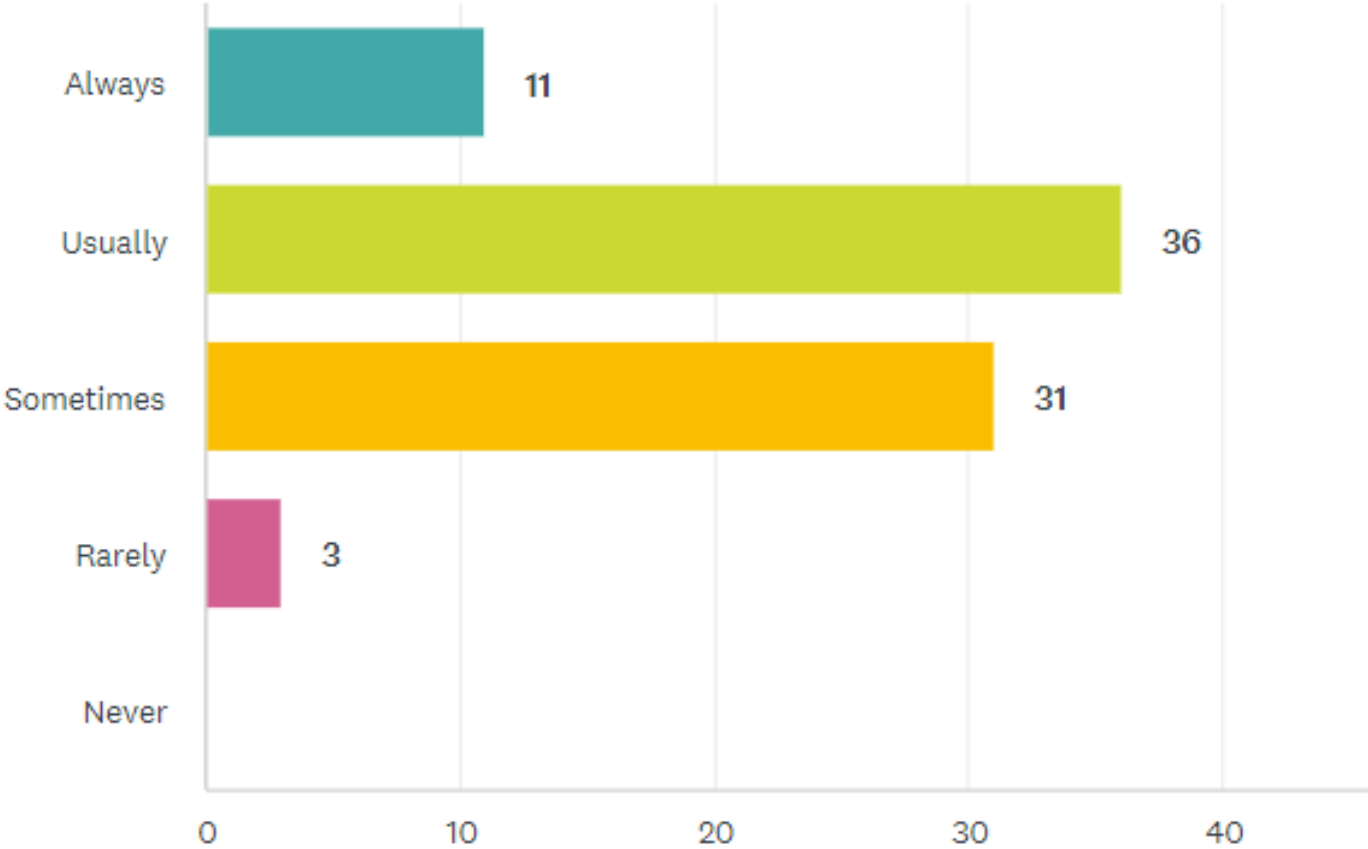
When a participant stops attending, does your café reach out to check on them?



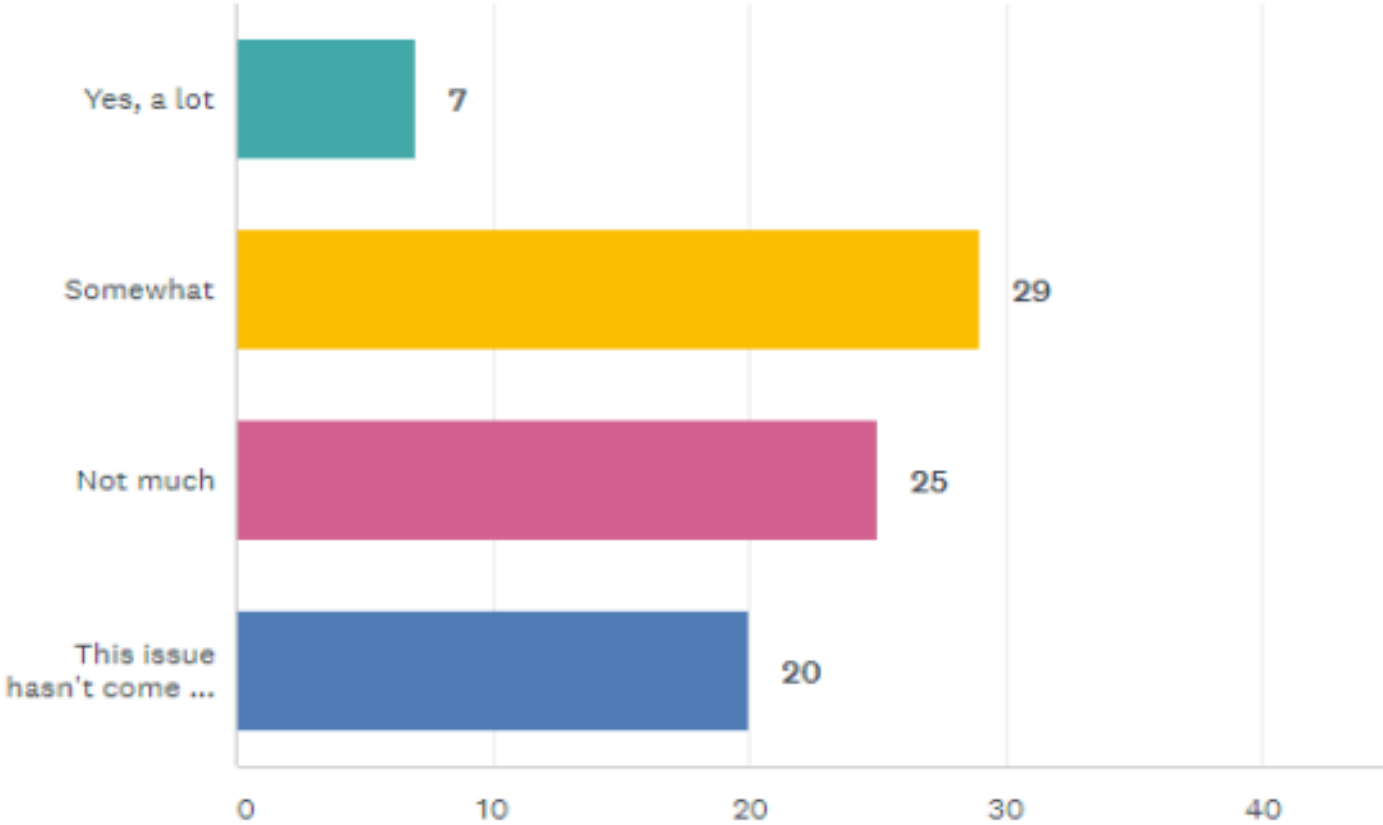
When do you reach out?

- After 2 – 3 missed sessions: 51%
- After 1 missed session: 13%
- Other responses:
 - All guests receive a call monthly to remind them and check in
 - “We are a small, close-knit café and all participants share their contact info and are in frequent touch.”
 - “Whether I check in depends how long they have been coming and if there has been a health issue, etc.”

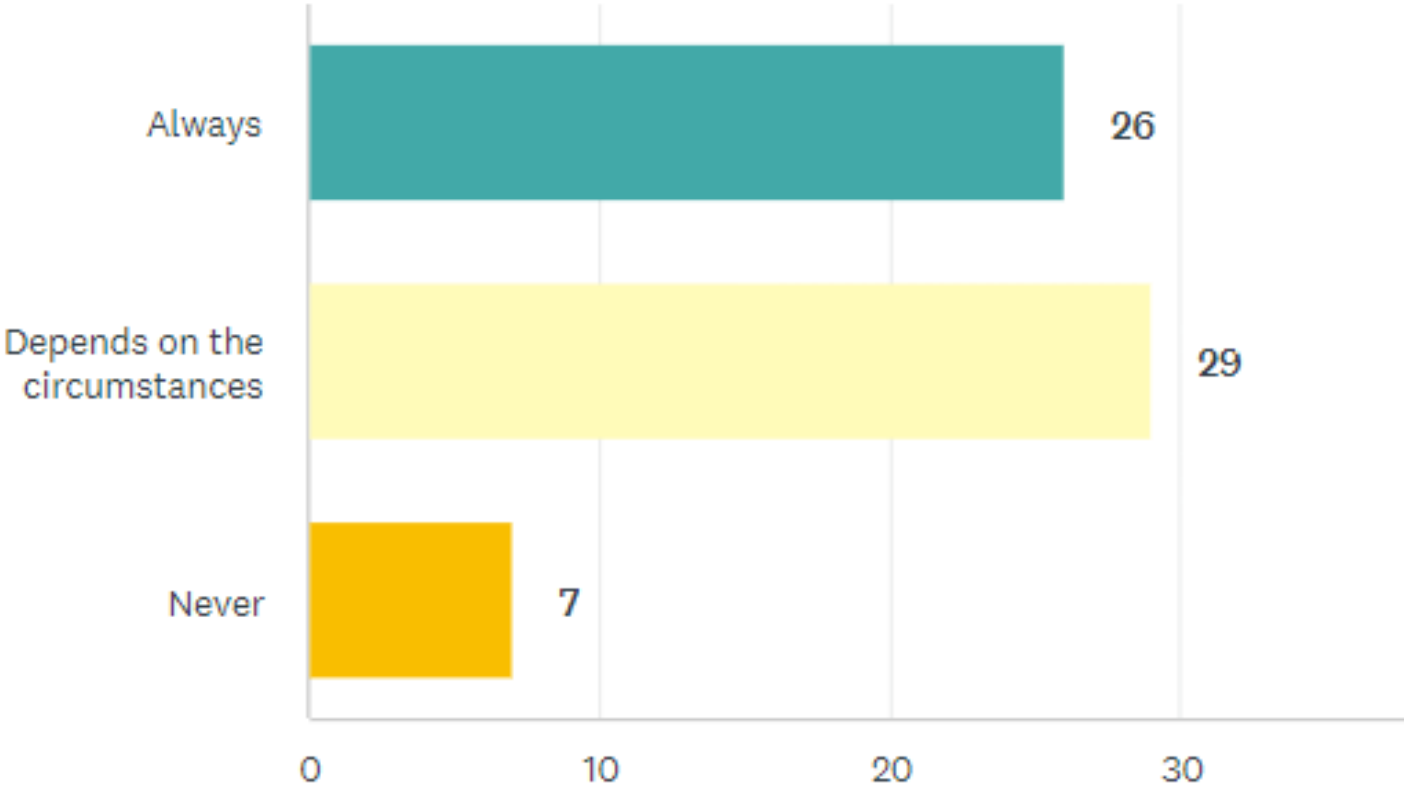
If a participant stops attending, how likely is it that you'll eventually find out the reason why?



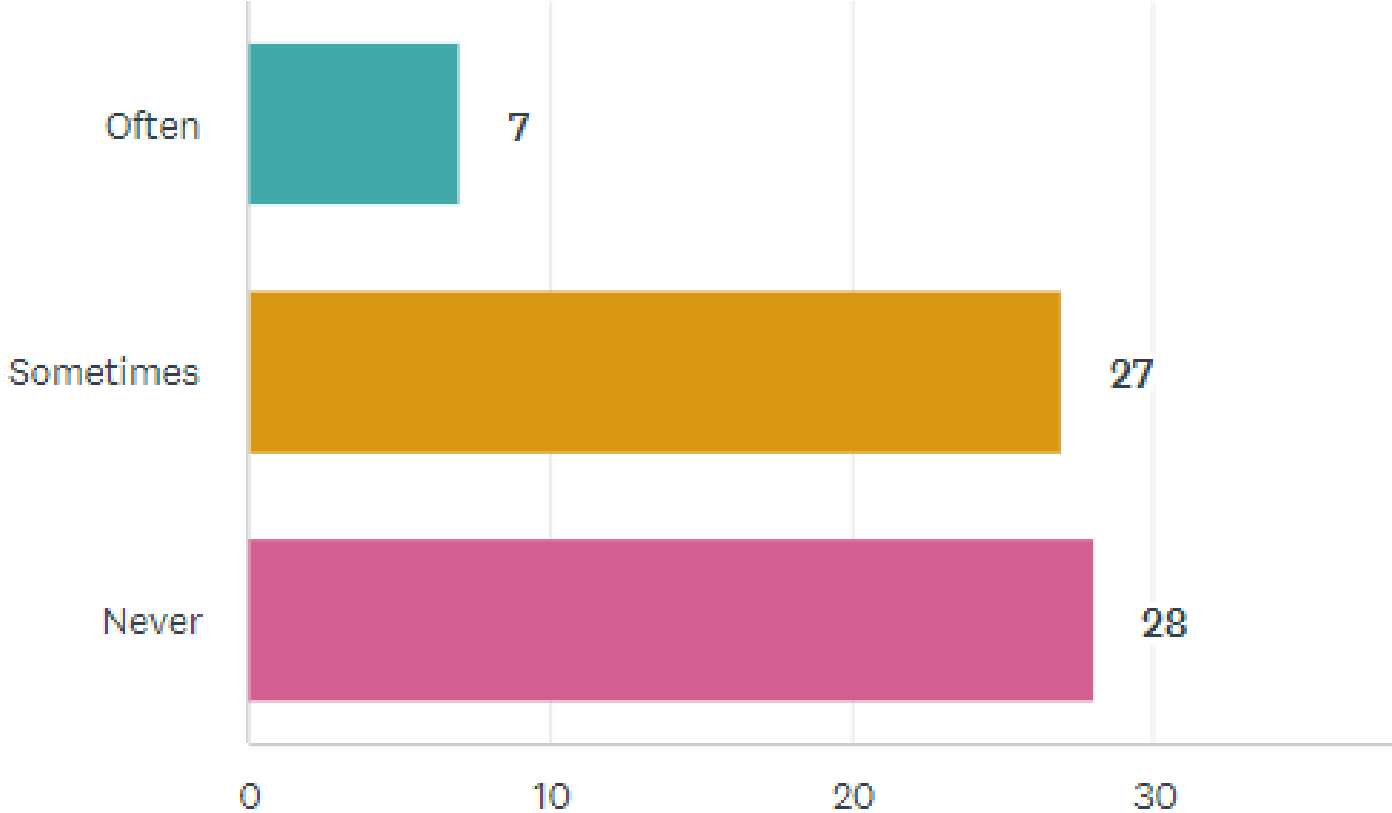
Has the loss of participants due to death or disease progression affected your café very much?



If the participant with dementia dies or is unable to continue attending, do you invite the care partner to continue attending?



Do care partners attend on their own in these circumstances?



Do you have a specific way to acknowledge losses and transitions at your café?

- 18% (11 respondents) DO have a specific way
- 82% (50 respondents) DO NOT have a specific way



How cafés respond

- Always ask the care partner what they would like. Ask their permission to share.
- Six respondents make an announcement to their café mailing list. Example: include a death announcement and link to the obituary in a monthly Constant Contact e-newsletter for the café.
- Three respondents send a card or another item (flowers, cookies). Some obtain signatures on the card from café participants.
- One respondent holds a moment of silence at their café for someone who has died.
- Many cafés provide referrals to additional support if needed.

Tribute or memorial sponsorship

- Designate a donation range
- Talk with the care partner about what would be meaningful to them.
Suggestions:
 - Share a photo or two of the person
 - Care partner tells a story about the person
- Ask the care partner if they want you to share more detailed information with the group or not. For example: should you mention the sponsorship in your flyer or information about that group meeting?

Comments about if/how to respond

- “It’s case by case. It depends how regular their attendance was.”
- “I only share this information with the folks attending the cafe if the care partner specifically asks me to do this.”
- “We do a “warm hand-off“ to support services if needed.”
- “It is never easy and one size does not fit all.”



*It seems a fine year and jolly to hope
for a world full of love.
Love that the world has*

SWEET Music

*Fantastic and Beautiful
as a world full of love.*

*When we ask "Who do you love?"
why do we not answer "Everyone!"*

*You may be willing to say "If we want a good doctor to grow love,
all of us together, let us make an effort unwatched a history -
Let us take some songs and out more
and see more...
Love now, please,
Love to embrace all who say and wonder to me each moment
with faith and peace"*

Thinking Of Those
Who will always be part of our
JF&CS Memory Café Community

Keep staff and volunteers in mind

- They also are affected by losses
- The impact may when someone special passes, or it may be cumulative
- Simple rituals can help
- Rituals done at the café can be kept general so that people can use them as they need to



Percolator section of next workshops

- Workshop #4: Understanding (and reducing) stigma



Your questions

Let's talk!

