

Increasing Capacity for Student Social Work Learners  
through Implementation of a New Teaching Model at  
Women's College Hospital Academic Family Health Team

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# Setting

- Urban Academic Family Health Team
- 20K+ patients
- 25 + staff physicians
- 25+ residents
- RNs, NPs, RDs, Pharm, OT, PT, SW as well as a large body of administrative support staff (reception, office, secretaries, health records, etc.)
- Foot Care Centre
- Family Way Obstetrics



# Previously

WCH AFHT offered one MSW<sub>2</sub> placement and one MEd Counselling Psychology placement with two supervisors during the academic year.

Combined, these students were on site 5.5 days and saw between 8-12 individual clients each per week, as well as taking part in our group programs.

# Proposal

- The proposed project would increase the number of MSW students in the academic year from 1 to 4, and would include the implementation of group supervision sessions with the students as well as ongoing one-one supervision.
- In the first year of the project (2019/2020) we would add two MSW<sub>2</sub> students (for a total of 3) and in the second and third years we would add 3 MSW<sub>2</sub> students for a total of 4. Staggering the addition of MSW students would allow the WCH AFHT time to honour existing commitments to our student from OISE.

# Potential Benefits

- Opportunities for peer feedback
- Opportunities for social networking
- Opportunities for group learning through shared discussion (with or without supervisor)
- Observational learning and developing empathy
- Modeling and rehearsing positive and productive discussion
- The opportunity to practice public speaking and presentation
- Opportunity to practice team-building skills
- Development of professional repertoires (i.e., presenting oneself in a professional manner among peers)
- Opportunity to co-create groups or other programming in an area of interest with fellow students
- Creation of practicum spaces for MSW students in a market where supply does not always meet demand.

*The Benefits of Group Supervision and Recommendations for its Implementation ,  
Amber L. Valentino, Linda A. LeBlanc, and Tyra P. Sellers, Behavioural Analysis  
Practice, 2016 Dec; 9(4): 320–328*

# Implementation

First year of the program: total of 5 students (3 from UofT, one from OISE, one from Laurier)

interrupted by pandemic shutdown

Second cohort didn't start until last year (2022/2023)

(4 UofT MSW students)

Third cohort this year (2023/2024)

(4 UofT MSW students)

# Structure

- In the first year, students were on-site and had touch-down space as well as dedicated counselling spaces that would be assigned as appropriate
- Friday morning group supervision at 9am with both supervisors, or peer-led
- Individual supervision weekly alternating supervisors, so one week I would meet with two students from 10-11 and 11-12 on Fridays and Chantal would meet with the other two
- Students also chose to set up a time to meet as a group each week for an hour
- WhatsApp Group to share questions, updates, share resources, brainstorming etc. throughout the day
- Post Pandemic: two students on-site with one supervisor on Wednesdays and the other two students on-site on Thursdays with the other supervisor, which made the space issue easier

# Advantages/Disadvantages from perspective of Supervisors

- More work up-front in terms of planning (logistics, space, interviewing, coordinating things like VPN, access to electronic charting, setting up schedules)
- Trouble-shooting the first week while getting set up
- Orientation about the same as we provided it to them as a group
- We found that the students able to help each other get set up with VPN, getting oriented to e-charting, etc.
- Students often debrief with each other and receive validation, feedback, support and suggestions
- More students means they are able to carry more of a caseload which off-set the additional two-hours per week spent providing supervision



# Feedback from Students

## *What did you like most about being part of a group placements?*

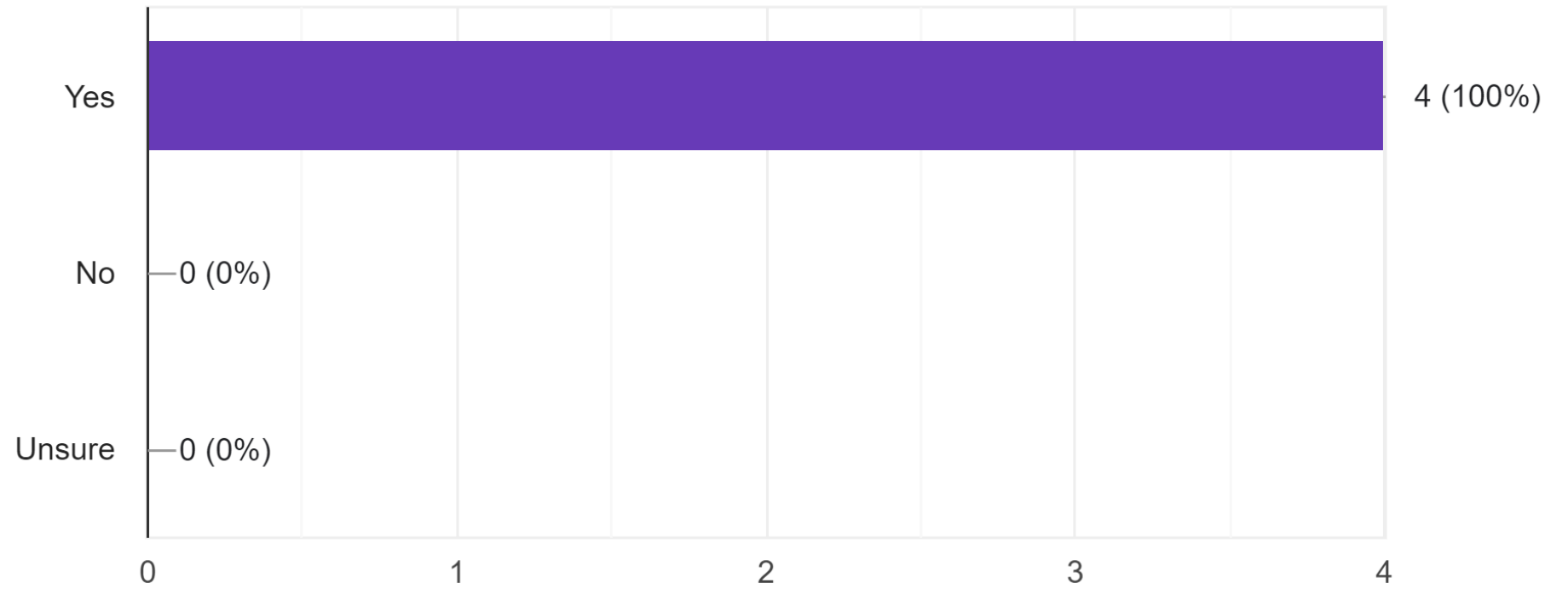
- The bond formed with fellow students, feeling peer support.
- I loved having student colleagues to chat with and bounce ideas off of. It made for a nice group supervision/peer supervision process. I think sometimes student placements can be lonely, and having several peers made it a more enjoyable experience. I felt we all got along well and were a very cohesive team.
- The opportunity to learn, collaborate and work with other students
- Learning from each other and having the support of the other students

***Was there anything you disliked about being part of a group placement?***

- Nothing!
- I think the only thing I would note is that there is sometimes some uneven distribution of opportunities (some students getting more groups or clients), but I think this is an easily fixable concern. I recognize that sometimes this is unavoidable as well. This also did not impact my student placement experience in the long run and I still had a great experience.
- Opportunities not evenly distributed
- No.

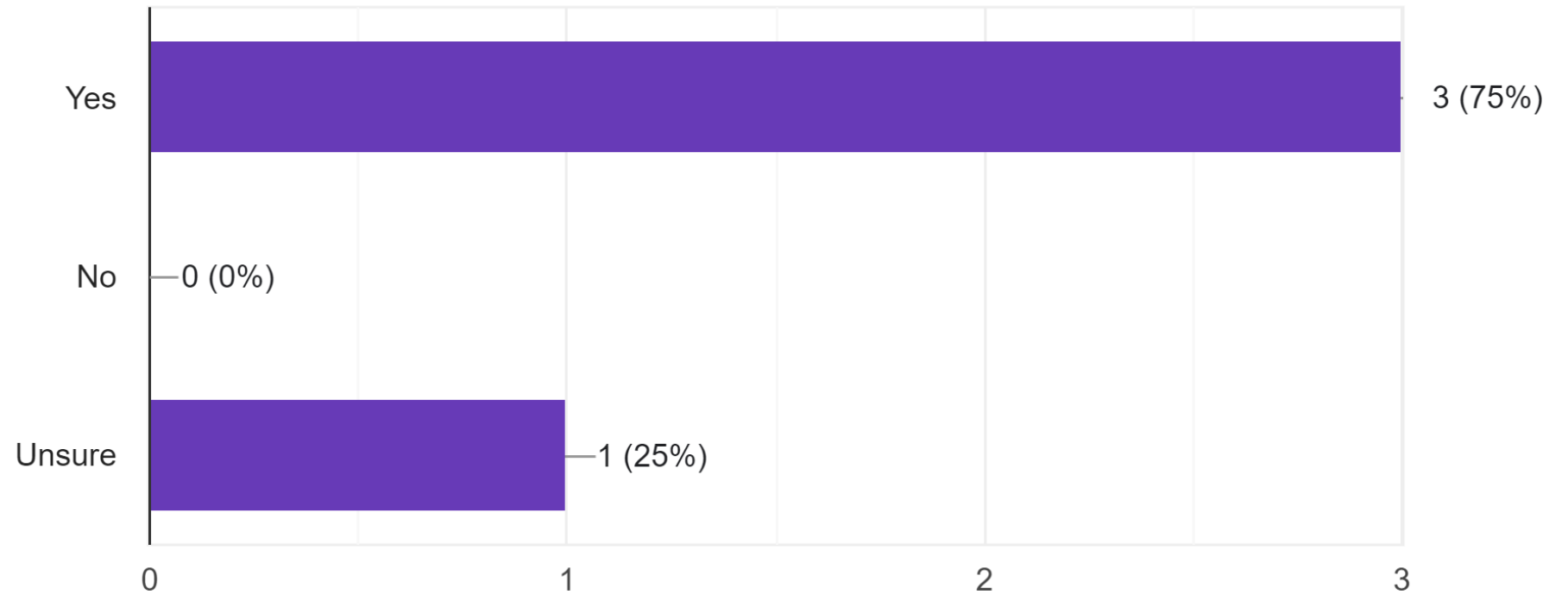
# Did you feel you received sufficient supervision and support from your supervisors?

4 responses



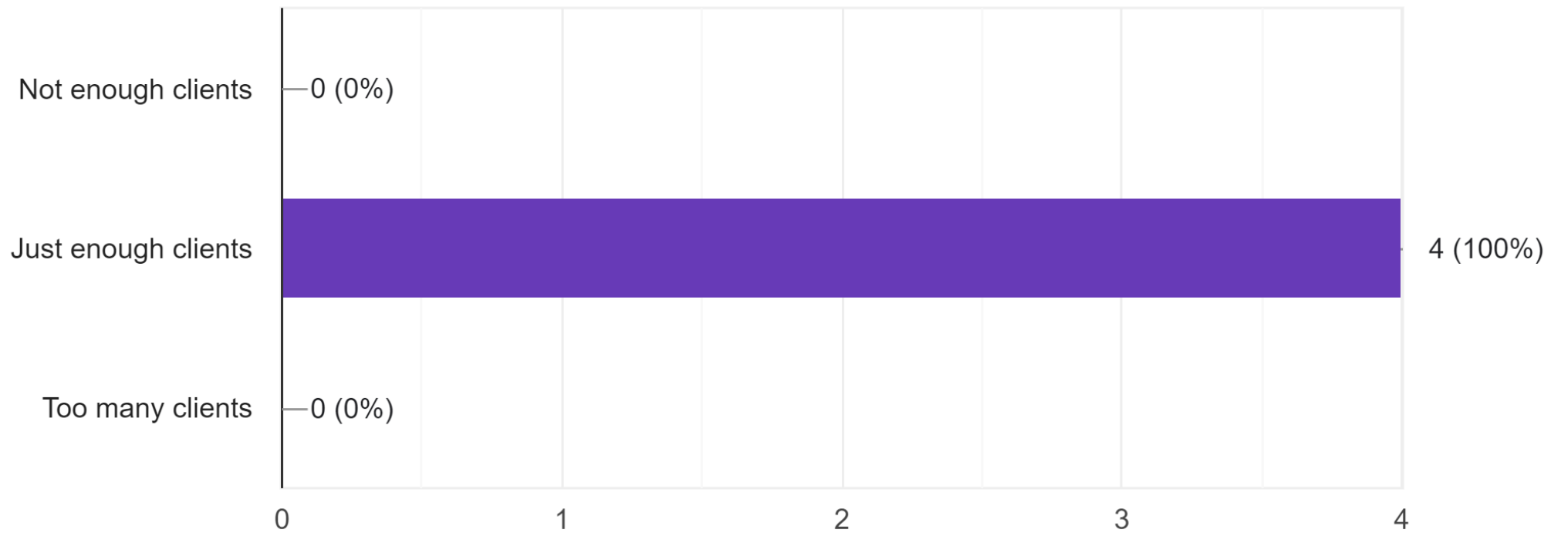
## Were you able to receive support/feedback from your co-students?

4 responses



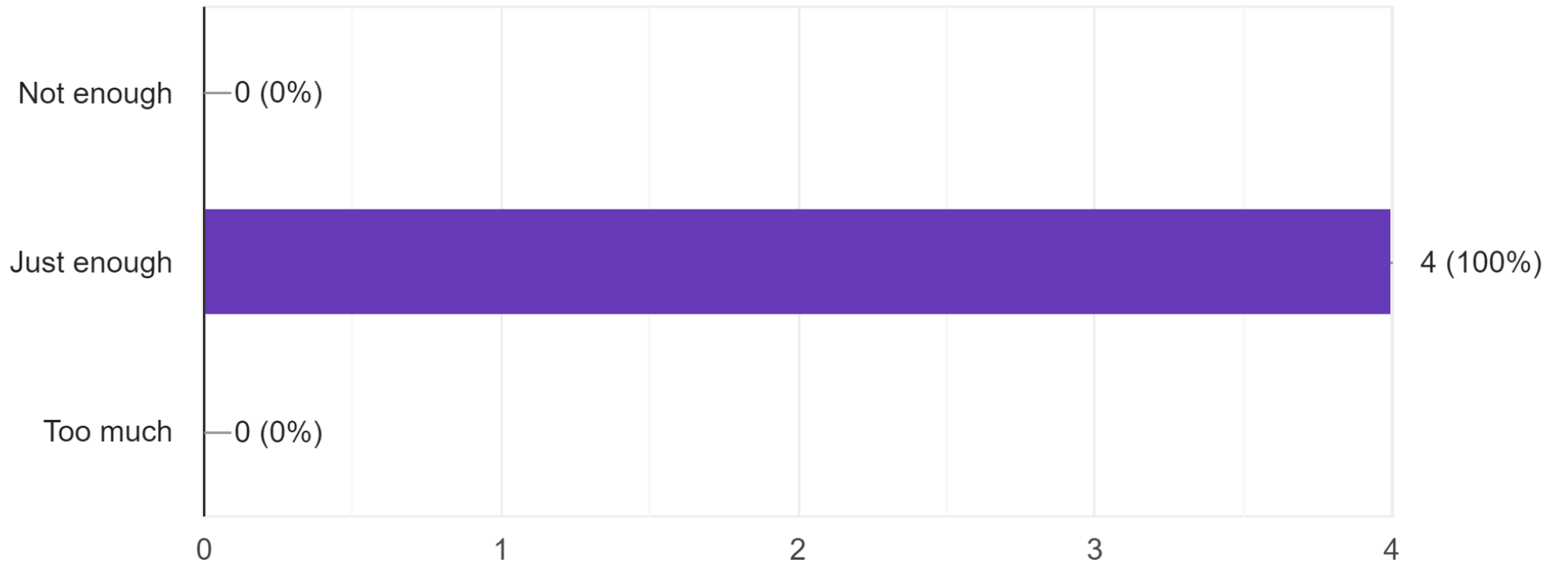
# Please comment on the quality of the following aspects of your placement: Client load

4 responses



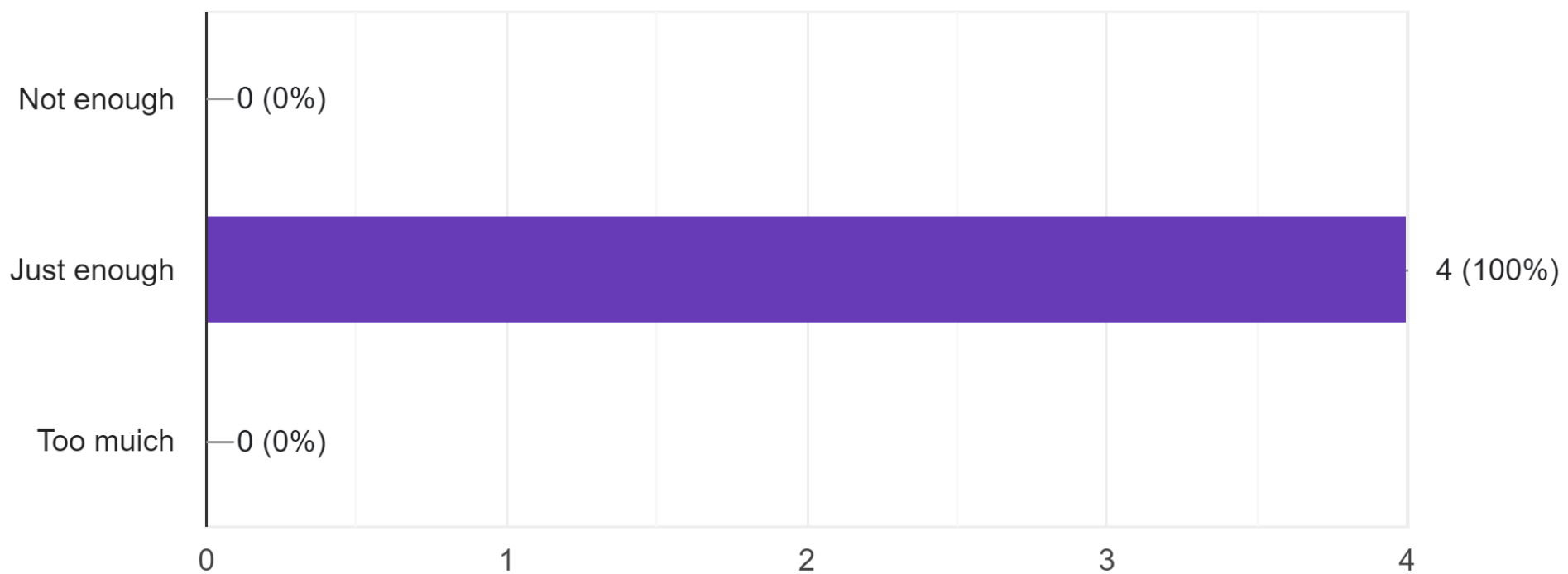
## Exposure to different members of the interprofessional team/ Opportunities to shadow

4 responses



## Ability to take part in/lead Groups (e.g. R&R, MBCT, Drop-in Support, Intuitive Eating)

4 responses



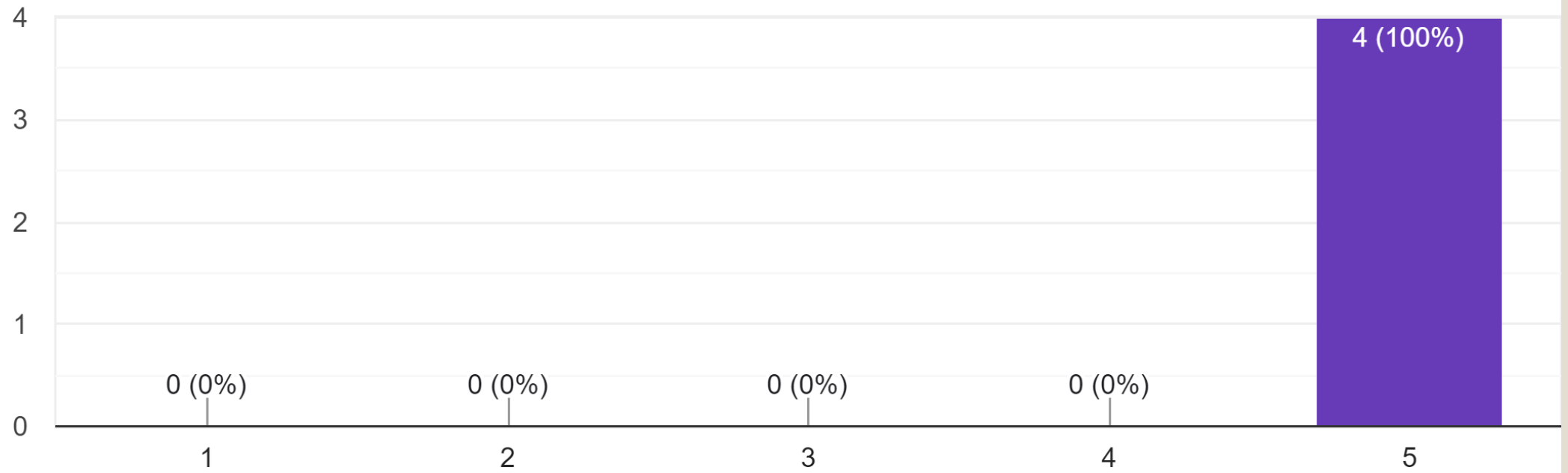
***Would you recommend a group placement to other students seeking a practicum opportunity? Please feel free to comment on why/why not***

- Yes!
- Yes I would absolutely recommend. I think it made for a very well rounded experience, and I learned a lot not only from my supervisors, but also my student colleagues. It felt very supportive to have peers with me, and also made the experience more enjoyable. We enjoyed camaraderie throughout the experience.
- Yes
- Yes. It helped to have more support from each other.



Please rate your overall experience, with 1 being not very good and 5 being very good

4 responses





Thank you!



**Questions? Comments?**