

Feedback about Psychology Consultation Services in a State Early Intervention Program

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BACKGROUND

According to the CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, 1 in 6 children have one or more developmental disabilities or delays (NCBDDD, 2018). Early intervention services for children with developmental delays have been associated with positive impacts on development as well as positive changes for the family and community (Goode et al., 2011). Child Development Watch (CDW) is a program in the state of Delaware that provides early intervention services for children with developmental delays under the age of three. As a part of CDW's early intervention program, psychology consultation services are available to children and their families. The services consist of a consultation with a postdoctoral psychology fellow during the child's initial in-clinic evaluation or during a home or daycare visit. The most common reasons for referral are concerns for behavior, sleep, feeding, and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the present study was (1) to receive feedback about the current psychological consultation services at CDW and (2) to identify areas for potential changes in the future.

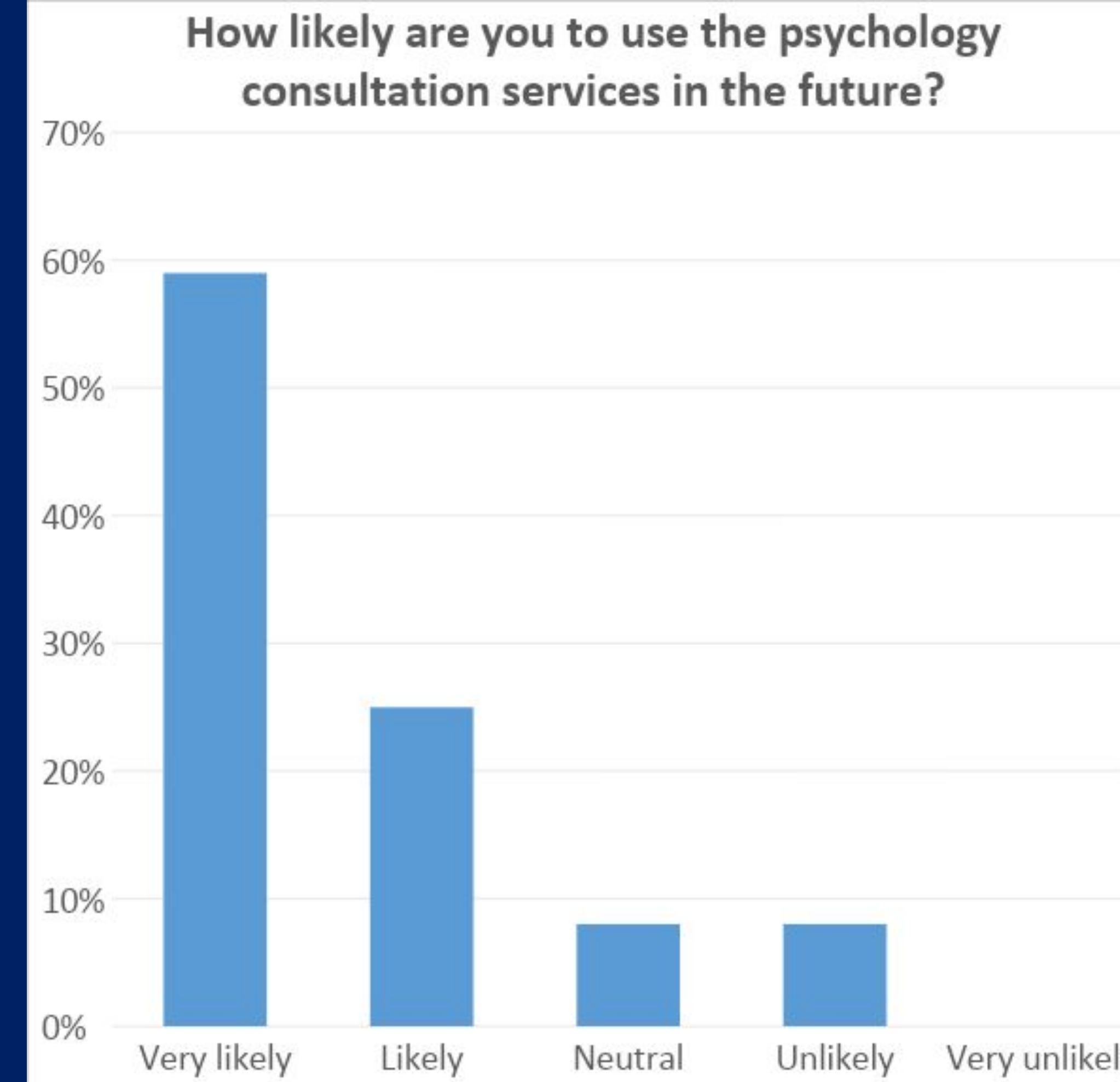
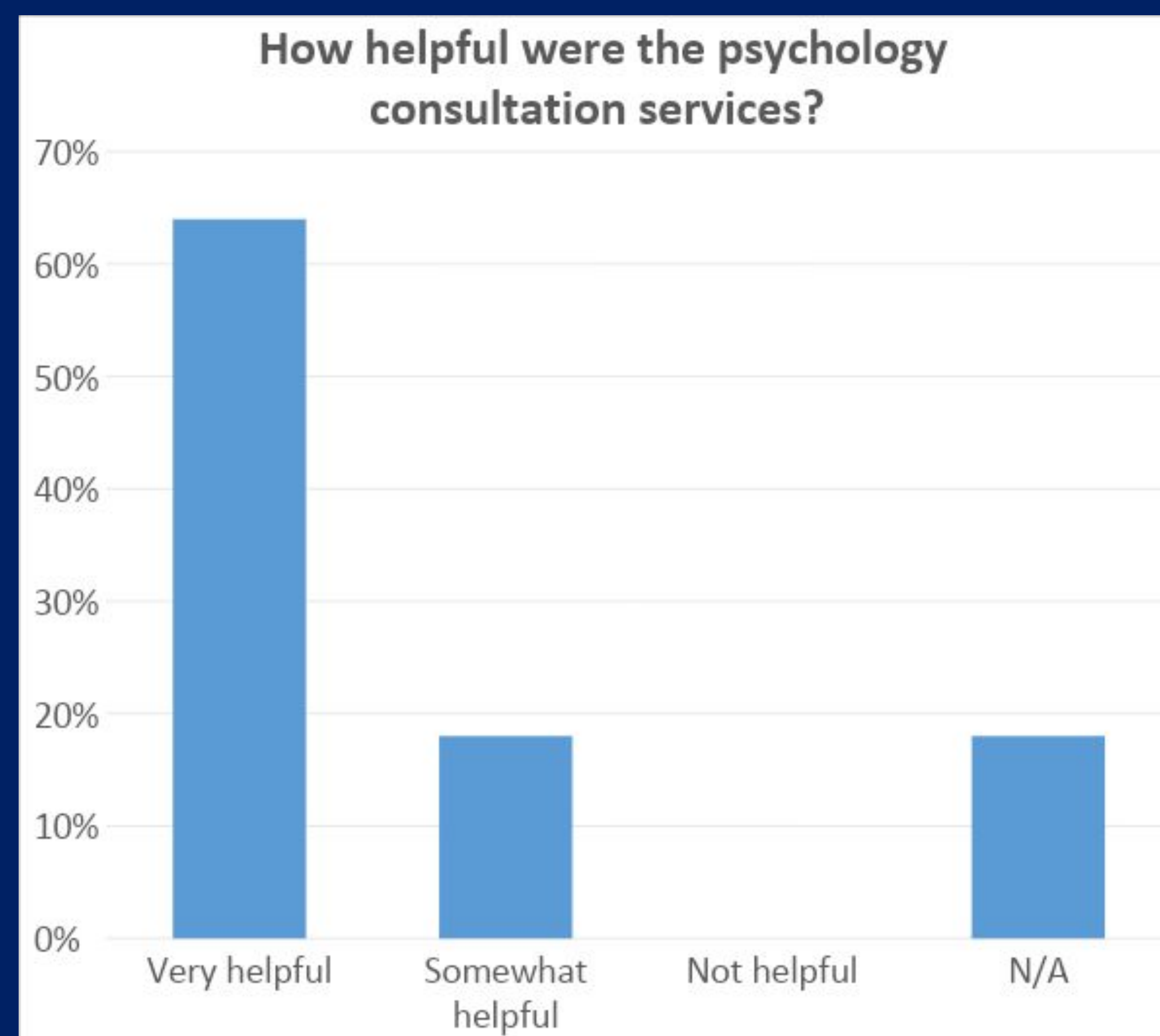
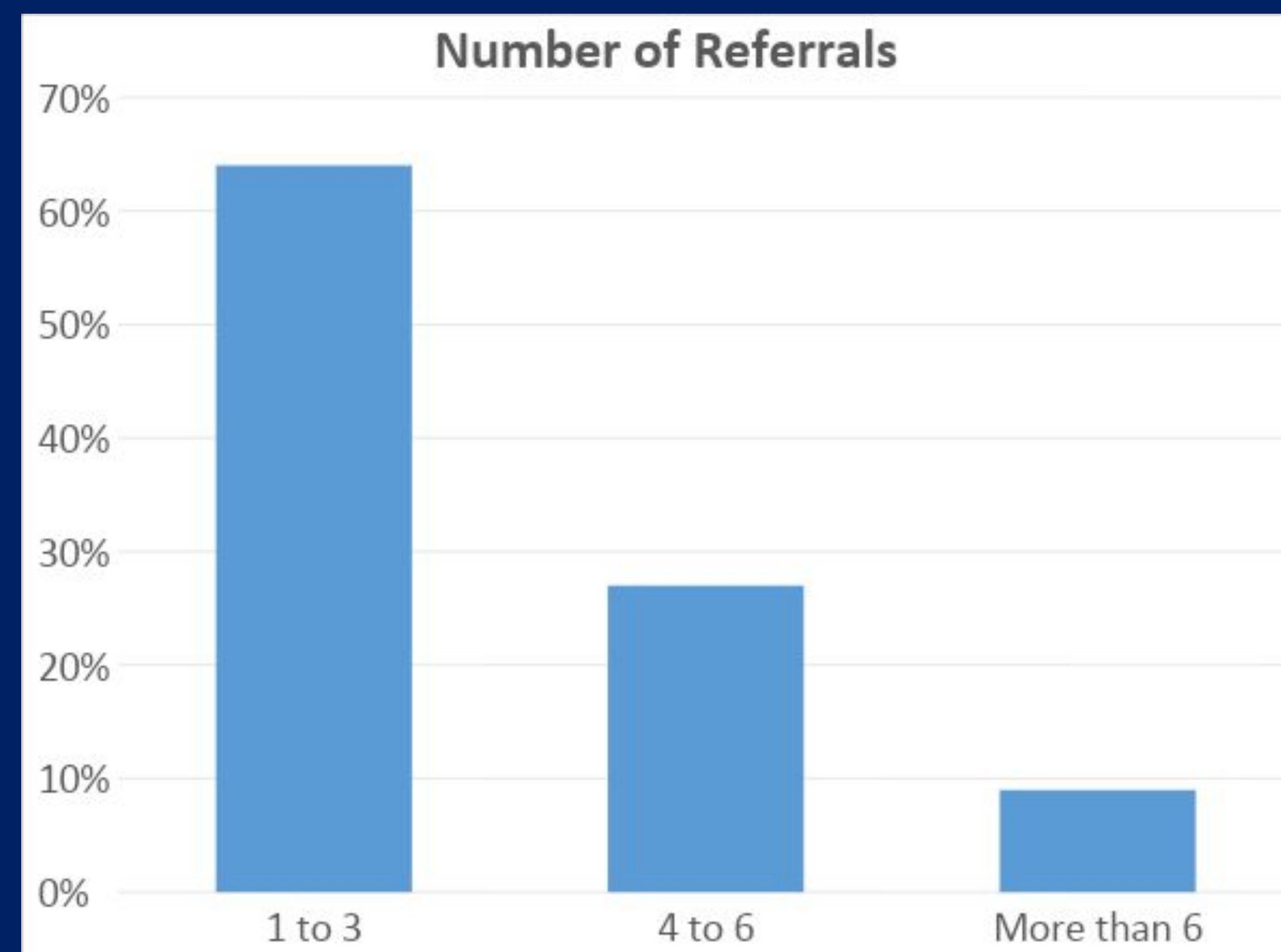
METHOD

Feedback about psychology consultation services was obtained from Family Service Coordinators (FSCs) at CDW. FSCs work individually with children and their families to help coordinate all services the child receives through CDW. This includes making referrals for psychology consultation services as needed. 12 FSCs completed a 10-question online survey about the current psychology services. The survey consisted of 8 closed-ended questions and 2 open-ended questions. The FSCs were not asked to provide any identifying information so all responses provided were anonymous. FSCs were eligible to complete the survey regardless of whether they had ever made a referral for psychology services.

RESULTS

Closed-Ended Questions

A total of 12 Family Service Coordinators responded to the survey. Of the 12 respondents, 10 reported making a referral(s) for psychology in the past year while 2 reported not making any referrals. The main reason given for not making a referral was the child did not have a need for a psychology consultation. The majority of FSCs who made referrals reported making 1 to 3 referrals over the past year. In addition, the majority of FSCs rated the psychology consultation services as helpful and reported that they were very likely to use the services again in the future.



RESULTS

Open-Ended Questions

What aspects of the psychology consultation services have been the most beneficial?

- Autism Spectrum Disorder – discussing “red flags,” dispelling myths, providing education, validating concerns, and providing support (5)
- Helpful advice, insights, recommendations, and handouts about behavior problems (5)
- Validating concerns and providing support for families (3)

What suggestions or changes would you recommend to improve the services in the future?

- Psychology consultations during community evaluations (i.e., not solely in the clinic) (4)
- No suggestions; happy with current services (4)
- Ability to provide follow-up psychology services (i.e., more than one psychology consultation) (2)
- Providing additional education for FSCs on how to discuss psychology services with families and when is it appropriate to make a referral for a psychology consultation (1)
- Clarification of the availability for home or daycare visits (1)
- Availability of the psychology report at the same time as the multidisciplinary assessment report (1)

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to receive feedback about the current psychological services offered through Child Development Watch. This feedback in turn helped provide suggestions for future improvement to services. Overall the FSCs who have used the psychology consultation services reported finding the services helpful and would be likely to use the services in the future. Two of the most common benefits of services identified by FSCs were: discussions and recommendations related to ASD and information and recommendations about behavior problems. Two of the most common areas identified for future improvement were: providing psychology services during community evaluations and offering additional follow-up services.

Future Directions:

1. Research the feasibility of offering psychology consultation services during evaluations in the community (i.e., evaluations in the home or daycare setting)
2. Explore ways to provide additional follow up with families past the psychology consultation
3. Help connect families to community mental health services
4. Provide training for FSCs about how to talk to families about psychology related concerns (in particular ASD) and when they should refer a child

REFERENCES

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