

Pathways to Social Work and Other Helping Professions: Pilot Evaluation Report

Boston University School of Social Work
The Network for Professional Education

This pilot was made possible with the support of the Accelerate the Future Foundation



School of Social Work:
The Network for Professional Education

Program Overview

The *Pathways to Social Work and Other Helping Professions* online certificate program explores pathways and careers in social work and other helping professions. The program:

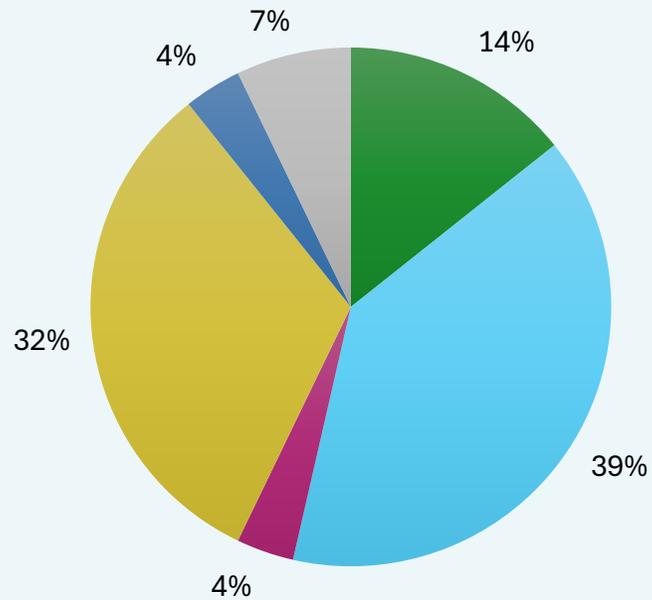
- Helps learners determine if social work is the right path for them
- Outlines career options in social work and the helping professions
- Prepares learners for the MSW application process



From June - September 2025, 28 learners completed a pilot of the program.

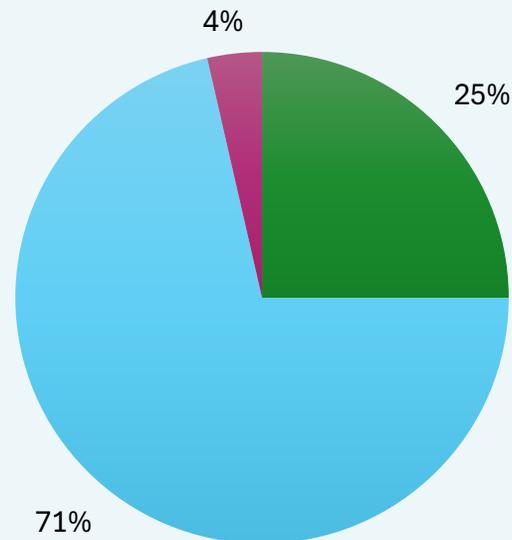
Learner Demographics

Race



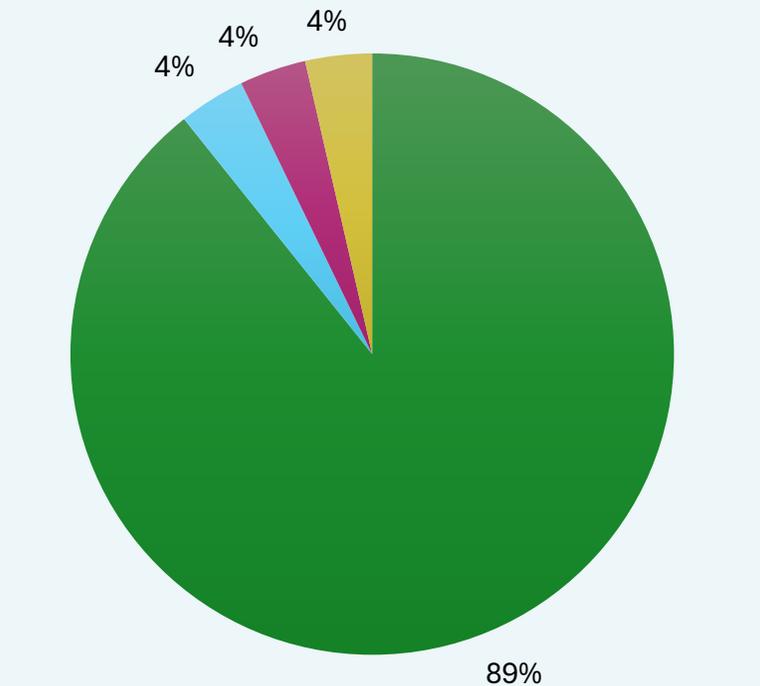
- Asian (n=4)
- Black or African American (n=11)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (n=1)
- White (n=9)
- Other (n=1)
- Prefer not to answer (n=2)

Hispanic or Latino/a/x



- Yes (n=7)
- No (n=20)
- Prefer not to answer (n=1)

Gender

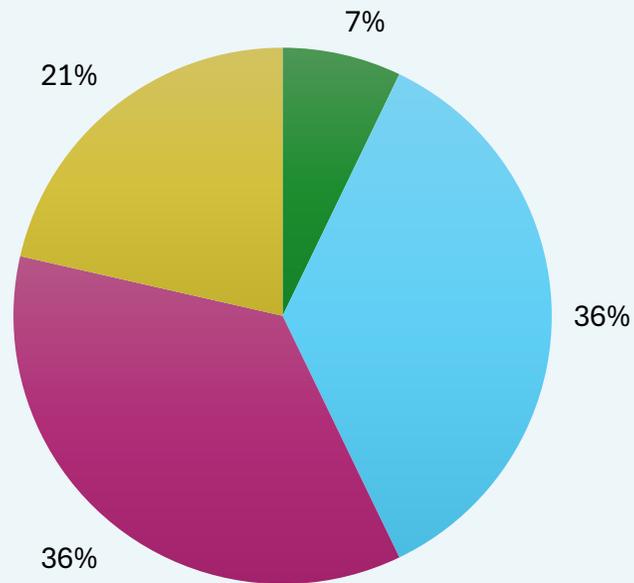


- Woman (n=25)
- Man (n=1)
- Genderqueer (n=1)
- Prefer not to answer (n=1)



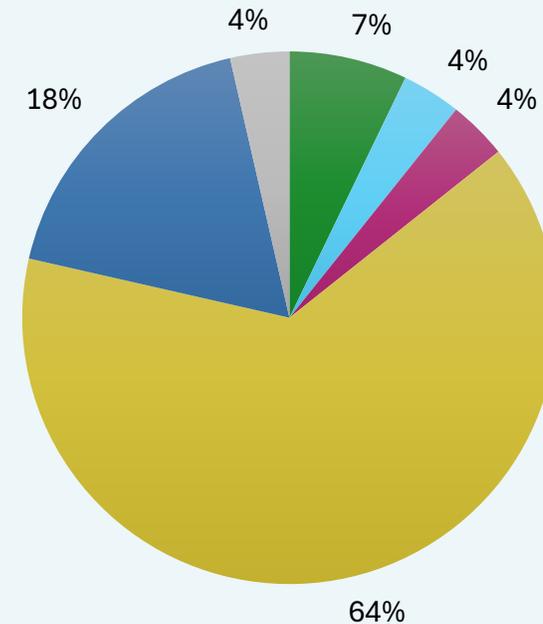
Learner Demographics

Age



- Under 25 years old (n=2)
- 25 - 40 (n=10)
- 41 - 55 (n=10)
- 56 - 65 (n=6)

Highest Level of Education

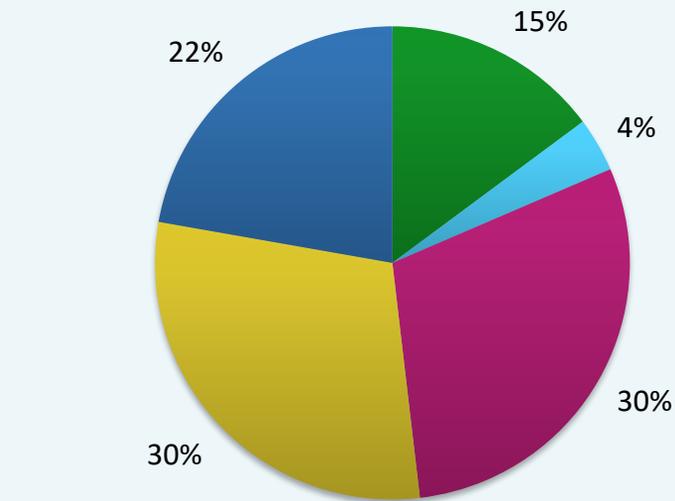


- High school diploma or equivalent (n=2)
- Some college, but no degree (n=1)
- Associate's Degree (n=1)
- Bachelor's Degree (n=18)
- Master's Degree (n=5)
- MSW (Masters in Social Work) (n=1)



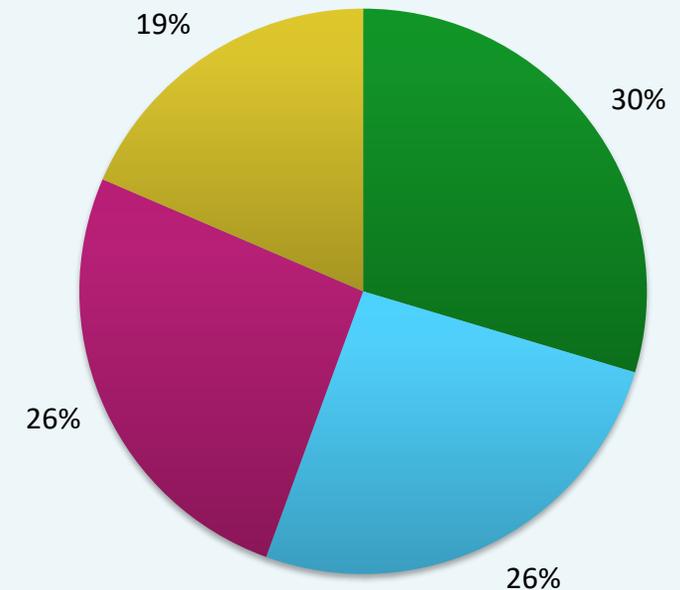
Learner Experience

How many years of experience do you have working in the helping profession?



- Less than 1 year (n=4)
- 1-2 years (n=1)
- 3-5 years (n=8)
- 6-10 years (n=8)
- Greater than 10 years (n=6)

Have you received any prior training or education in the social work profession?



- None (n=8)
- Very little (n=7)
- Some (n=7)
- A lot (n=5)



Current Job Roles

- Case Manager (6)
- Administrator (2)
- Client Advocate (2)
- Director or Assistant Director (2)
- Outreach Worker (2)
- Personal Care Aide (2)
- Adult Clinical Community Services (1)
- Certified Peer Specialist (1)
- Community Employment Coordinator (1)
- Community Health Worker (1)
- Counselor (1)
- Information and Referral/Assistance (1)
- Program Coordinator/Manager (1)
- Public Health Professional (1)
- Recovery Coach (1)
- Services Coordinator (1)
- Social Worker (1)
- None/Unemployed (1)



Barriers to a Social Work Education

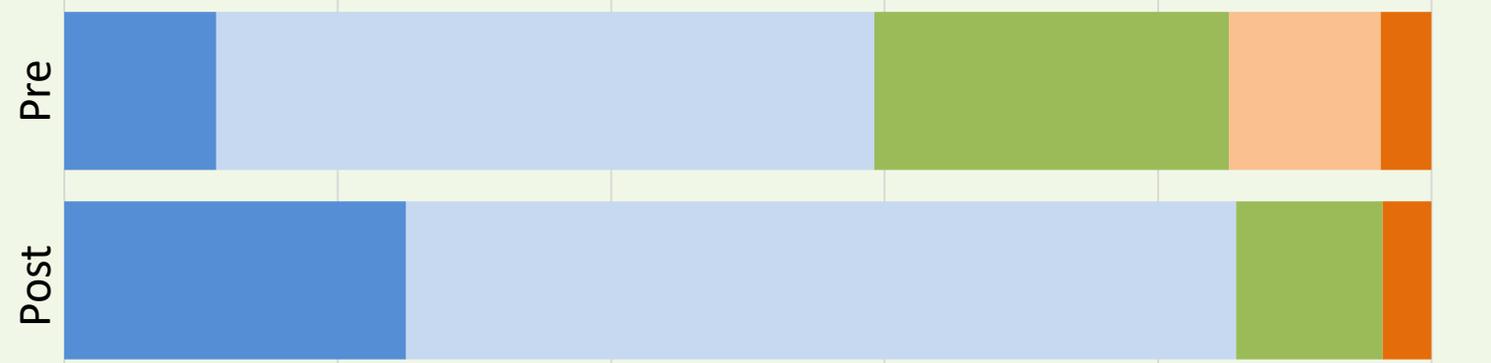
Learners were asked: *“What are some of the barriers to pursuing a social work education?”* Common responses included:

- Financial/Cost of education
- Working full-time/Time constraints
- Childcare and caregiving commitments
- Low salary potential after graduation
- Lack of resources and mentors for first-generation students and students from underrepresented groups



Program Outcomes: Competencies

I can confidently apply to a graduate social work degree program, or related helping profession, of my choosing.
($p < 0.05$)



59% of learners agreed or strongly agreed.

86% of learners agreed or strongly agreed.

I can identify the social work or related path that is right for me.
($p < 0.05$)

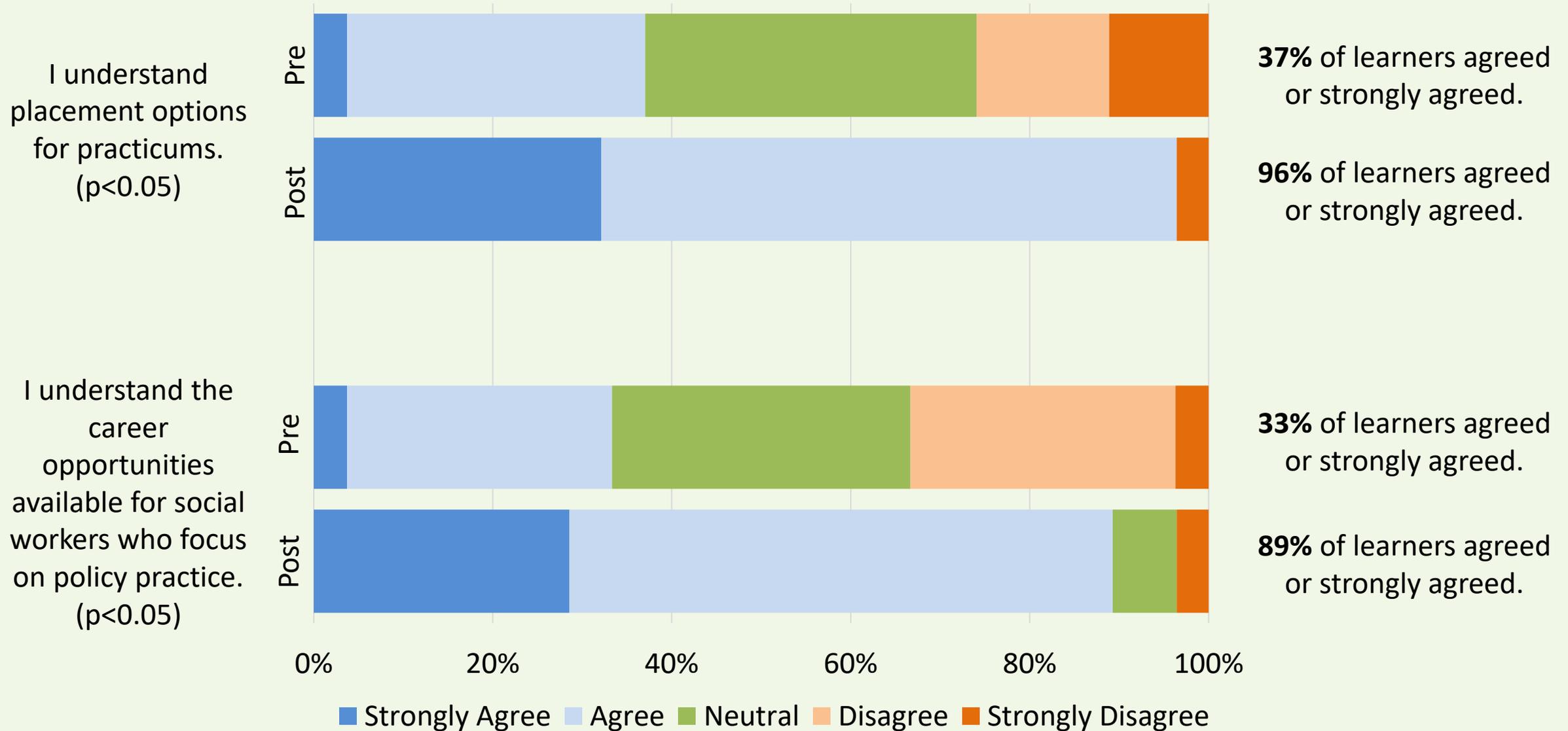


54% of learners agreed or strongly agreed.

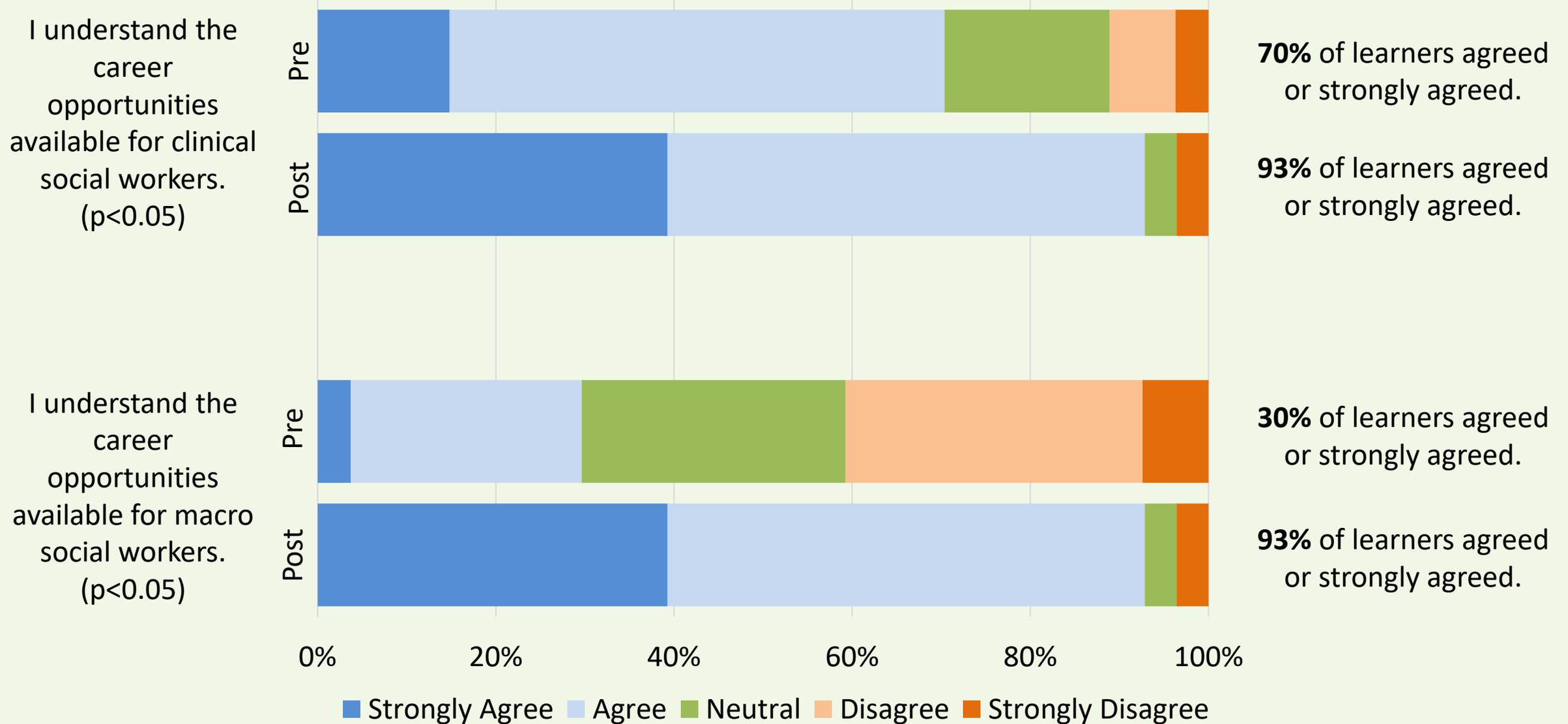
82% of learners agreed or strongly agreed.

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Program Outcomes: Competencies

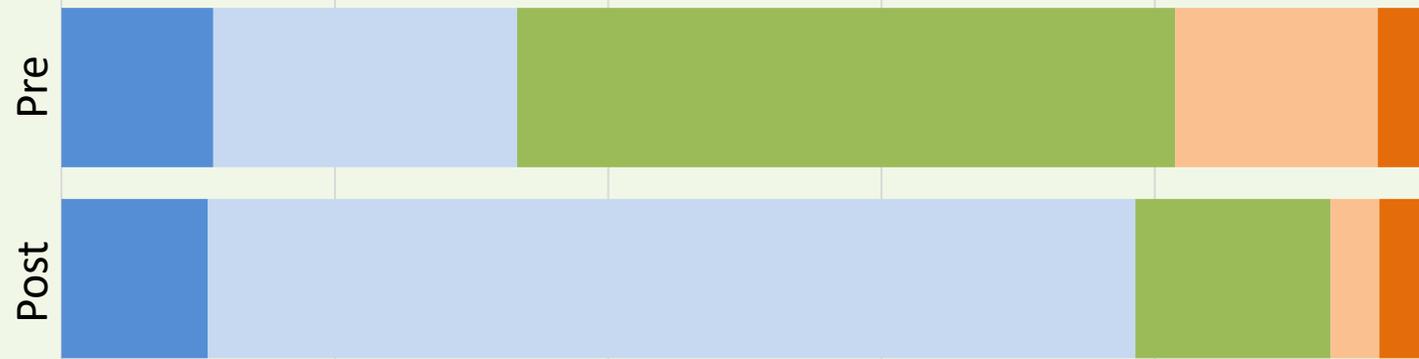


Program Outcomes: Competencies



Program Outcomes: Learner Confidence

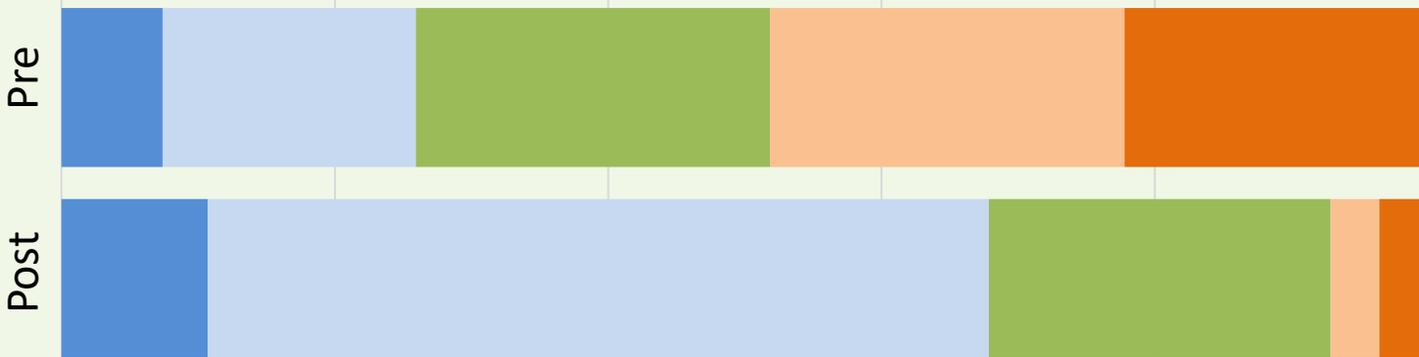
How confident are you in your understanding of a career in social work?
($p < 0.05$)



33% of learners felt very or extremely confident.

79% of learners felt very or extremely confident.

How confident are you in preparing an application for a school of social work?
($p < 0.05$)



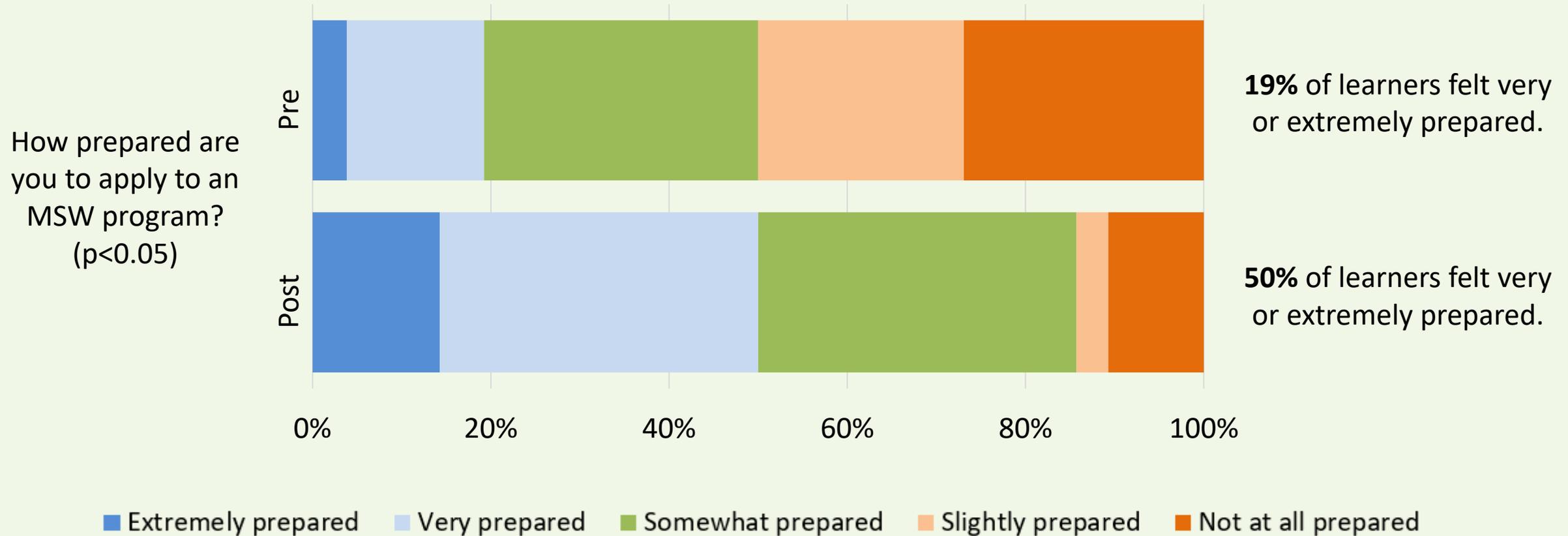
26% of learners felt very or extremely confident.

68% of learners felt very or extremely confident.

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Extremely confident Very confident Somewhat confident Slightly confident Not at all confident

Program Outcomes: Learner Preparedness



Program Outcomes: Evaluation Questions

After completing the program, learners responded to a series of course evaluation questions.

The course expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.

100%

of learners agreed or strongly agreed

The information in the course was effectively presented.

100%

of learners agreed or strongly agreed

The course materials were useful and suitable for my needs.

93%

of learners agreed or strongly agreed

I would recommend this course.

93%

of learners agreed or strongly agreed

Program Outcomes: Evaluation Questions

After completing the program, learners responded to a series of course evaluation questions.

The course provided me with the skills to apply to a graduate program in social work.

89%

of learners agreed or strongly agreed

How helpful was this training in increasing your confidence that you can write a competitive application to a graduate social work program or other health profession?

71%

of learners found the training very or extremely helpful

How helpful was this training in pursuing your long-term career goals?

79%

of learners found the training very or extremely helpful

Learner Feedback

“This course was extremely well-structured and informative. It gave me clarity and motivation to move forward in my social work journey.”

“This course has been incredibly valuable in helping me clarify my path toward a career in social work. I appreciated the clear structure, the supportive instructors, and the opportunity to explore different areas within the helping professions.”

“This course enhanced my understanding of social work practice and helped me develop my professional skills. I appreciate the supportive and meaningful learning environment created.”

“Overall, this course provided me with an idea of what I want my career to look like moving forward.”

Learner Feedback

“Having those guest speakers talk about their experiences helped me put things into perspective and reaffirmed my belief that you can still be successful regardless of your age or where you are in life.”

“The program exposed me to different areas of the field—like community work, and policy advocacy—which helped me identify my interests and strengths.”

“I really liked the speakers. I could hear their pride in social work and accomplishments in their sections.”

“What I found most helpful was making the course be self paced. The videos were very helpful in hearing real life and lived experiences to what social work profession entails.”

What steps do you anticipate taking after taking this course?

“I will explore whether specializations exist for Mental Health or Geriatric social work within the MSW program at Boston University.”

“Researching MSW programs, preparing my personal statement, and seeking scholarship opportunities.”

“I anticipate applying to the Master of Social Work through Boston University.”

“I anticipate continuing learning and taking courses relevant to the helping profession.”

Conclusion

- 28 learners piloted the *Pathways to Social Work and Other Helping Professions* certificate
- After completing the program, learners:
 - Felt more confident in their understanding of the social work field
 - Felt better prepared to apply to MSW programs
 - Had a better understanding of available career opportunities

We look forward to expanding the program and encouraging more learners to consider the social work profession.



Next Steps

- *Continue open enrollment*
- *Recruit from Boston University's undergraduate pool*
- *Develop partnerships with other Schools and Colleges at BU*
- *Recruit from community colleges*
- *Present and disseminate findings at next year's CSWE*
- *Other strategic partnerships?*
- *Other ideas?*



Contact Us

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