



Conclusion Statement: Parents of pediatric burn survivors were more inclined to attend a supportive program that focused on their child's psychosocial needs rather than their own.

Introduction/Significance

Feelings of guilt, anxiety, and isolation are common emotions for parents following their child's burn injury^{3, 6, 7}, which in turn can impact the child's coping^{2, 5}. Research has demonstrated that engaging parents in support programs enhances children's coping¹. A parent support group for pediatric burn survivors was created to address these issues, but participation was consistently low, with an average attendance of two parents. To increase attendance, the format of the program was modified to target the pediatric survivor as well as the parent and sibling's needs.

Data source/ Population

The program was created for burn survivors age 3 to 17 years and their siblings and parents. The pediatric module incorporated developmentally appropriate activities to engage pediatric burn survivors and their siblings in therapeutic techniques to normalize their experience and provide expressive opportunities. Simultaneously, the parents attended a support group, where facilitators encouraged expression of feelings connected to their child's burn injury and developed strategies for supporting their child through daily life. The parent portion also fostered an opportunity for parents to develop their own coping skills. A SOAR® volunteer attended the program to foster peer support, since parents value this type of psychological assistance⁴.

Results

Parents completed a survey at the end of the session, which employed a 5 point Likert scale. The survey assessed their perception of their child's coping, their own coping, the current use of available programs by the attendees and the likelihood in attending the same event. There were 29 attendees (11 adults and 18 children). Ten surveys were completed, but one was eliminated due to user error. The results were overwhelmingly positive and validated a need for parent support (see Figure 1). Most parent participants (78%) had never attended a burn survivor support program, although all participants had previously attended survivor-related social events. All respondents indicated they would attend this event again and based on their response to feeling uncomfortable about discussing their child's injury (see Figure 2), demonstrates a need for on-going support. The surveys did not elicit any negative comments.

Lessons Learned

- Recreational socially based activities alone do not foster coping skills and emotional support.
- Providers need to be creative in developing their formats to capture children as well as their parents for optimal recovery.
- The survey demonstrated a need for on-going parent support based on their lack of comfort discussing their child's burn injury.
- The traditional parent support group modality was less effective than targeting children's support programs in regards to attendance.

References

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This event was helpful to us as a family to improve our coping

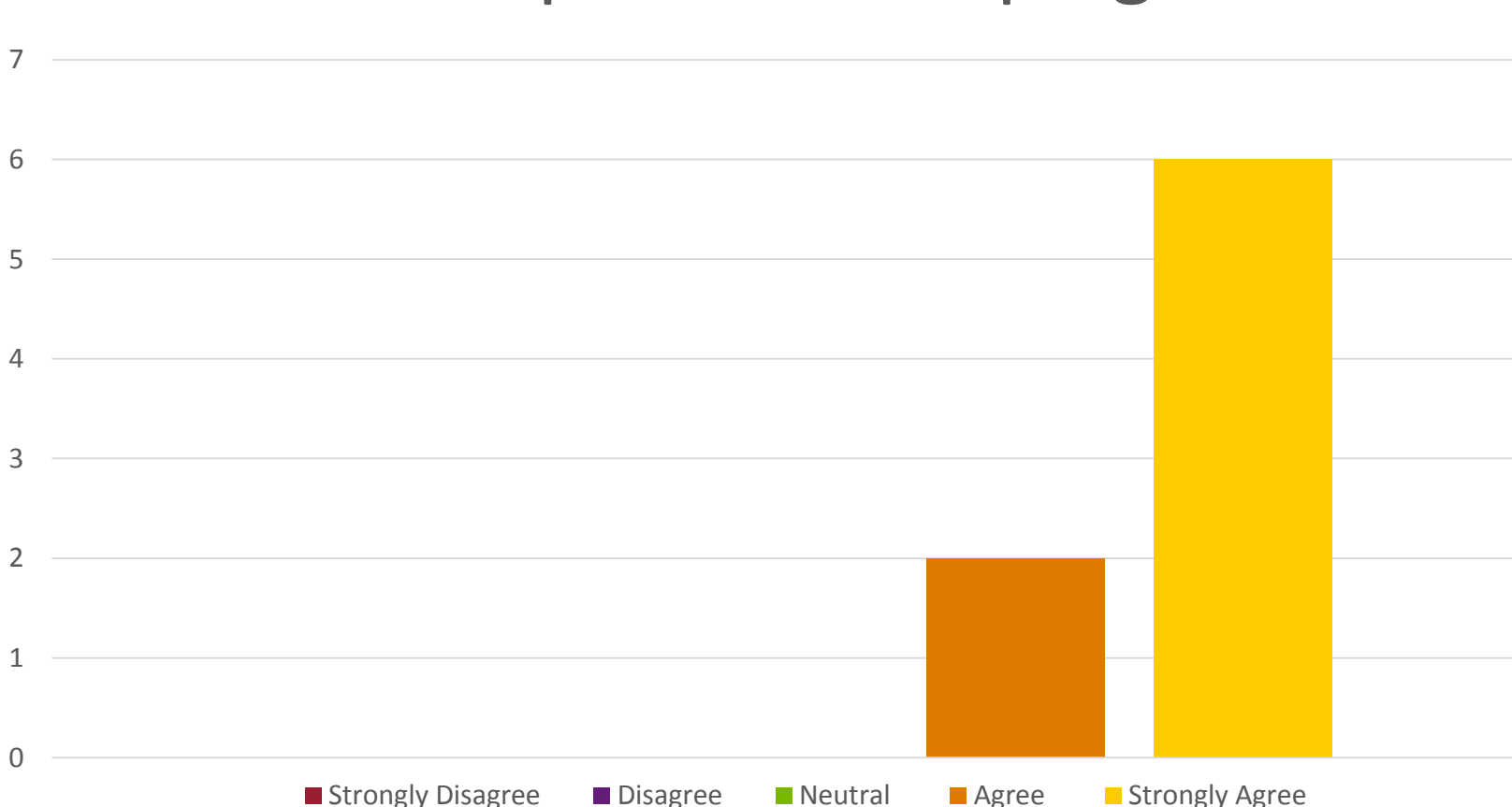


Figure 1

I feel uncomfortable explaining my child's injury to others

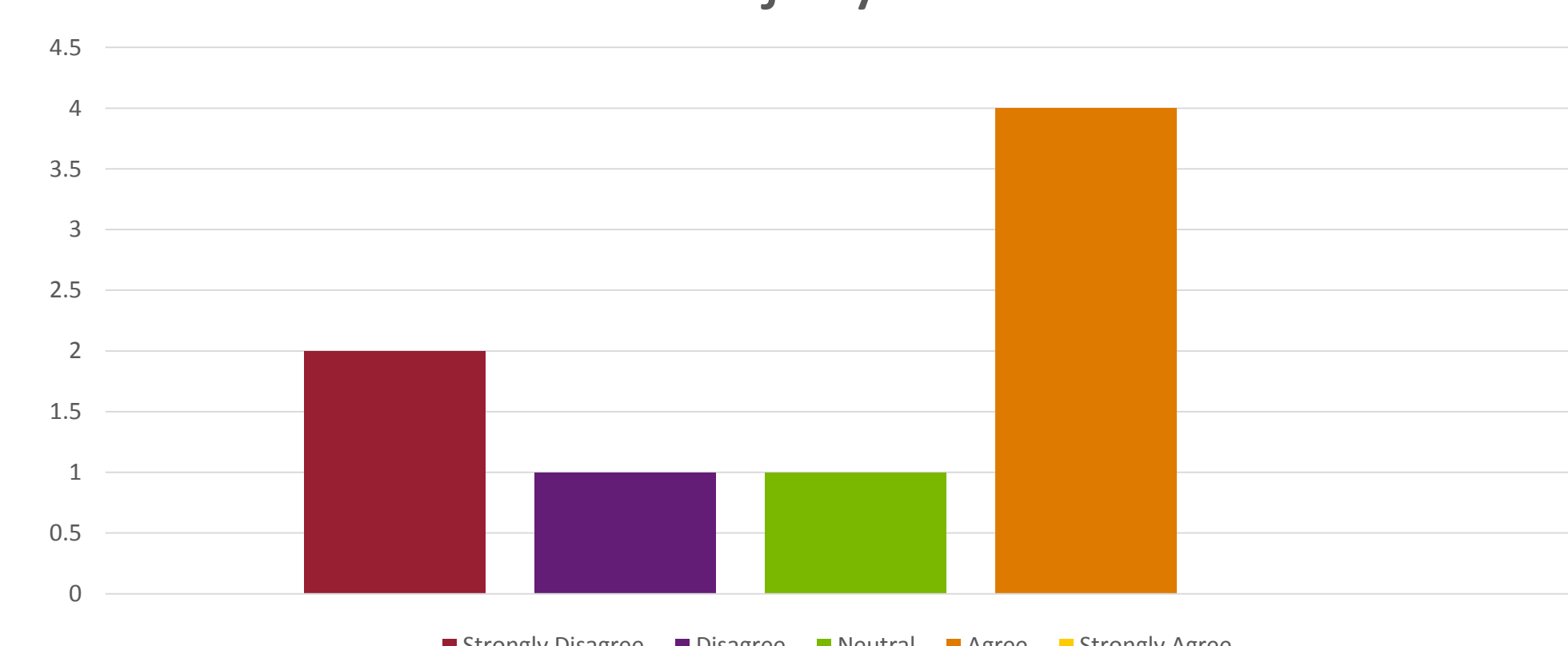


Figure 2