

Evaluation Report

The 'Surf Action Sharks 2016'

An Integration Project Supporting the Mental
Health and Wellbeing of Children in Families of
Former and Serving Military Personnel

30/04/16 – 20/08/16



Kindly Funded by:



SURF ACTION

Surf Action was established in Cornwall in 2009 and is now a registered Charity (number 1140191). An award winning and pioneering project, Surf Action aims to promote and protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of serving and former serving members of the armed forces and the blue-light emergency services and their families who are living with physical and/or psychological difficulties as a result of their service and to assist them into making the transition into civilian life, in particular but not exclusively, by:

- Introducing them to surfing, high intensity water sports and involving them in peer group activities.
- Providing access to support, guidance, signposting and education.
- Providing access to information and peer support relationships for their families.
- Engaging them in various projects within communities.

By making use of the stunning coastal environment and offering holistic support which takes into account the practical, social and psychological difficulties which some service-users can experience, we do not seek to replicate the valuable work carried out by existing military and civilian organisations and charities, but to complement, signpost to, and work with them to fill the gaps identified by the service-users who come to us. Published PhD research recently carried out with Loughborough University has lent support to the Surf Action model and significantly extended previous knowledge on physical activity, military veterans and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by highlighting how nature-based physical activity – encapsulated in the conceptual notion of the “Blue Gym” – can significantly promote well-being among military veterans and other service-users.

Surf Action is the only organisation providing evidence-based ocean therapy to support the mental health and wellbeing of serving military, veterans and their families in the UK.

Rogers C, Mallinson T, Peppers D (2014), ‘High-Intensity Sports for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Depression: Feasibility Study of Ocean Therapy With Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom’, *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 68, 395-404.

Caddick, N., Smith, B., & Phoenix, C. (2015). The effects of surfing and the natural environment on the well-being of combat veterans. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25, 76-86.

Caddick N & Smith B (2014), ‘The impact of sport and physical activity on the well-being of combat veterans; A systematic review.’ *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* 15, 9-18.

Thomson Koon, J. Boddy, K. Stein, K. Whear, R. Barton, J. and Depledge, M.H. 2011. Does Participating in Physical Activity in Outdoor Natural Environments Have a Greater Effect on Physical and Mental Well-being than Physical Activity Indoors? A Systematic Review. *Environmental Science and Technology* DOI: 10.1021/es102947t

Since being founded Surf Action has also championed **social inclusion** and **cohesion** between the **military, veteran and civilian communities**. It has sought to help individuals, families and communities by providing educational information as a tool with which to empower them to make positive changes in their lives and communities.

The 'Surf Action' Sharks Project



Background

Recent research has highlighted the increase in trauma and PTSD in serving personnel. This complemented the growing bank of evidence to show that children of military families often experience multiple stress factors before and during their parent's deployment and when they come home. Without appropriate mental health support systems, children of military personnel may be at a significant disadvantage compared with their peers in non-military families. The increase in active deployment, use of reservists and the lag in identification of and support for PTSD in military veterans is increasing the range and intensity of the issue and building up huge capacity issues for children's mental health services.

Research has shown that children from military families experience relatively high rates of mental health, trauma and related problems. Military life can be a source of psychological stress for children. Multiple deployments, frequent moves and having a parent injured or die is a reality for many children in military families. Wartime parental deployments can be one of the most stressful events of a child's life. Behavioral changes include changes in school performance, lashing out in anger, worrying, hiding emotions, disrespecting parents and authority figures, feeling a sense of loss, and symptoms consistent with depression.

In depth studies of children with deployed parents in the US showed that:

- High levels of sadness were seen in children in all age groups
- Depression was seen in about one in four children
- Academic problems occurred in one in five children
- 37% of children with a deployed parent reported that they seriously worry about what could happen to them
- Parents reported that one in five children coped poorly or very poorly to deployment separation
- Media coverage of war posed a significant source of stress for children and made it much more difficult for children to cope with a parent's deployment

In late 2015 Surf Action applied to the West Cornwall Youth Trust for funding to run a project which would explore and evidence the benefits of early intervention to support, and in doing so reduce, the increasing demands for the services of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). We intended to do this through a programme of activities that integrate children from forces and non-forces families through surfing and beach related activities. A recently published doctorate based on the Surf Action Ocean Therapy Course evidenced the link between surfing and beach activities and increased mental health and wellbeing of participants. We wanted to explore the benefits of this approach for the children of military and veteran families and to try to measure the benefits for the children.

The project intended to enable forces children to better integrate in their communities, make new friends in non-military families and cope with change, feelings of anxiety and loss.

In March 2016 the West Cornwall Youth Trust very kindly granted us £2,000 towards the cost of this project

The West Cornwall Youth Trust



Established in 2010, the West Cornwall Youth Trust (charity number 1133411) provides support to deserving young people in Cornwall, with a view to enabling them to take part in worthwhile activities that they may otherwise not be able to afford. The primary way in which they achieve this is by offering financial assistance or grants to charitable organisations that can, in turn, help young people in West Cornwall – generally those who live west of an imaginary line between St Austell and Newquay, including the Isles of Scilly.

Further details can be obtained from their website at: <http://westcornwallyouthtrust.org/>

Telephone: 07837 067585 | **Email:** info@westcornwallyouthtrust.org

Post: West Cornwall Youth Trust, PO Box 321, Marazion TR18 9BZ

West Cornwall Youth Trust is registered in England and Wales as a charitable company limited by guarantee.

Company no. 07090738. Charity no 1133411.

Registered address: Lowin House, Tregolls Road, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 2HA



Project aims

The aims of the project were:

1. To explore and evidence the benefits of early intervention to support the mental health and well-being of children in families of former and military personnel.
2. To help to reduce the demands on the services of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) by:
 - a. Supporting the physical and psychological wellbeing of the participants.
 - b. Encouraging participants to make friends, reduce isolation, build self esteem, and build self-confidence and self-reliance.
 - c. Provide families with the opportunity to take part in surfing and beach activities thus developing and strengthening family ties.
 - d. To build emotional resilience in the participants and make them better able to deal with the absence of a deployed parent.
3. To encourage conversations between the parents of the participants so as to strengthen contacts within the civilian, veteran and military communities thus widening the support available to the spouses and children of deployed partners.
4. By engaging families in a healthy, demanding and fun activity such as surfing, something which most will not have tried before, to encourage parents to take the time to re-assess their family dynamics and the way they interact with their children and to see the considerable benefits which healthy outdoor activities can bring when they are participated in as a family.
5. To continue in helping develop the project expertise and knowledgebase with Surf Action

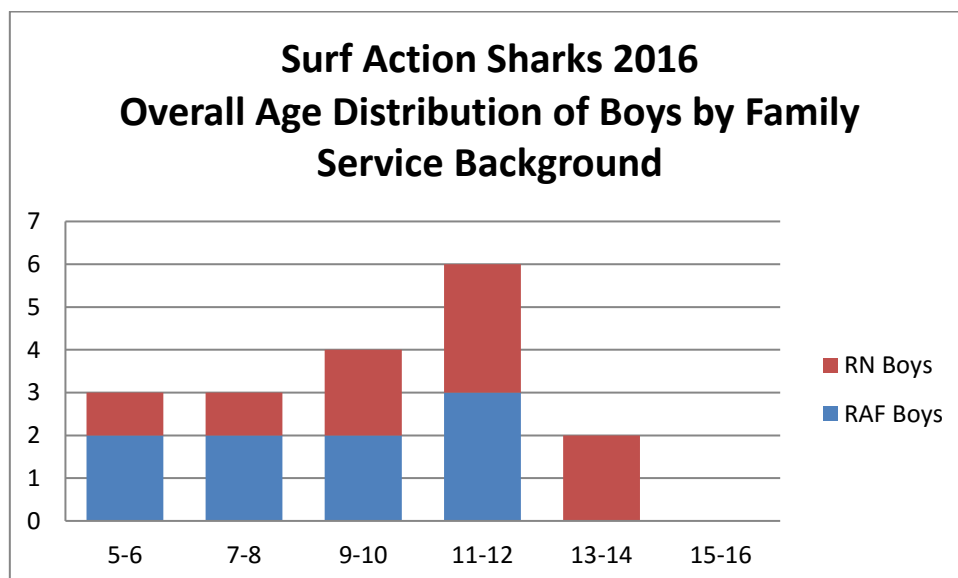
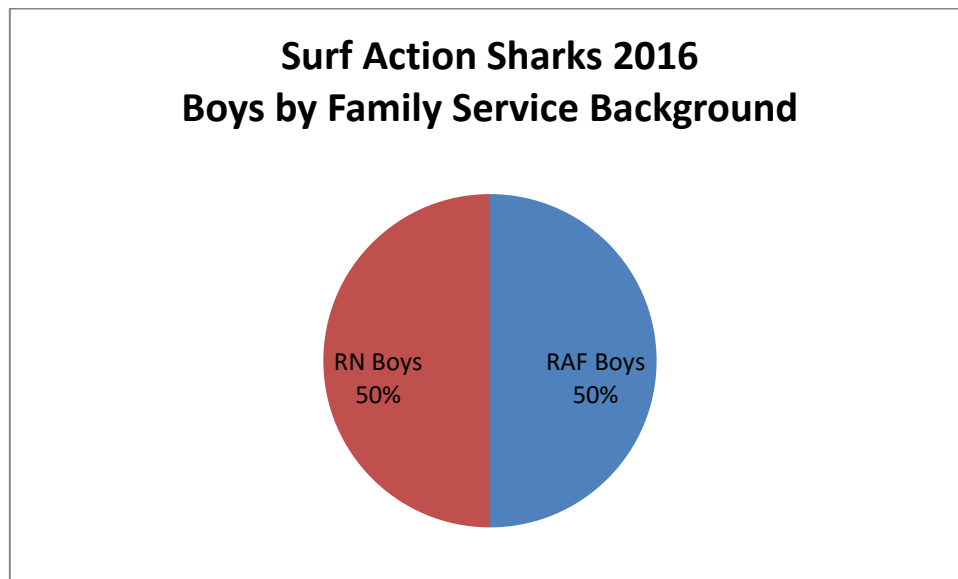
Methodology

1. Participants

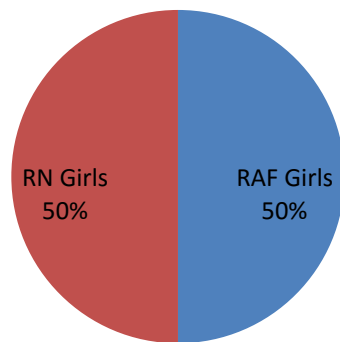
The participants came from 3 sources:

1. RAF St Mawgan families
2. RNAS Culdrose families
3. Local schools

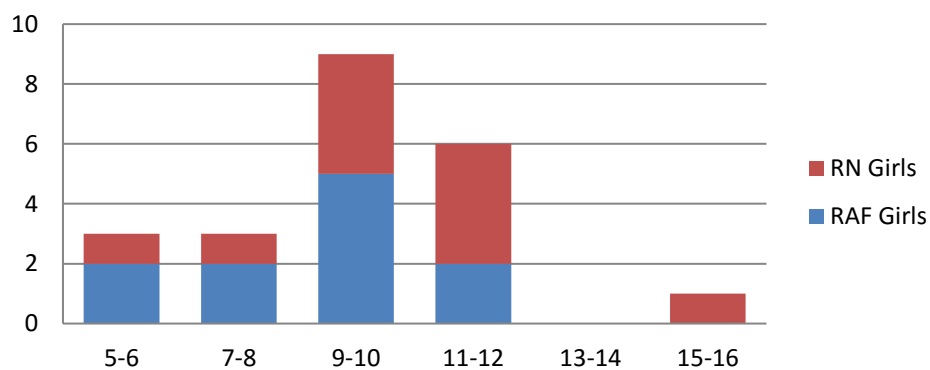
The project was advertised through social media relevant to each source and through the Family and Welfare organisations of the military establishments and local education facilities. The interest was immediate and the various courses available were rapidly filled. From the outset Surf Action tried to achieve a satisfactory service background and gender balance for the project. The maximum number of child places available was 40 (10 per course).



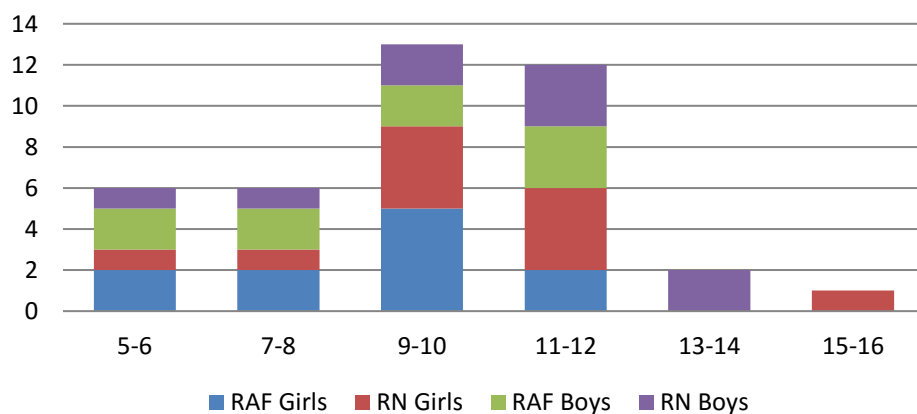
Surf Action Sharks 2016 Girls by Family Service Background



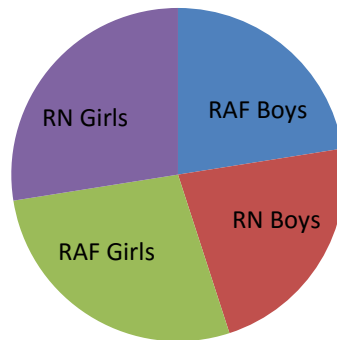
Surf Action Sharks 2016 Overall Age Distribution of Girls by Family Service Background



Surf Action Sharks 2016 - Group Age Distribution by Family Service Background



Surf Action Sharks 2016 Group Gender Distribution by Family Service Background



The range of ages for the group was 9 years with the youngest child being 6 years old. The mean age was 9.5 years. A total of 40 young people fully participated thus filling 100% of the available places.

2. 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)

3. Activities

Surf Action decided to adapt Surf Action's community-based, sports-oriented, fully risk assessed occupational therapy course (Ocean Therapy) which uses the high-intensity sport of surfing in an experiential, skills-based experience specifically adapted for military personnel and veterans seeking mental health services. Consistent with conceptualizations of the transformative nature of engagement in meaningful occupations and the dynamic influence of environment on a person's performance this course combines surfing performance, focused group processing, and social participation to create opportunities for veterans to examine ways in which their individual values, abilities, and experiences can support successful transition to civilian life. By providing individual support in the water for each child, preferably from one or both of their parents, to help build confidence and by adding extra fun challenges and games in the water we hoped that it would have similar beneficial effects on the children as well as their parents. Parents who did not go into the water but who remained on the beach whilst their child was in the water then had the opportunity to chat to other parents from the civilian and military community for a couple of hours and to discuss a wide range of common issues etc in a very welcoming atmosphere and environment.

Four, eight week, Ocean Therapy Courses were run with two each at Newquay (using Great Western or Tolcarne beaches on Saturday mornings) and Praa Sands (on Sunday mornings). These venues were selected as they were the best suited for RAF St Mawgan families (Newquay) and RNAS Culdrose families (Praa Sands). There were always two courses running at any one time with one at each venue and they were run back to back from April until September. All equipment such as wetsuits, boots, gloves and surf boards were provided by Surf Action. Fully trained Surf Action surf instructors and lifeguards were in attendance at all times.

4. Evaluation Measures

An important part of the project was evaluating whether the sessions had a positive effect on the participants.

Psychological well-being is now largely accepted as covering two perspectives: (1) the subjective experience of happiness (affect) and life satisfaction (the hedonic perspective); and (2) positive psychological functioning, good relationships with others and self realization (the eudaimonic perspective). The latter includes the capacity for self development, positive relations with others, autonomy, self acceptance and competence. Thus we wanted to use an easy but psychometrically robust, validated wellbeing scale which would reflect both the hedonic and eudaimonic perspective. Our preference was for the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) with its respondent 1 – 5 Likert Scale.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was funded by the Scottish Government National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being, commissioned by NHS Health Scotland, developed by the University of Warwick and the University of Edinburgh, and is jointly owned by NHS Health Scotland, the University of Warwick and the University of Edinburgh.

It is a positively worded scale measuring emotional and psychological wellbeing, validated with children aged 8 upwards. Because of the simplicity of the measure we decided to extrapolate its use to the age of 6.

We asked the children to complete a simple questionnaire that used this scale to measure their self-esteem, self-confidence, relationships and achievements.

The abbreviated WEMWBS form consisted of 7 positively worded statements:

1. I'm feeling good about the future?
2. I've made new friends?
3. I've had fun today?
4. I feel better about myself?
5. I've had fun with my family?
6. I've learnt something new today?
7. I am looking forward to my next session?

There were 5 possible responses to each statement:

- All of the time (scoring 5 points)
- Often (4 points)
- Some of the time (3 points)
- Rarely (2 points)
- Not at all (1 point)

The minimum score possible on each form was 7 (a score of 1, meaning 'not at all', for each of the seven questions) and the maximum score possible was 35 (a score of 5, meaning 'all of the time', for each of the 7 questions). 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. Volunteers and parents were also on hand to guide them if required.

The WEMWBS form was completed at weeks 1, 4 and 8 during each course. 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. Any participant who was absent at week 1 or failed to complete the week 1 WEMWBS report was asked to repeat it at week 2 so that good base-line data was achieved. The week 4 WEMWBS reporting score was used if a participant missed the final reporting cycle at week 8 and thus it gave us a sufficiently robust intervention data set. Qualitative data was also collected from the adults by way of conversations and social interactions. At the same time Surf Action was able to gain a good awareness of current and looming problems amongst the families/communities.

Gender based means and group means for each of the 7 questions were then calculated (falling between 1 and 5) and the data analysed. By virtue of the questions being positively worded the lower the WEMWBS score the more stressors are indicated in the participant's life. Means and standard deviations were extensively calculated for each individual, gender, service background and the overall group so that progress could be tracked. An improvement in wellbeing would be indicated if there was an increase in the mean at the end of each course and a narrowing of the standard deviation thus indicating more consistent grouping around the improved mean. This could then be validly interpreted as an improvement in wellbeing. Before and after total WEMWBS scores were also calculated for each individual, gender and population. By knowing the background of all participants we could eliminate population bias at the outset.

Results and Findings

1. Attendance

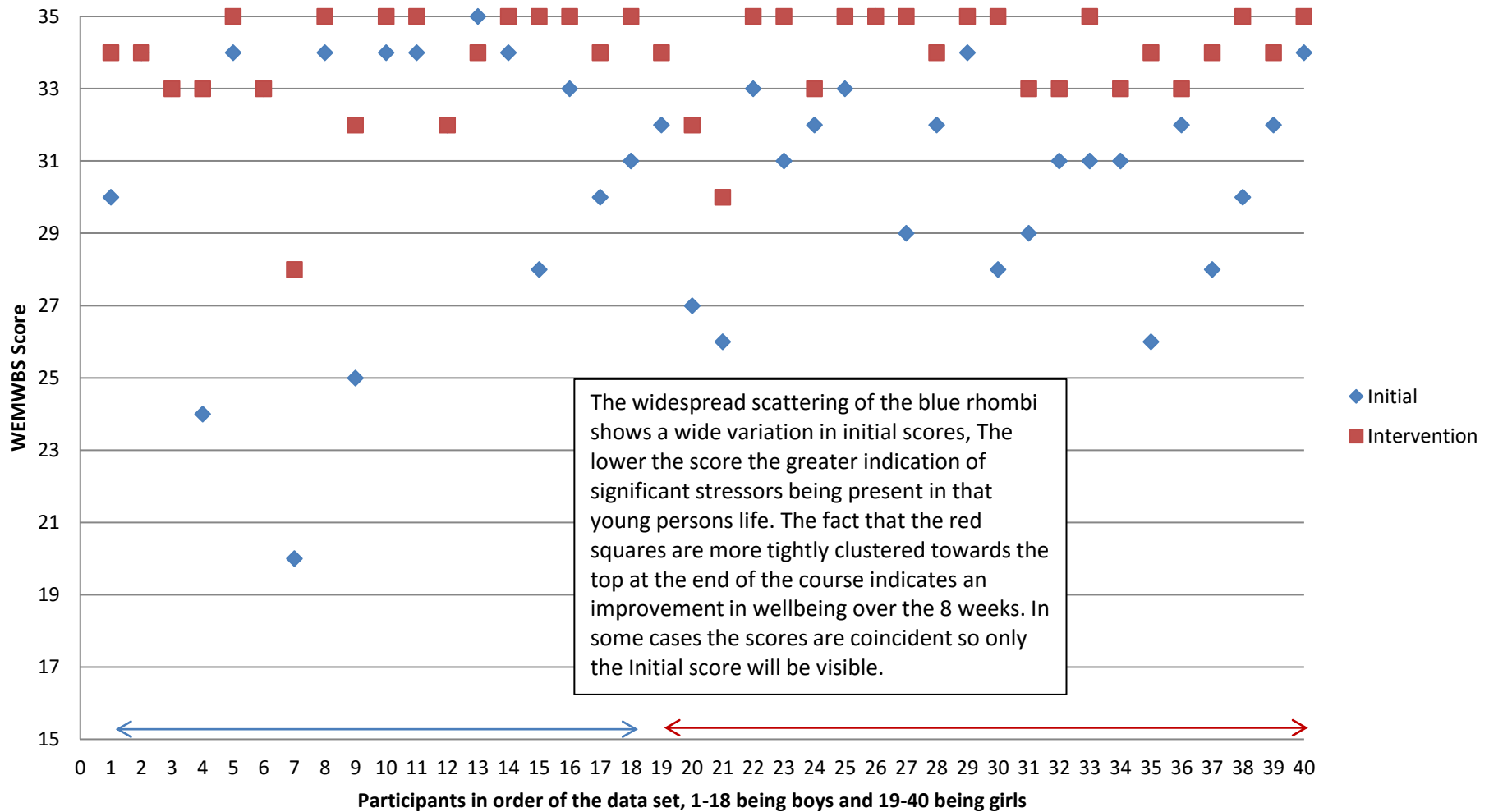
Surf Action Sharks 2016: Attendance	
18 Boys	91%
22 Girls	88%
40 Total	89%

The overall attendance figures were very high and this was indicative of how enjoyable the participants found their course. Considering that courses were run through the late spring, summer and then well into the autumn with the attendant common problems such as bad weather, illness, school commitments and family holidays etc, this was most gratifying. We would hope that this will encourage the youngsters to continue participating in healthy outdoor activities at weekends

Combined WEMWBS Scores for 40 Children																					
		I'm feeling good about the future	I've made new friends	I've had fun today	I'm feeling better about myself	I've had fun with my family	I've learned something new today	I'm looking forward to my next session	Mean Score	Standard Deviation		I'm feeling good about the future	I've made new friends	I've had fun today	I'm feeling better about myself	I've had fun with my family	I've learned something new today	I'm looking forward to my next session	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Attendance Out of 8 dsessions
Boys Newquay		4	3	4	5	5	5	4	4.29	0.76		5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.86	0.38	6
		5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.86	0.38	8
		5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4.71	0.49		5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4.71	0.49	8
		4	4	5	3	1	3	4	3.43	1.27		5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.71	0.76	8
		5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	8
		5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.71	0.49		5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.71	0.49	8
		3	3	5	2	1	1	5	2.86	1.68		4	3	5	4	3	4	5	4.00	0.82	8
		4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	5
Boys Praa Sands		3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3.57	0.53		4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.57	0.79	8
		5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	8
		5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	7
		5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4.57	0.53		3	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.57	0.79	8
		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00		5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.86	0.38	6
		5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	7
		4	4	5	3	3	4	5	4.00	0.82		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	5
		5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.71	0.76		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	8
Girls Newquay		4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4.29	0.49		5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.86	0.38	8
		4	3	5	4	5	5	5	4.43	0.79		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	7
		4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.57	0.79		5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.86	0.38	7
		4	4	5	4	3	5	5	4.43	0.79		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	7
		5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4.57	0.53		5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4.71	0.49	8
		5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4.71	0.49		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	7
		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	7
		4	4	4	2	5	5	5	4.14	1.07		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	7
Girls Praa Sands		4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.57	0.53		5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.86	0.38	7
		5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	8
		3	3	4	4	4	5	5	4.00	0.82		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	6
		3	4	5	3	4	5	5	4.14	0.90		4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.71	0.49	6
		5	3	5	4	4	5	5	4.43	0.79		5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4.71	0.49	7
		4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4.43	0.53		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	6
		5	3	4	5	4	5	5	4.43	0.79		5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.71	0.49	7
		3	4	5	3	3	4	4	3.71	0.76		5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.86	0.38	7
40		4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.57	0.53		5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4.71	0.49	8
		3	3	5	3	4	5	5	4.00	1.00		5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.86	0.38	8
		3	4	5	4	4	5	5	4.29	0.76		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	6
		5	3	5	5	5	5	4	4.57	0.79		5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.86	0.38	7
		4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.86	0.38		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00	0.00	6
	Mean	4.25	4.10	4.78	4.08	4.25	4.58	4.83	4.41	0.31		4.85	4.70	4.98	4.68	4.75	4.90	5.00	4.84	0.13	89.38
	9.6	STDEV	0.78	0.81	0.48	0.89	1.01	0.81	0.38	0.48		0.43	0.65	0.16	0.53	0.49	0.30	0.00	0.22		

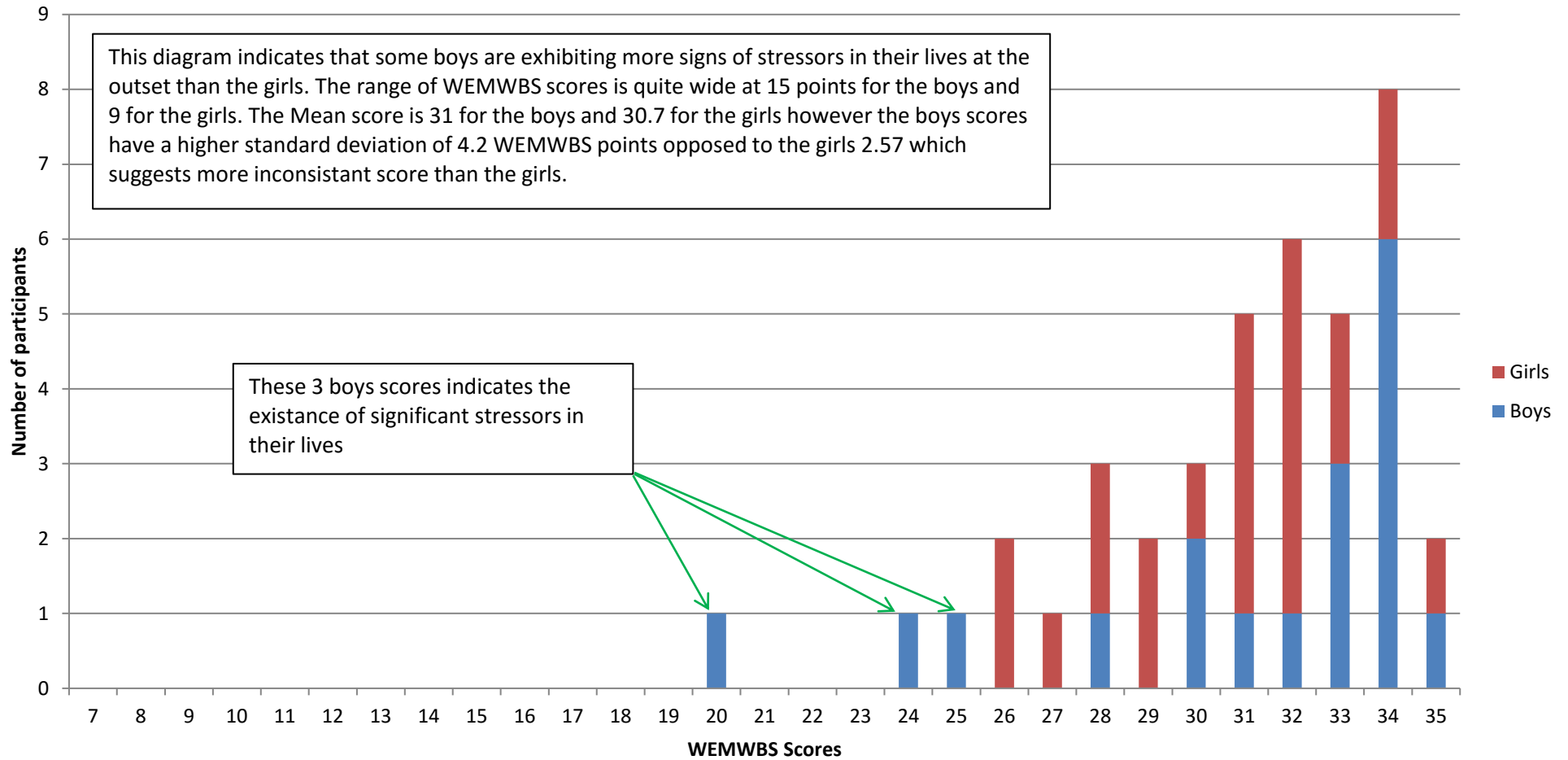
Surf Action Sharks 2016

A Graph showing the spread of the Initial and Intervention WEMWBS score for each of the 40 youngsters



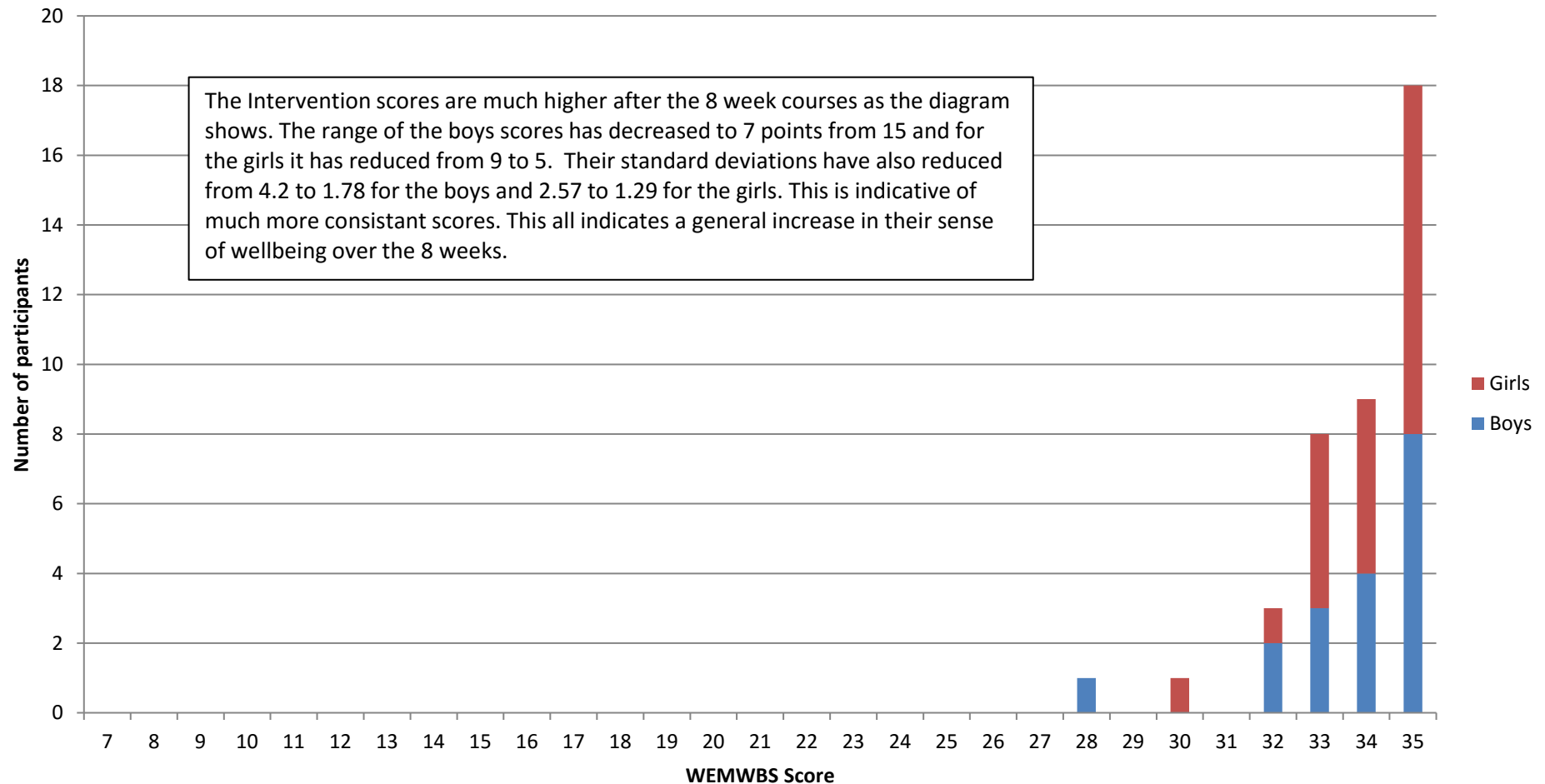
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Initial WEMWBS Scores for the 40 Participants



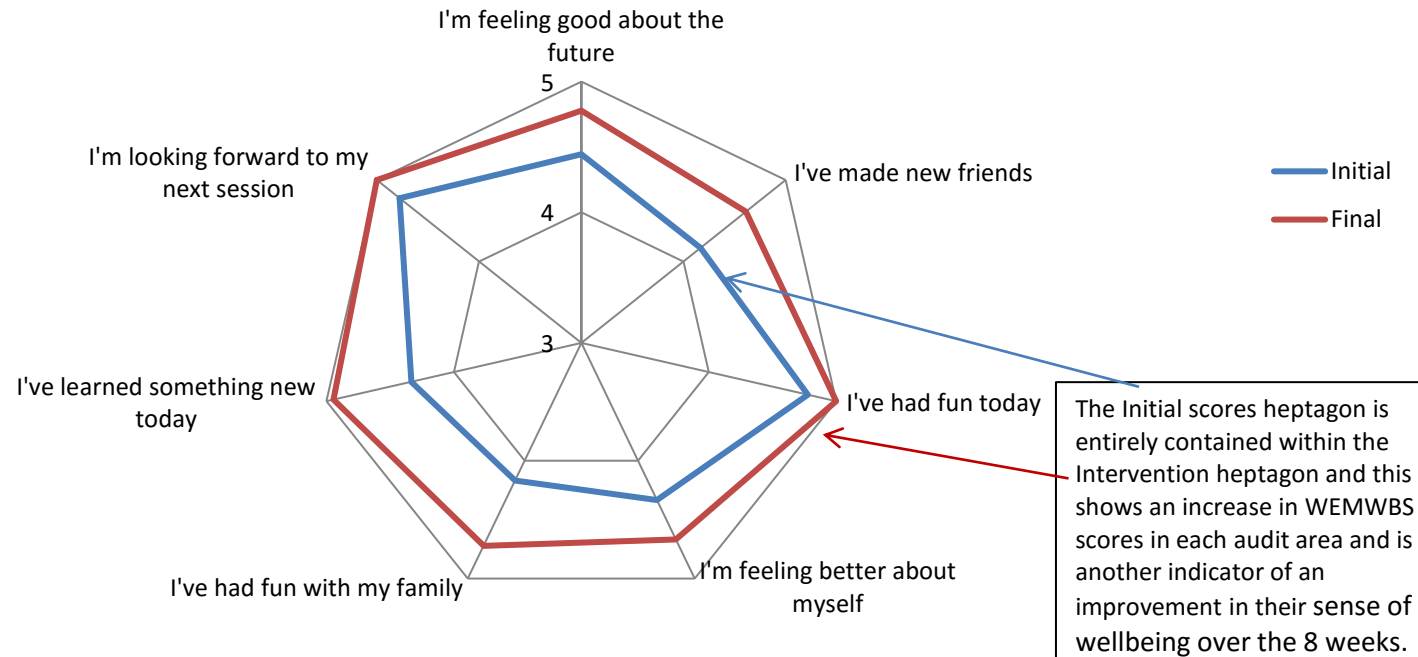
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Intervention WEMWBS Scores for 40 Participants



Surf Action Sharks 2016

The Overall Grouped Mean WEMWBS Scores per Audit Question at the start and at the end of the 8 week course for the 18 Boys

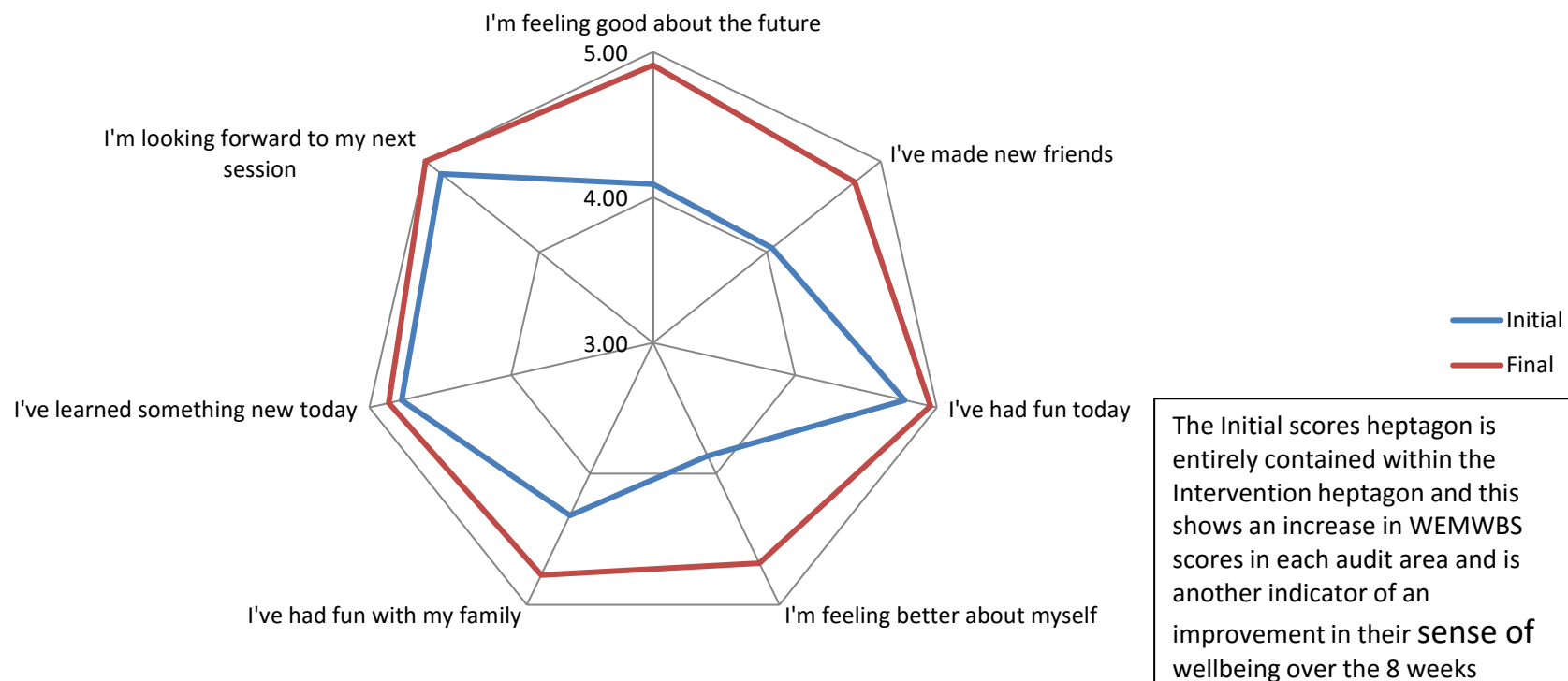


Average WEMWBS Scores	I'm feeling good about the future	I've made new friends	I've had fun today	I'm feeling better about myself	I've had fun with my family	I've learned something new today	I'm looking forward to my next session
Initial	4.44	4.17	4.78	4.33	4.17	4.33	4.78
Intervention	4.78	4.61	5	4.67	4.72	4.94	5
% Increase	7.7	10.6	6.4	7.9	13.2	14.1	4.6

The standard deviation in the Initial scores was 0.6 and this is reduces to 0.31 in the Intervention scores. This indicates more consistency.

Surf Action Sharks 2016

Grouped Mean WEMWBS Scores for the 22 Girls

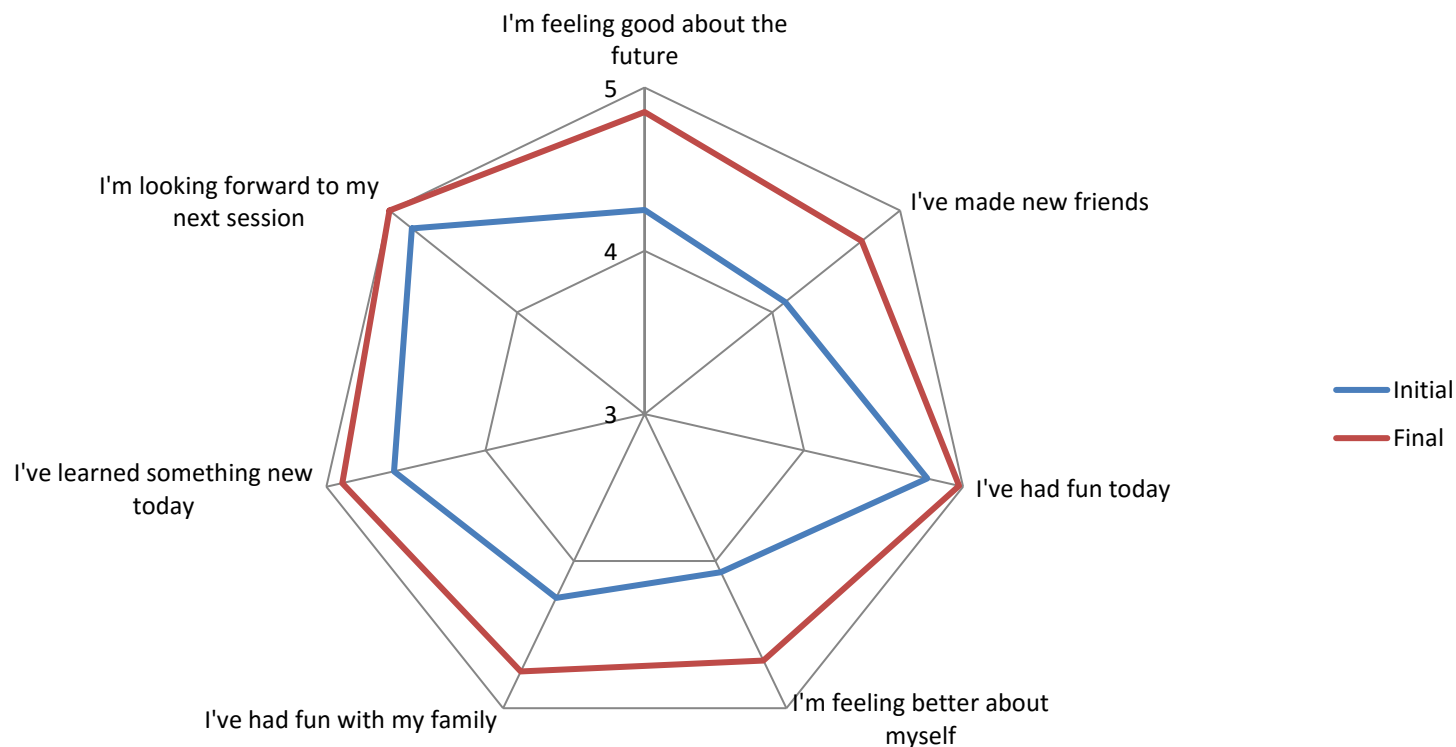


Average WEMWBS Scores	I'm feeling good about the future	I've made new friends	I've had fun today	I'm feeling better about myself	I've had fun with my family	I've learned something new today	I'm looking forward to my next session
Initial	4.09	4.05	4.77	3.86	4.32	4.77	4.86
Intervention	4.91	4.77	4.95	4.68	4.77	4.86	5
% Increase	20	18	3.8	21.2	10.4	1.9	2.9

The standard deviation in the Initial scores was 0.41 and this reduces to 0.11 in the Intervention scores. This indicates more consistency.

Surf Action Sharks 2016

Group Mean WEMWBS Score per Audit Area for all 40 Participants



WEMWBS Scores	I'm feeling good about the future	I've made new friends	I've had fun today	I'm feeling better about myself	I've had fun with my family	I've learned something new today	I'm looking forward to my next session
Initial	4.25	4.1	4.78	4.08	4.25	4.58	4.83
Final	4.85	4.7	4.98	4.68	4.75	4.9	5.0
% Increase	14.1	14.6	4.2	14.7	11.8	7.0	3.5

3. Findings:



Children and Emotional Resilience

Our aim throughout was to boost the children's emotional resilience. Children will have different levels of resilience and different ways of responding to and recovering from stressful times. They will also have different ways of showing when the demands that are being put upon them outweigh their capacity to cope. They might become emotional, they might withdraw, or they might become defiant, angry or resentful. Of course, even the most resilient of warriors have days where it all gets too much, but low resilience will likely drive certain patterns of behaviours more often. Resilience is not only for the genetically blessed and can be strengthened at any age. One of the most exciting findings in the last decade or so is that we can change the wiring of the brain through the experiences we expose it to. The right experiences can shape the individual, intrinsic characteristics of a child in a way that will build their resilience. Exercise strengthens and reorganises the child's brain to make it more resilient to stress. One of the ways it does this is by increasing the neurochemicals that can calm the brain in times of stress. Anything that gets kids moving is good but of course, if you can make it fun that is so much better. We used the Surfing to help achieve this.

Social support is associated with higher positive emotions, a sense of personal control and predictability, self-esteem, motivation, optimism and resilience. Children won't always notice the people who are in their corner cheering them on, so when we can, we let them know about the people in their fan club. Anything we can do to build their connection with the people who love them will strengthen them. Research tells us that it's not rugged self-reliance, determination or inner strength that leads children through adversity, but the reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship. In the context of a loving relationship with a caring adult, children have the opportunity to develop vital coping skills. The presence of a responsive adult can also help to reverse the physiological changes that are activated by stress. This will help ensure that the developing brain, body and immune system are protected from the damaging effects of these physiological changes. This was why we specifically asked the parents to support their children in the water and were glad that many did and found it a highly enjoyable and beneficial experience. In

addition, the children had other positive and likeable role models in their sport instructors. They also benefited from having their own social group dynamic with their new friends and fellow participants.

Taking into account these aims the results in the outcomes diagrams displayed above consistently show a significant improvement in the mean WEMWBS wellbeing scores per question amongst the participants which is what we had hoped for.

Some individuals showed very high improvements in their scores, a 40% increase for boy number 7 and a 25% increase for girl number 12. Those children who scored 35 at the outset because they were generally happy could not show any increase by definition. Some of the biggest percentage changes were observed in the girls scores particularly when it came to 'self-image' where they showed a 21% increase which was very encouraging. Recent research suggests that the emotional resilience of girls generally is being undermined by the pressures of social media and modern lifestyles.

We were delighted to see that for both the boys and girls the mean WEMWBS score per question increased and the standard deviation decreased thus indicating a general increase in the wellbeing measure with the scores more tightly packed around the higher mean thus also showing greater consistency in the scores. This allows us to say that they have shown a significant increase in their wellbeing scores as a result of having participated in our activities.

Parents and Family Relationships

- It was predominantly the husband who was the serving partner. The parents and fathers in particular, loved the project and enjoyed participating in the activities with their children each week. Some fathers said they'd spent more quality time with their children during the 8 week course than they had during the rest of the year. This did create some feelings of guilt but it was offset by the hope that they would continue doing it. Surf Action was surprised to find that up to then many of the service partners spent an extensive part of the weekends in particular away from their families and with their service mates playing sport etc even if they had been away from home during the week.
- During conversations over a coffee away from their partners it became apparent that there were considerable stresses building up in some families:
 - In particular in those where the serving partner was about to take early retirement/redundancy from their respective service:
 - The wife was often much more grounded in the day to day reality of civil life and took charge of the family and paying bills etc and had considerable reservations about life outside the service and felt that their partner was being too optimistic about the ease of the transition and the future. They found it hard to talk about it to their partner without it seeming they were trying to undermine them. Children in particular were picking up on these tensions. Housing and schooling were a continual worry to those who would have to leave married quarters.
 - The husbands often seemed to be living in a bubble of optimism and had friends who were in a similar position with the same attitude. People they

- knew who had already left always seemed to be positive in conversations with them yet their wives were telling a different story to the other wives.
- The wives were very glad to have an opportunity to discuss these matters away from their partners with others who were in the same situation or who had already been through it. Similarly their children were benefiting from the wider social contacts with the children of veterans.
 - The current political instability in many parts of the world is resulting in increased short notice deployments of unknown duration. This is having a substantial effect on some families. The huge amount of coverage of the news in all formats means that children are no longer easy to isolate from reality and they are already showing signs at home of increased stress and worry as events unfold.
 - At the time of writing some local squadrons are changing from 'planned deployed' to 'short notice deployments with 24 /48 hours notice'. This is likely to have an impact on family life and local schools have been warned that they may notice a change in children's behaviour.
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Summary

Surf Action is delighted by the outcomes of the 'Surf Action Sharks' project and has learned an enormous amount which will help set the future direction of its services:

- The Ocean Therapy approach has been very successful with the youngsters and all measures have shown significant improvements in wellbeing which should also sustain good

- psychological health and emotional resilience. Its success beyond the adult age group will be developed and refined.
- The participants have made new friendships within a wider social circle and this has helped reduce isolation and helped to build and sustain their self-esteem, self-reliance and self-confidence. This should help them to deal more effectively with the stresses and unpredictability of service family life.
- The families have thoroughly enjoyed the Ocean Therapy course and its attendant spin-offs. Most would not have ever thought of participating in such activities despite living so close to some of the best beaches in England. By providing a Saturday Surf Clinic at Newquay Surf Action will help the families to remain active as a unit and to benefit from the beautiful Cornish ocean environment and the resultant improvements in their physical and psychological health.
- The partners have made good use of conversations with those in similar situations and those who have already experienced them. They now have some strategies to use in raising some difficult issues within the family whilst minimising the stresses on their children. These enhanced societal connections will also support them when their partner is deployed.
- It is important that we can continue to give young people regular and affordable access to ocean activities as it is massively beneficial for them physically, psychologically and emotionally.



Surf Action would once again like to thank The West Cornwall Youth Trust for their financial support for this worthwhile project.



We would also like to thank the proprietors of 'Seascape Lodge' in Newquay for their wonderful generosity in allowing us to use it as a super base from which to run many of the activities.

