

Appendix 5:

Independent Evaluation Report – Tele-education Evaluation

**Neil Atherton Day
Centre for Program Evaluation
University of Melbourne**

Summary

The quantitative data available from attendance records and self-completion pro formas administered after each workshop show that the tele-education sessions

maintained high levels of attendance throughout the program
provided information that was informative and useful in participants' work
met participants' goals and led to intentions to change practice
used a method of tele-education that was initially well accepted and increasingly more so
after the first few sessions.

The objectives of the program to provide information and stimulate change in practice have been well met. There are some indications that, for small minorities of participants, content of particular sessions may have been less useful. There appears to be a small minority who continued to feel uncomfortable with the tele-education method throughout the eight sessions.

These issues suggest that greater emphasis on targeting specific participants for particular sessions might be attempted in future applications of tele-education.

However, when compared with the significance of the overall success of the program in achieving its objectives, these are very minor issues.

Methods

The evaluation of the tele-education program was undertaken by Anne Fahey with advice from an independent evaluation consultant, Neil Day. The consultant worked extensively on the evaluation design, reviewed all evaluation materials and conducted the analysis and reporting of quantitative outcome data. This section of the report is based on these quantitative data.

Two data sources are reported here: attendance records, and surveys self-completed after each day's sessions. These data were supplied in EXCEL spreadsheets. After some initial problems with formatting had been resolved, these were read into SPSS which was used for analysis and charting.

Note that in the figures and tables, N = number of days attended, R = Respondents.

Attendance

Information was available about the attendance of 45 participants in the tele-education training seminars, including a detailed roll of sessions attended, and organisation represented.

Organisation type

Table Tele-education 1—Organisation type represented by participants

Type of orgn R is from

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid CAMHS	7	15.6	15.6	15.6
CHC	8	17.8	17.8	33.3
Counselling	3	6.7	6.7	40.0
Education	4	8.9	8.9	48.9
Family Support Services	12	26.7	26.7	75.6
Maternal & Child Health	1	2.2	2.2	77.8
Child Protn	3	6.7	6.7	84.4
Special childrns services	7	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

The seven participants from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were not in the target audience and were auditing the sessions only. They are excluded from most of the following analysis.

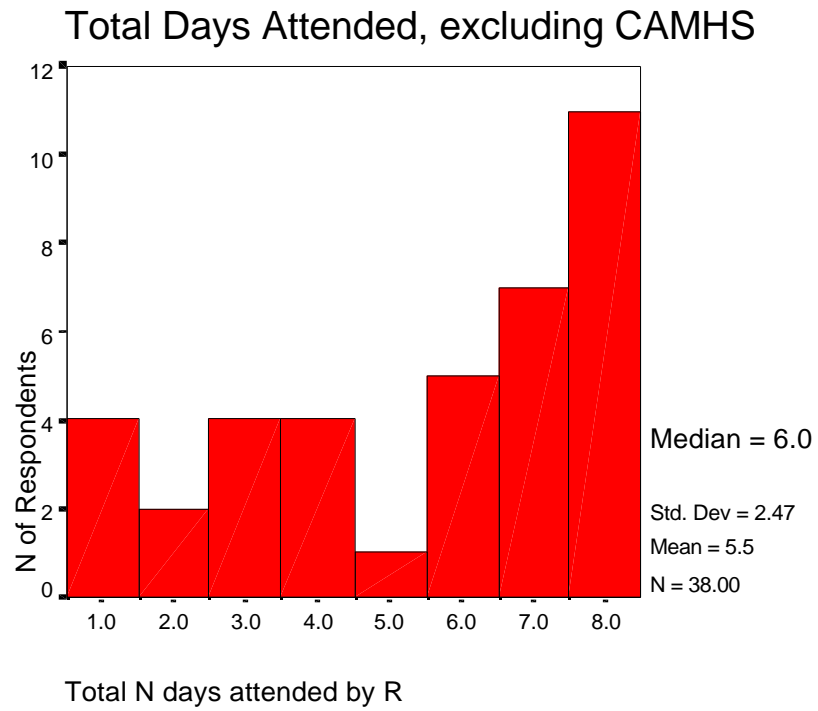
Table Tele-education 2—Number of days attended by each participant

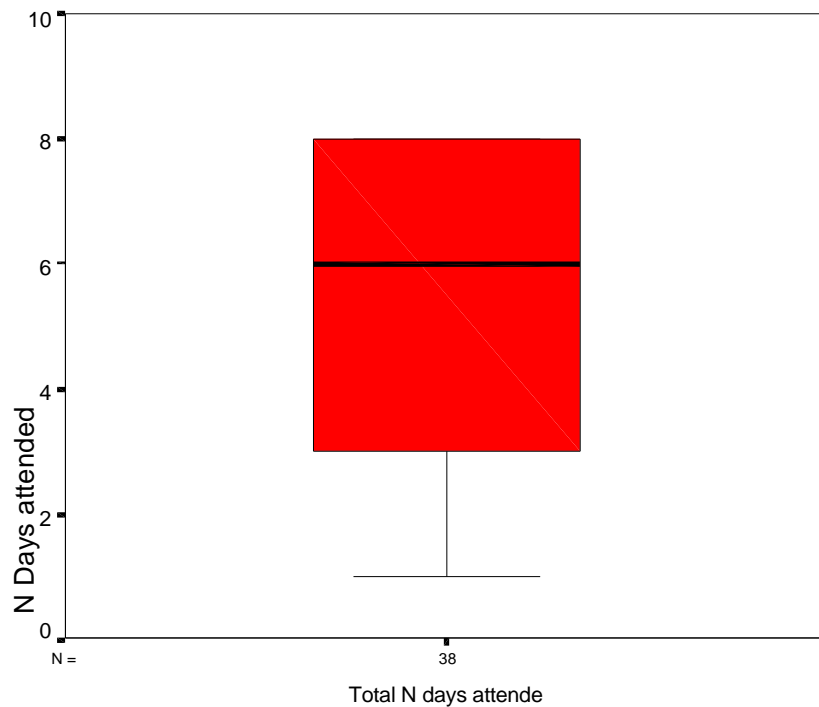
Total N days attended by R

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	4	10.5	10.5	10.5
	2.00	2	5.3	5.3	15.8
	3.00	4	10.5	10.5	26.3
	4.00	4	10.5	10.5	36.8
	5.00	1	2.6	2.6	39.5
	6.00	5	13.2	13.2	52.6
	7.00	7	18.4	18.4	71.1
	8.00	11	28.9	28.9	100.0
	Total	38	100.0	100.0	

Nearly half the participants (46 per cent) attended all, or all but one, of the days, and 63 per cent attended more than half the days on which sessions were offered. These data are in Table Tele-education 2—‘Number of days attended by each participant’, and displayed in Figure Tele-education 1—‘Total days attended by participants’, as a histogram.

Figure Tele-education 1—Total days attended by participants





The data can be more parsimoniously displayed using a boxplot as shown below in Figure Tele-education 2—‘Total N days attended by each participant: boxplot’.

Figure Tele-education 2—Total N days attended by each participant: boxplot

The boxplot in Figure Tele-education 2 shows, in summary form, the information from the distribution. The median (black horizontal line) is 6.0 days. The dark box shows the spread in attendance of the ‘middle half’ of the 38 informants: 25 per cent of informants above and 25 per cent below the median value of 6.0. The ‘whisker’ shows the range of values of all informants excluding extreme or outlier cases. Usually, there is a whisker above as well as below the box. In this case there is no upper whisker and the top of the box extends to limit of the scale. This indicates a skewed distribution with many participants attending all, or very nearly all, sessions.

Attendance by type of organisation

Seven CAMHS workers are included in this analysis. Means and standard deviations for the total days attended for each participant are shown below in Table Tele-education 3—‘Total days attended, by organisation type’.

Table Tele-education 3—Total days attended by respondents, by organisation type

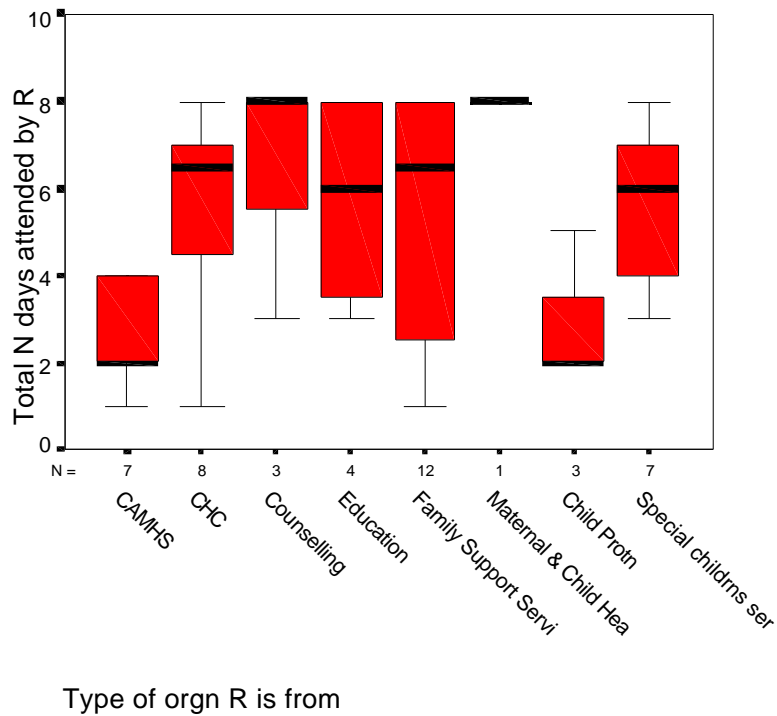
Total N days attended by R

Type of organ R is from	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Counselling	6.3333	3	2.8868
Education	5.7500	4	2.6300
Family Support Services	5.4167	12	2.9064
Maternal & Child Health	8.0000	1	.
Child Prot'n	3.0000	3	1.7321
Special childrns services	5.5714	7	1.9024
CAMHS	2.7143	7	1.2536
CHC	5.6250	8	2.3867
Total	5.0444	45	2.5222

Boxplots are most useful for comparing details of distributions between groups as in Figure Tele-education 3—‘Boxplot of days attended, by participants’ organisations’. Comparing the length of the boxes we note that attendance from Family Support Services and Education participants was variable, especially in comparison with CAMHS or Child Protection workers.

The black lines within boxes suggest that attendance from CAMHS and Child Protection participants was lower than for the other groups, although the small number of workers from Maternal and Child Health, Counselling and Child Protection make these comparisons risky.

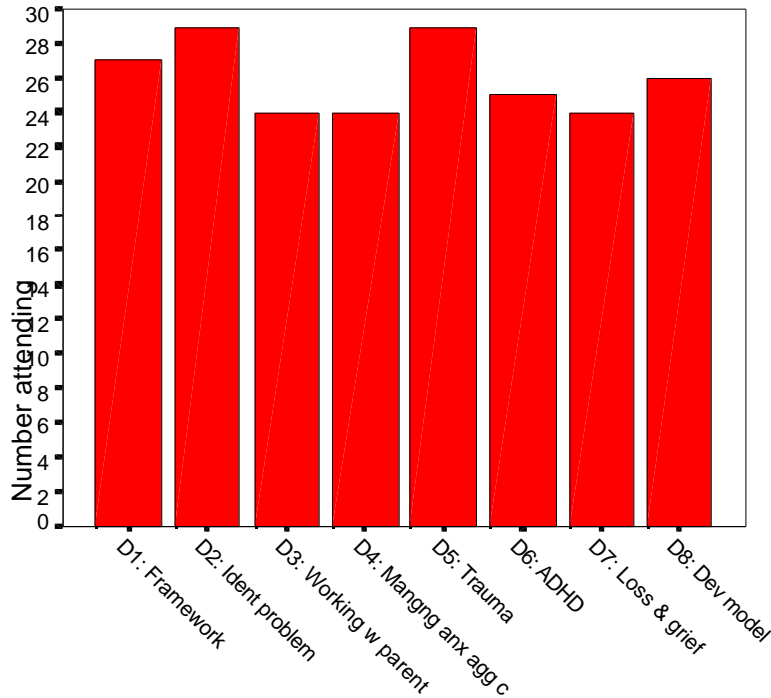
Figure Tele-education 3—Boxplot of days attended, by respondents, by organisations



Attendance on particular days

The numbers attending on each day of the training are shown below in the histogram Figure Tele-education 4—‘Number attending each day, excluding CAMHS’. These data show some differences in the numbers attending, but there is no evidence of the type of systematic decline in attendance through time that might be expected as a result of extensive withdrawal from the program.

Figure Tele-education 4—Number attending each day, excluding CAMHS



Nature of non-attendance: ‘dropout’ or ‘intermittent’

The nature of non-attendance can provide an indication of satisfaction with the training. Withdrawal or dropout is defined as cessation of attendance. This may indicate that the training was not meeting the withdrawn participant’s needs. Intermittent non-attendance, on the other hand, may indicate selective attendance: with respondents picking session of particular interest. It may also indicate that other commitments kept informants away on days they might otherwise have attended. Evidently, the categories are not watertight, but they may inform consideration of satisfaction with the training course.

CAMHS informants are excluded from this analysis, on the grounds they were auditing particular sessions, rather than attending the full training course.

For the purposes of the analysis we define types of attendance as

full: Respondent attended all sessions

withdrawn: Respondent ceased attending before Day 7 and did not resume

intermittent: all other cases.

Well over a quarter of participants were present for all eight days, as may be seen in Table Tele-education 4—‘Type of non-attendance’. A further 50 per cent attended intermittently, but with a median attendance of 6 days, thus it can be concluded that most of these attended frequently, if intermittently.

Table Tele-education 4—Type of non-attendance

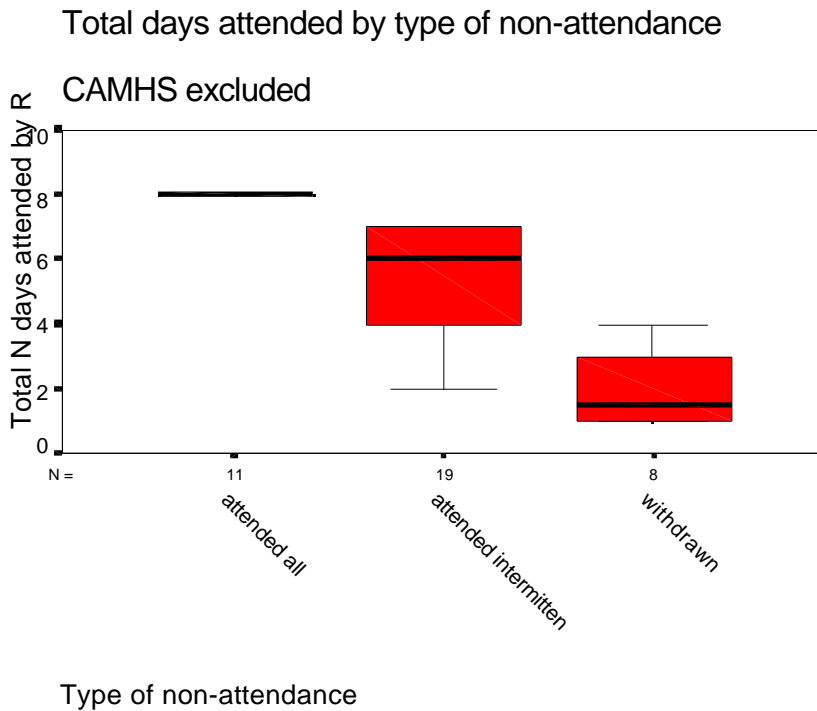
A little over one-fifth of informants withdrew; the median days of attendance for this group being 1.5 days. The boxplot in the table below suggests there is relatively little

ATT_TYP Type of non-attendance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 attended all	11	28.9	28.9	28.9
	2.00 attended intermittently	19	50.0	50.0	78.9
	3.00 withdrawn	8	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	38	100.0	100.0	

variation among this group in the days attended: the small number who withdrew ceased attending only a handful of sessions. Those who attended intermittently tended to skip only a few of the sessions.

Figure Tele-education 5—Days attended by attendance type



We conclude that 80 per cent of participants voted with their feet in favour of continued attendance at the teletraining sessions.

The eight who withdrew include three from family support services organisations and two from educational organisations. Before concluding that the sessions did not meet the needs of participants from these backgrounds, it is worth noting that other individuals from these organisations attended all eight days (two from education and four from family support services). Furthermore, five participants from family support services were intermittent attendees. On average, these attended six of the eight days of teletraining.

On the basis of the limited information available, attendance levels appear to be very high and there does not appear to be any particular characteristic of the few who did drop out that might explain their withdrawal.

Conclusion

Analysis of the attendance records suggests that the tele-education program has been successful in retaining the attendance at all or nearly all sessions for the large majority of participants. There are no obvious characteristics of the few who withdrew, nor for those who attended intermittently rather than fully.

Participant evaluations of the workshop

At the conclusion of each training session, participants were requested to fill out an evaluation pro forma.

The numbers attending each session and the number of pro formas available for analysis are shown in Table Tele-education 5—‘Rate of return of evaluation pro forma by session’. This table shows an overall response rate of 77 per cent, but there are some individual sessions where the rate is less satisfactory: for example Sessions 2 and 7.

Table Tele-education 5—Rate of return of evaluation pro forma by session

<u>Session</u>	N attending	N pro formas	Response rate %
1 Normal development 0–12	32	26	81.2
2 Early warning signs of mental or emotional issues	33	23	69.7
3 Working with parents and carers in understanding and managing children’s behaviour	25	19	76.0
4 Managing the anxious child and the acting out and difficult-to-engage child	25	19	76.0
5 Understanding and managing trauma	32	24	75.0
6 Working with ADHD	28	22	78.6
7 Family change and loss — addressing the grieving process	25	17	68.0
8 How the child learns to relate: a developmental model	27	25	92.6
Total	227	175	77.1

The pro forma was slightly different for the various sessions, and specific questions were used to inform the delivery of following sessions. However, eight of the questions (Q4–Q11) are constant across all eight days on which sessions were held, and these items are used in this section of the evaluation.

Content of workshop

Q4–Q6 deal with the content of the workshop and consisted of like-type items.

Q4 ‘Today’s workshop presentation was informative for me.’

Responses

- 5 highly informative
- 4 very informative
- 3 informative
- 2 a little informative
- 1 not informative

Q5 ‘The information presented today was useful to me in my job.’

Responses

- 1 not useful
- 2 some use
- 3 satisfactory
- 4 very useful
- 5 completely useful

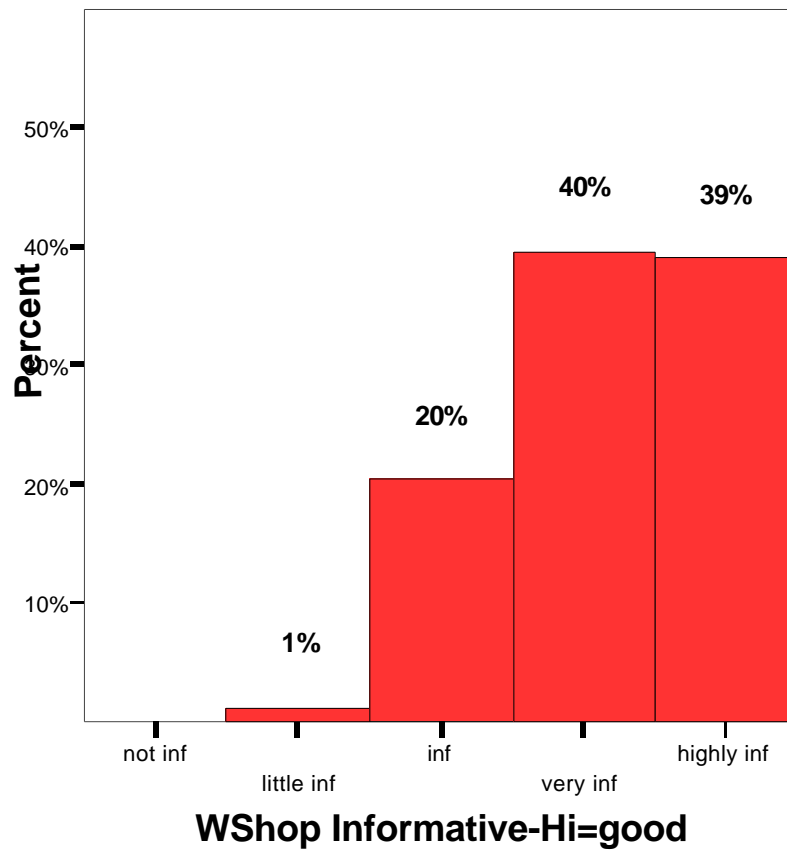
Q6 ‘The material covered was already familiar to me.’

Responses

- 1 very familiar
- 2 familiar
- 3 some familiarity
- 4 mostly unfamiliar
- 5 all unfamiliar

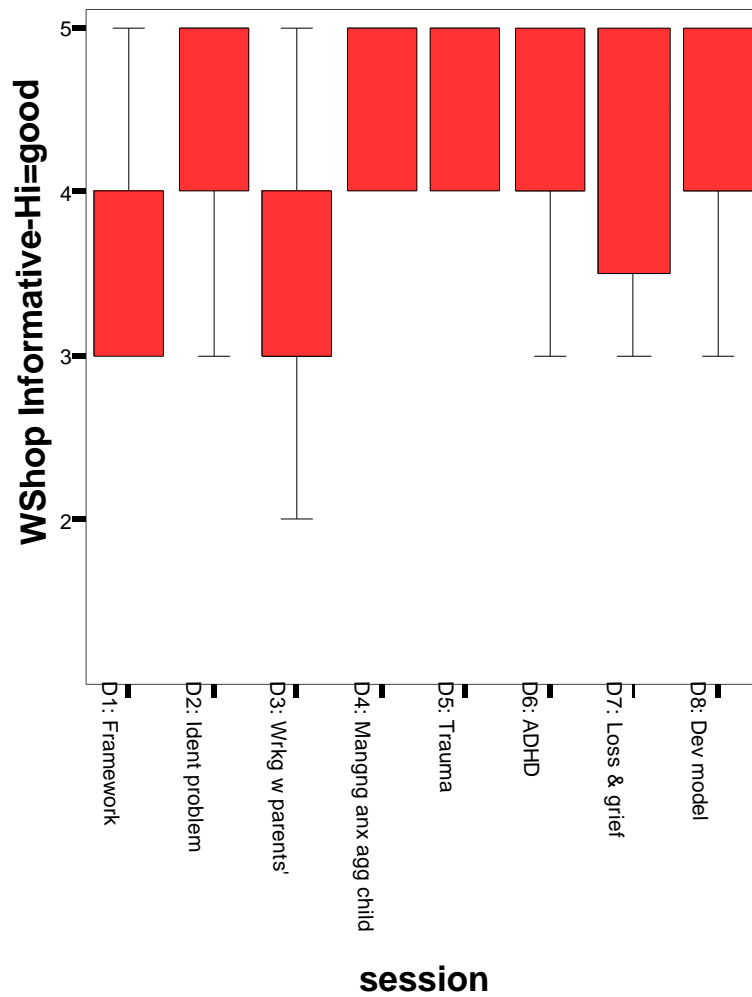
The scoring for Q4 has been reflected from that in the questionnaire, so that a high score value shows a positive outcome in the case of all three questions. It might be argued that a middling, rather than a high score on Q6 would be preferable. Material that was too unfamiliar might not be accessible. Material that was too familiar might be of little value.

Figure Tele-education 6—Q4 Workshop informative: histogram



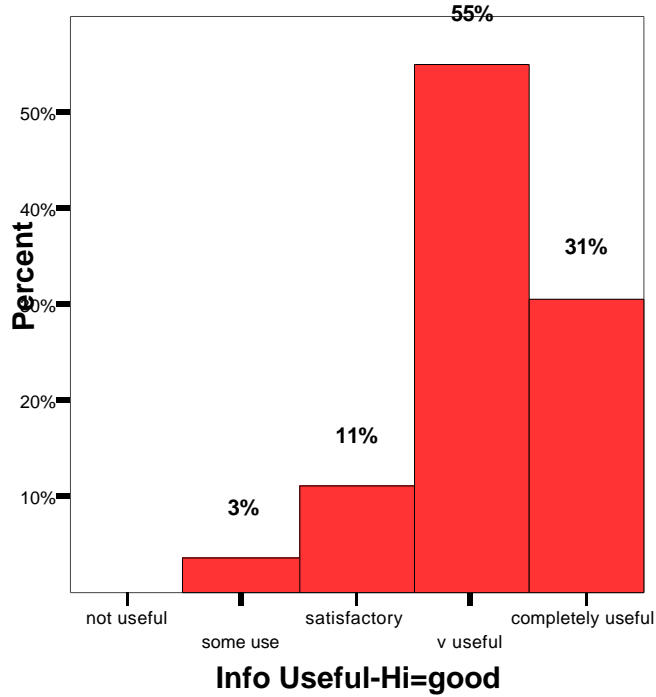
The figure shows the distribution of responses to Q4 aggregated across all eight sessions. With just under 80 per cent of informants reporting that the workshop was ‘very’ or ‘highly’ informative, and only 1 per cent gaining little information, it is evident that overall the sessions addressed areas of interest for the participants. If the response categories are coded from 1 to 5, with ‘5’ representing ‘highly informative’; the overall mean for the question is 4.2.

Figure Tele-education 7—Q4 Workshop informative: boxplot by session



In Figure Tele-education 7—‘Q4 Workshop informative: boxplot by session’, the responses to this question are shown separately for each of the eight sessions. Only two sessions show any major difference from the generally extremely high level of response. The first introductory session and the third session on working with parents report the session content as ‘very’ rather than ‘extremely’ informative. With this minor exception, it appears all sessions in the series were regarded by participants as ‘informative’.

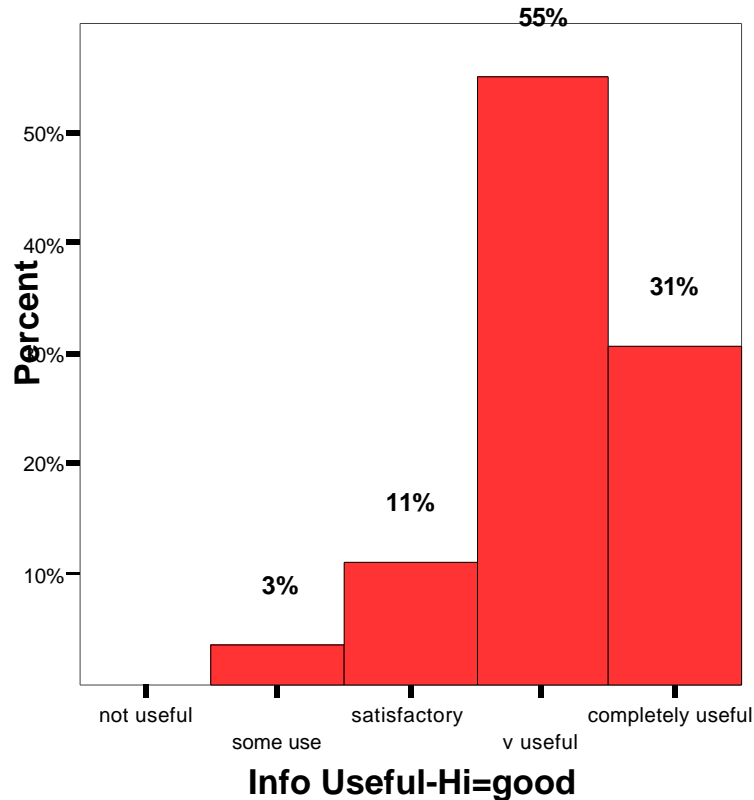
Figure Tele-education 8—Q5 Information useful in job: histogram



Having sessions that are ‘informative’ does not necessarily indicate that the material covered is of direct relevance to participants’ work roles. Q6 specifically asks whether or not the ‘information presented today’ was of use in the respondent’s job. With 86 per cent of informants (across all eight sessions) finding the information either ‘very’ or ‘completely’ useful, it is evident that the sessions were well targeted at the professional needs of participants.

Using the same procedure to scale the responses as was described above for Q4, the mean value for Q5 is 4.1.

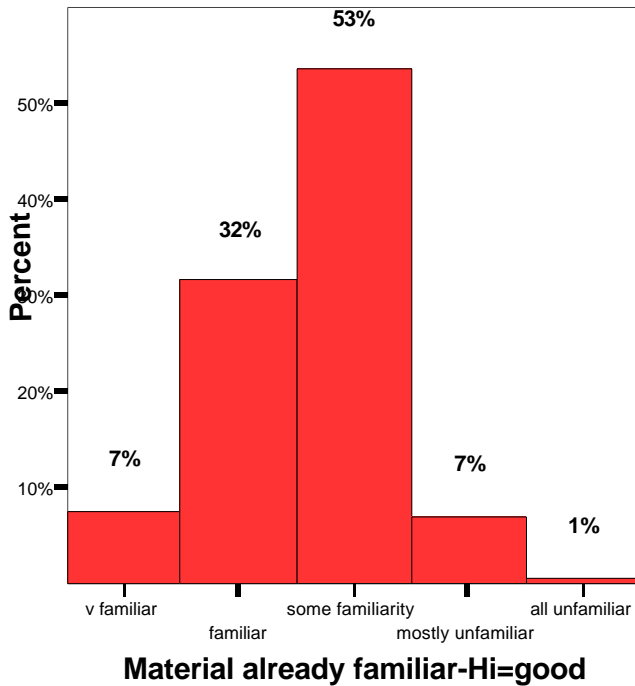
Figure Tele-education 9—Q5 Information useful in job: boxplot by session



In Figure Tele-education 9—‘Q5, ‘Information useful in job: boxplot by session’, a similar pattern emerges as in the previous comparative box plot: Sessions 1 and 3 have slightly lower levels of direct work-related usefulness.

It is also worth remarking that for a small number of informants some sessions were less useful. This may be seen from the long lower whiskers on Session 7 (‘Family Change and Loss: Addressing the Grieving Process’). A check back to the questionnaires showed that two informants reported this session as ‘some use’ and two as ‘satisfactory’. The small circles in the figure show outliers. Again a check of the questionnaires show these are, in each case, a single informant reporting the session to be of ‘some use’ only.

Figure Tele-education 10—Q6 Material already familiar: histogram



Although the number of informants who find the information of less professional benefit is tiny, it might suggest some attention to targeting of future sessions, with, possibly, more detail provided to participants about content of specific sessions.

The distribution of responses to Q6 is markedly different to the other questions in this category. Again responses are aggregated across all eight sessions. With the modal category in the centre of the scale, more than half report ‘some familiarity’ with the material presented. Effective presentation of new professional information should build on existing knowledge, so some prior knowledge may be of value. On the other hand, if the information presented is already very familiar, the value of the session in expanding participant knowledge may be questioned.

Only 1 per cent (one informant for one session) found the information unfamiliar. Of the 7 per cent (N=13) of respondents who found some information ‘very familiar’, three were referring to the introductory session, and three were referring to the third session ‘working with parents’.

Figure Tele-education 11—Q6 Material already familiar: boxplot by session

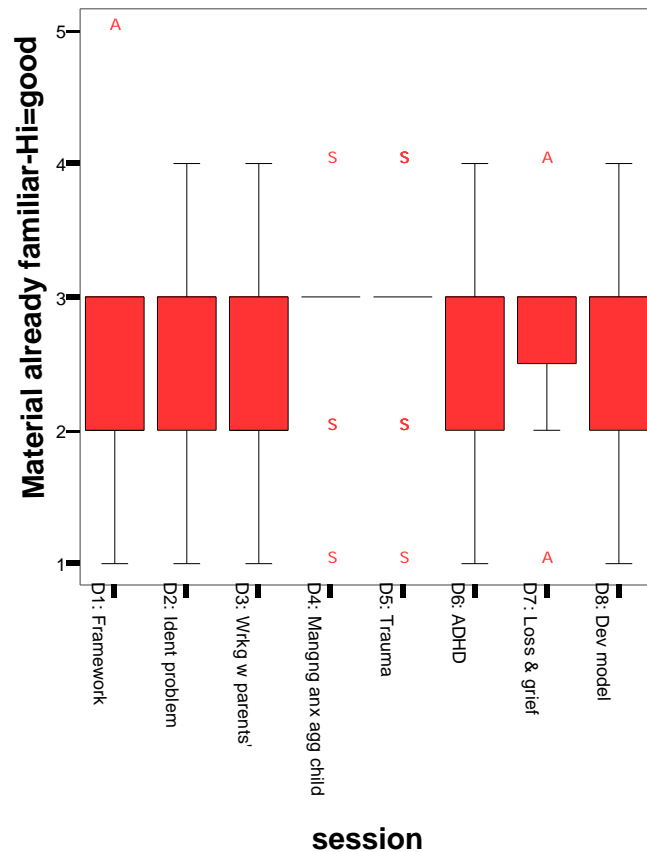


Figure Tele-education 11—‘Q6 Material already familiar: boxplot by session’, shows that the pattern described for the histogram holds generally across all sessions. The single horizontal line in Sessions 4 and 5 are due to the fact that nearly all informants choose the middle response: fifteen out of nineteen for Session 4, ‘Managing the Anxious Child and the Acting Out and Difficult-to-Engage Child’, fifteen out of twenty-four for Session 5 on ‘Understanding and Managing Trauma’. The box plots suggest some variability among participants in levels of prior knowledge as there are whiskers present for all but two sessions.

Conclusion: Workshop content

Responses to the first three questions common across all sessions suggest that the tele-education was well-targeted in terms of the prior knowledge of participants and in terms of their need for professional information.

Effect of workshop on participants

Survey Questions 8 and 9 were about the effects of the workshop in meeting participants' goals, and in resulting in changes in participants' professional practice.

Q7 'Today's session met my goals.'

Responses

- 1 not at all
- 3 satisfactory
- 4 mostly met
- 5 completely

Q8 'I will make changes to my practice as a result of today's session.'

Responses

- 1 yes
- 2 no

Q9 'If yes (to Q 8), what changes?' (two lines to write in answer)

It should be noted that the information on change in practice is self-reported, and prospective in that it concerns the effects anticipated by the participants themselves at the conclusion of the workshop. A true 'level 3' training evaluation would involve a follow-up study using observation of the participants' subsequent professional activity, or reports from supervisors and managers. There is some qualitative data reported elsewhere in this document that may partially fulfil this requirement.

The sessions appear to have been highly effective in meeting participants' goals. Nearly three-quarters of responses (aggregated across all sessions) indicate that goals were 'mostly met' or 'completely met'.

Figure Tele-education 12—Q7 Session met respondent's goals: histogram

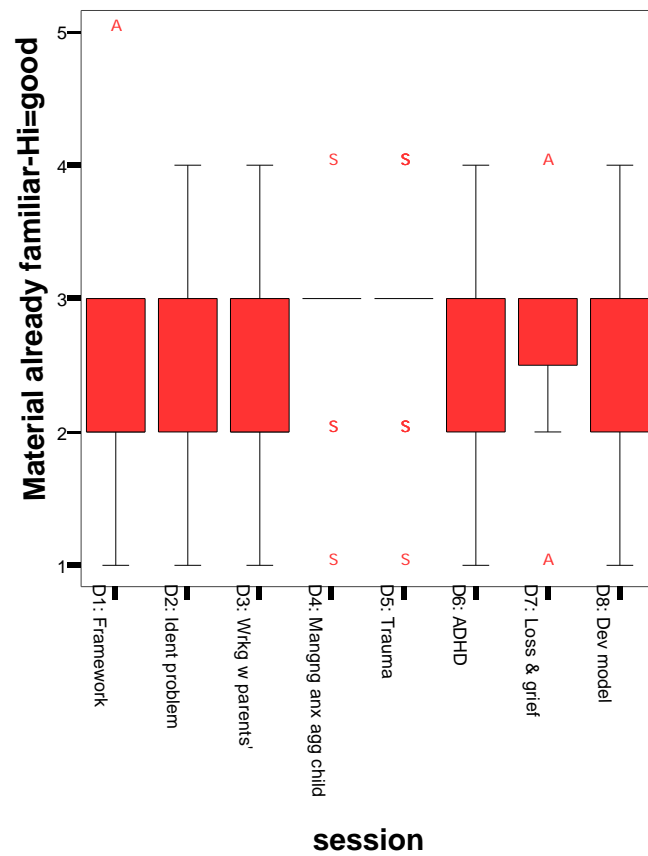
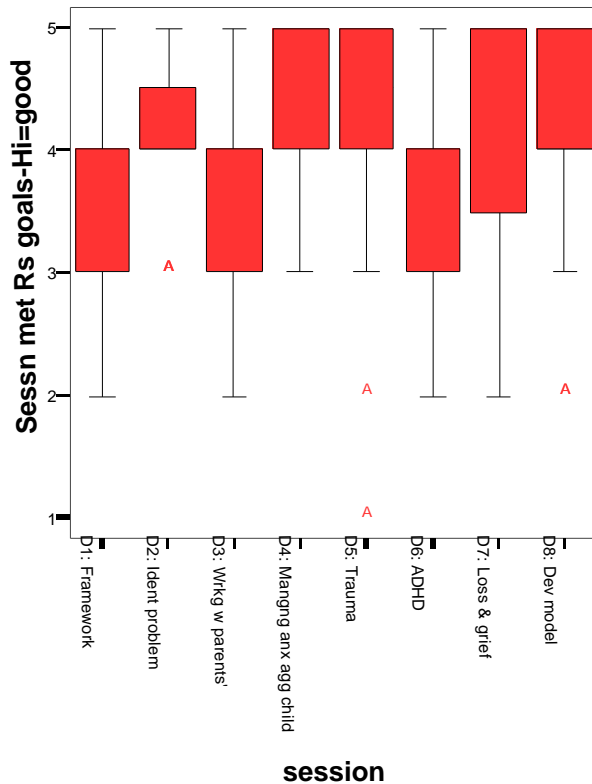


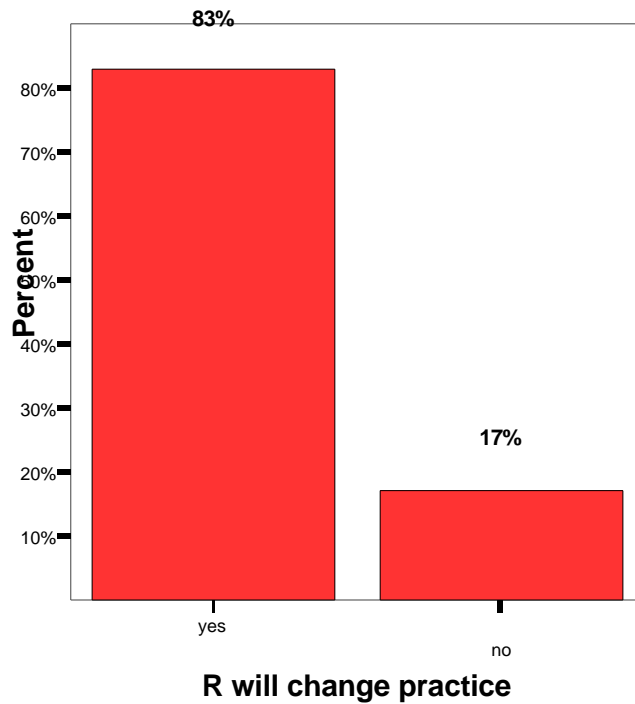
Figure Tele-education 13—Q7 Session met respondents' goals: boxplot by session



From Figure Tele-education 13 it is evident that some differences are apparent to the extent to which sessions met goals. Session 4, ‘Managing the Anxious Child and the Acting Out and Difficult-to-Engage Child’, Session 5, ‘Understanding and Managing Trauma’, and Session 7 ‘Family Change and Loss—Addressing the Grieving Process’, all had more than half respondents marking the top category of ‘goals completely met’. Interestingly, there are, for all these sessions, some informants who were less satisfied.

One participant was ‘not at all’ satisfied with the ‘Trauma’ session; this person was the only participant to tick this category across all questionnaires. Session 1, ‘Introduction’, Session 3 ‘Working with Parents and Carers in Understanding and Managing Children’s Behaviour’, and Session 6, ‘Working with ADHD’, were generally reported to be slightly less effective in achieving participant goals, but even in these instances the modal category is the second top response in each case.

Figure Tele-education 14—Q8 Respondent will make change to practice: histogram Q8, which, after the statement ‘I will make changes to my practice as a result of today’s



sessions’, gave the choice of responding ‘yes’ or ‘no’, shows that, aggregated across sessions, more than 80 per cent of responses indicate that there will be a change to practice resulting from the session.

The introductory session did not directly address practice issues and, as will be seen in the next section, was far less likely than any other session to lead to changes in practice. If data from this first session are excluded, the proportion claiming they will change practice rises to 89 per cent.

Figure Tele-education 15—Q8 Mean percentage of respondents who will make change to practice: by session

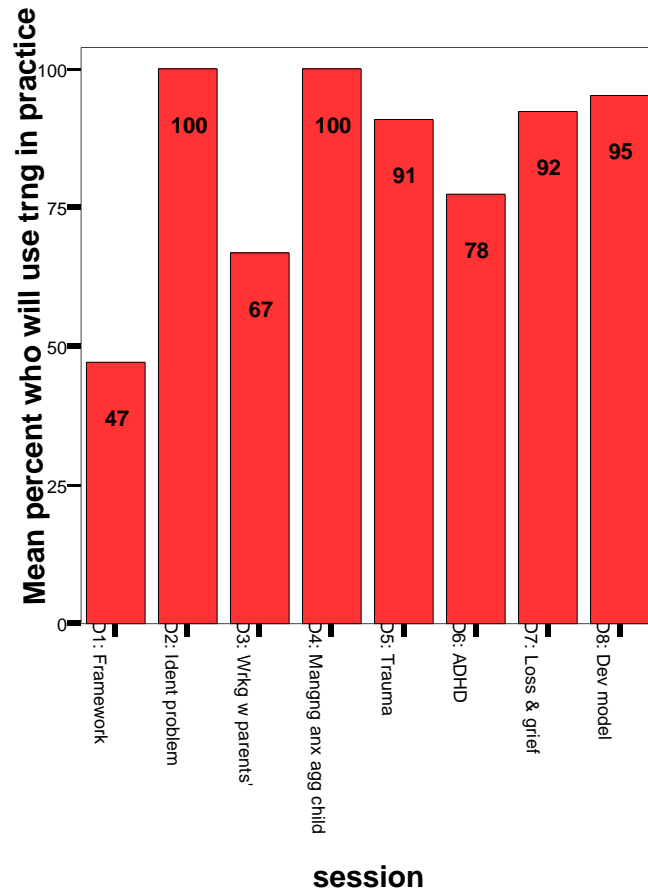


Figure Tele-education 15—‘Q8 Mean PCT of respondents who will make change to practice: by session’, indicates that there is some variability between sessions in terms of their impact on anticipated change in informant’s professional practice. As would be anticipated, the introductory first session was unlikely to lead to change; it may be disregarded for the purposes of the present discussion.

With the exception of Sessions 3 and 6 all—or very nearly all—participants anticipate changing their practice as a result of attending particular tele-education workshops. In comparison, 67 per cent of those reporting on Session 3, ‘Working with Parents and

Carers in Understanding and Managing Children's Behaviour', anticipate they will make changes in their practice as a result of the session.

After Q8 asked whether or not change was anticipated, Q9 asked 'If Yes, what changes?'. There is evidence in the written comments in reply to Q9 that some participants already had experience in working with families. Comments refer to 'reinforcement' of existing practices, or 'better' practice, for example, more formal assessments. It appears from these comments that many participants were already aware of practice with families, and this may account for the relatively lower proportion who anticipate change in practice as a result of attending the session. On the other hand, there may be some practitioners from organisations where parental contacts are less important.

The other session with relatively lower impact on practice was the workshop on ADHD. At 78 per cent the proportion likely to change is high, but lower than the near unanimity of intention to change practice that characterises most sessions.

Conclusion: Effect on workshop participants

The quantitative data indicate that the tele-education sessions had remarkably high apparent impact on participants, both in meeting their goals and in developing in them the intention to change their practice. Information about intention to change is most persuasive when validated by independent reports of subsequent actual sustained changes in work practices. However, the scale of the program required a limited evaluation budget and efficient low-cost data collection of quantitative information. Nevertheless, these results are consistent with results from interviews reported elsewhere in this document. Overall it would be difficult to image a more positive indication of successful program outcomes from evaluation data of the type reported here.

Response to tele-education methods

The last two questions asked in the self-completion surveys following each workshop dealt with participants' reactions to the tele-education method of presentation.

Q10 'I was very comfortable with the tele-education presentation.'

Responses

- 1 very uncomfortable
- 2 some discomfort
- 3 no discomfort
- 4 comfortable
- 5 very comfortable

Q11 'Tele-education worked very well for me as a medium for professional education today's session.'

Responses

- 1 excellent
- 2 very good
- 3 satisfactory
- 4 unsatisfactory
- 5 poor

Figure Tele-education 16—Q10 How comfortable was respondent with tele-education?: histogram

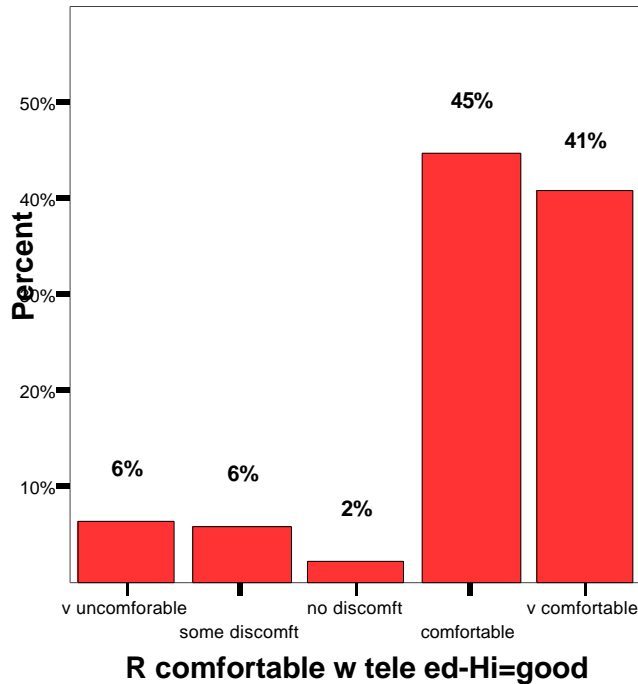


Figure Tele-education 16—‘Q10 How comfortable was R with tele-education?: histogram’, shows that there is strong endorsement of the method. Over 86 per cent are either ‘comfortable’ or ‘very comfortable’ with the method. The distribution is, however, slightly U-shaped. Only 2 per cent choose the mid point of the scale; a larger minority (12 per cent) express some level of discomfort with using tele-education. One comment, ‘Filming was a bit intimidating to start with’, indicates a widespread concern, although for most participants, this issue diminished with increasing experience.

Figure Tele-education 17—Q10 How comfortable was R with tele-education?: boxplot by session

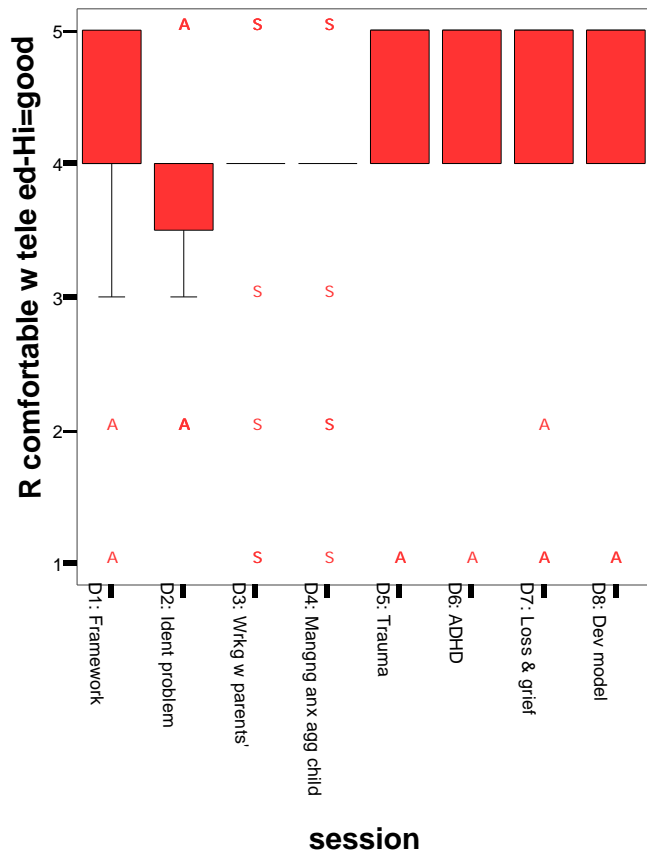


Figure Tele-education 17—‘Q10 How comfortable was R with tele-education?: boxplot by session’, suggests that the concern about the method diminished through time. The first two sessions have whiskers descending below the box; the remaining six have none. This suggests an increasing concentration of informants at the top ‘unconcerned’ end of the scale. However, it should be noted that extremes and outliers persist throughout all sessions. This indicates that there is a small minority for whom the method continues to be a continuing problem. Because of confidentiality guarantees, it is not possible to match individual responses across sessions, although some anecdotal and contextual information suggests that the outliers represent a handful of participants who continued to be concerned throughout all the sessions.

Figure Tele-education 18—Q11 Today’s tele-education as medium for professional education: histogram

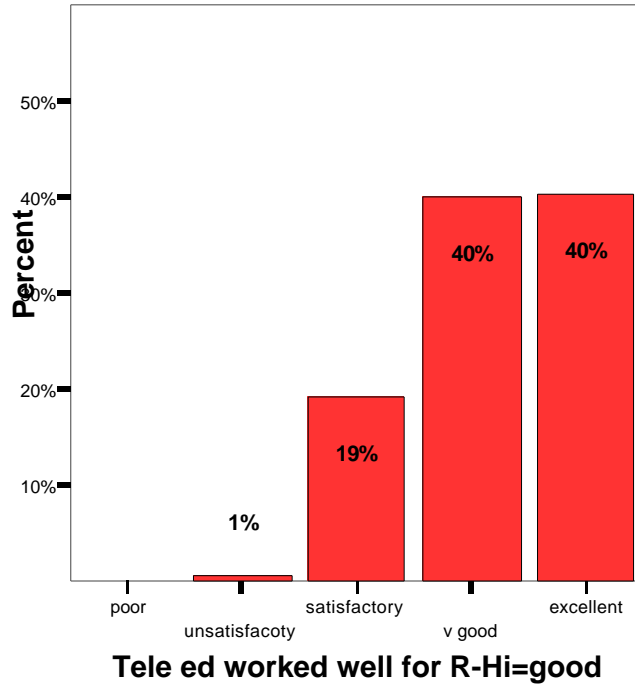


Figure Tele-education18, ‘Q11 Today’s tele-education as medium for professional education: histogram’, shows that 80 per cent of responses, aggregated across sessions, report that the method was ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’. Only 1 per cent report that the medium was ‘unsatisfactory’ or ‘poor’. A review of questionnaires shows that this was a single informant responding ‘unsatisfactory’ to the session on ‘Managing the anxious and aggressive child’.

Figure Tele-education 19—Q11 Today’s tele-education as medium for professional education: boxplot by session

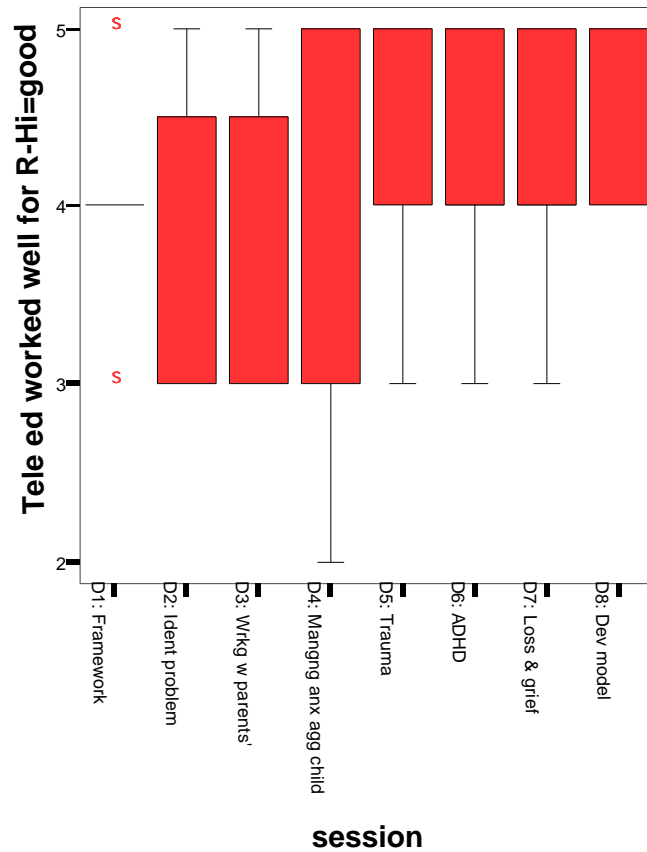


Figure Tele-education19—“Q11 Today’s tele-education as medium for professional education: boxplot by session”, suggests an increased acceptance of the medium after the first four sessions. A ‘novelty’ factor may explain the high level of consensus for the first session, with sixteen out of twenty-five respondents describing it as ‘very good’. The next three sessions show some spread of responses, whereas from Session 5 onwards there is remarkable consistency of acceptance (smaller boxes and shrinking lower-bound whisker).