

Building Women's Resilience with Psychological Skills: A Community Project

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Background

The project was a small-scale initiative to enhance basic psychological skills among low-income residents of an apartment in Selayang, in the post-COVID period. A four-series program tailored and promoted to this community to address their unique mental health challenges was organised. The need for this intervention was determined by the psychological challenges of the pandemic, which has significantly impacted low-income families. It was identified that this group required targeted support to build resilience, manage stress, and foster a supportive environment. The program was designed to empower participants with practical skills to improve mental well-being.

Project Details

This project involved 19 participants and was organized by a non-governmental organization (Wanita IKRAM Selayang). It consisted of a four-series session conducted in Malay, focusing on critical mental health topics: stress management, Psychological First Aid (PFA), problem-solving, and building social support. These topics were selected based on feedback from informal discussions with the community, highlighting their specific needs. A registered female counsellor led the sessions and provided basic psychological training, ensuring comfort and relatability for the female participants. Each session lasted two hours at the community program hall, providing a safe and accessible space for women to learn and share their experiences. Attendance was sustained throughout the four sessions implying a commitment to the program conducted.

Outcomes

Post-program, a simple survey was done to obtain feedback on participants' view of the programme. Out of 19 participants, 13 responded to the post-event survey, yielding approximately 70% response rate (n = 13 respondents).

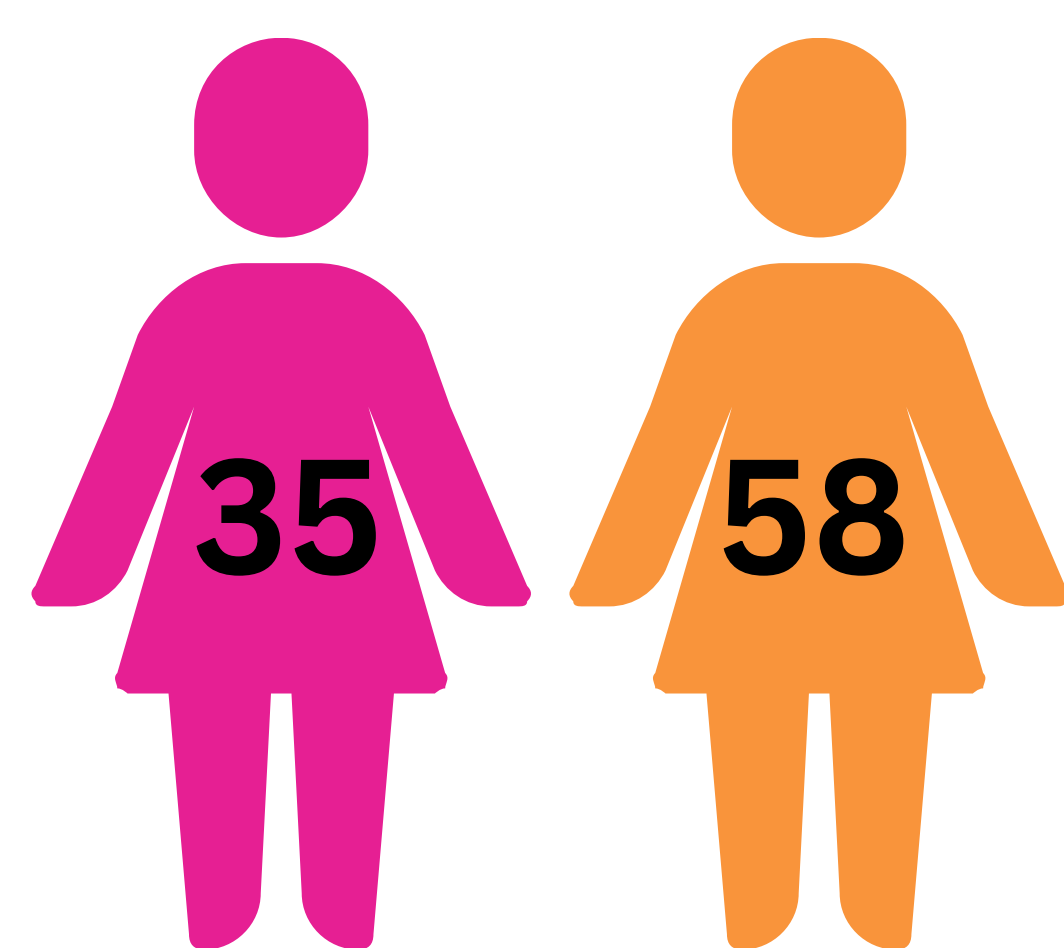


Figure 1: Age range from 35-58 years old

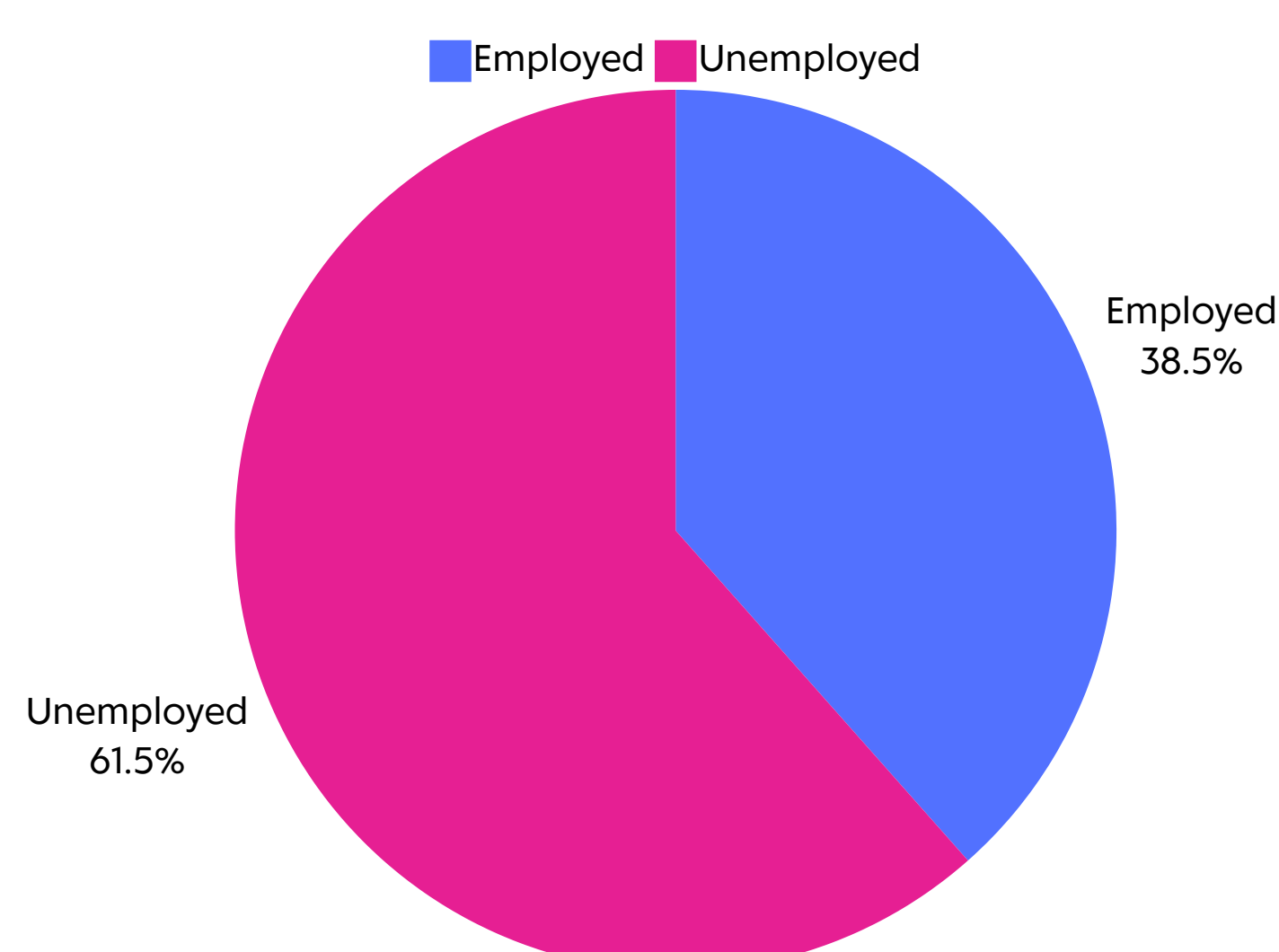


Figure 2: Employment status

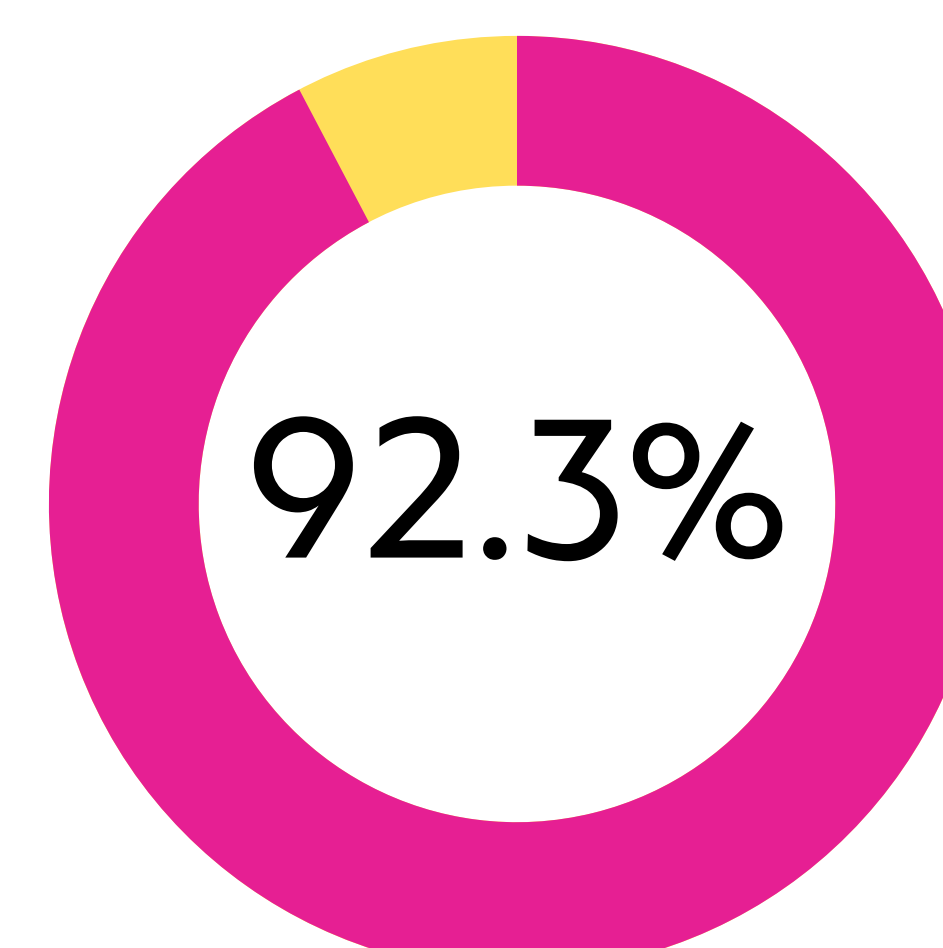


Figure 3: More than 90% said that this program helped to manage their mental health

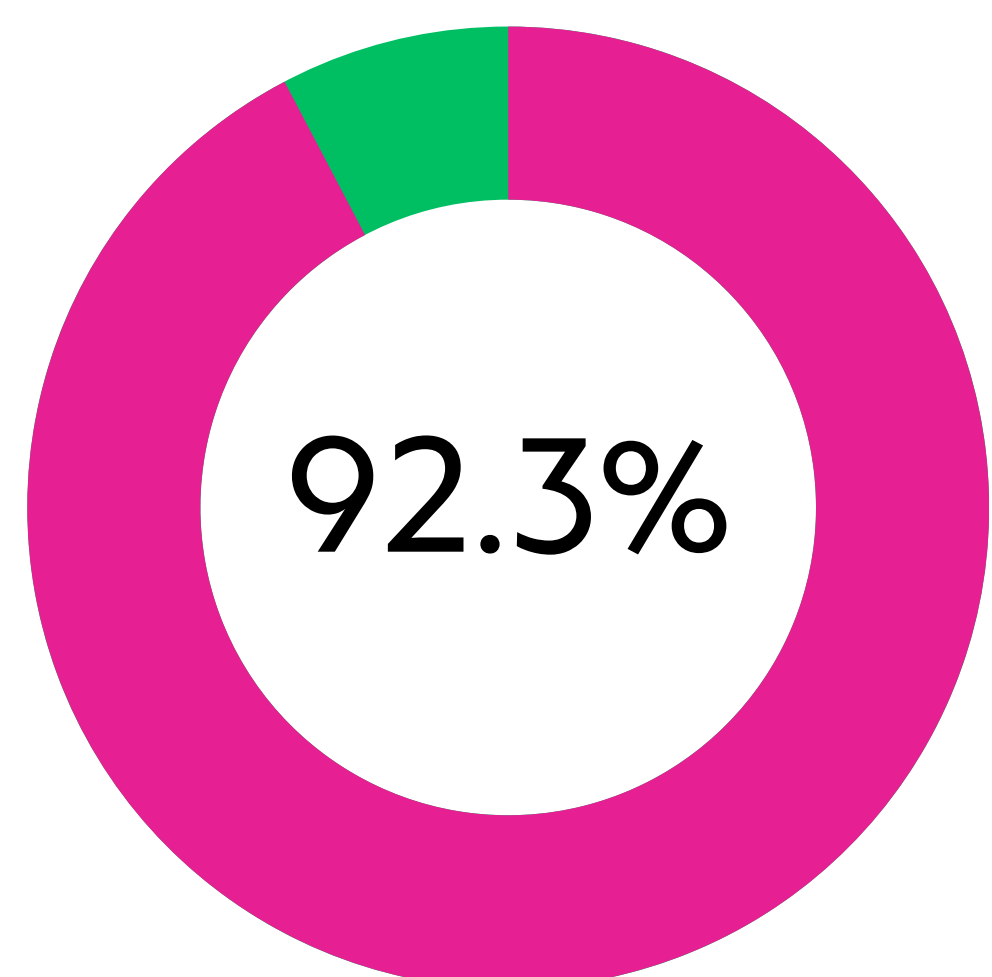


Figure 4: More than 90% said stress management is the most helpful from all the skills taught

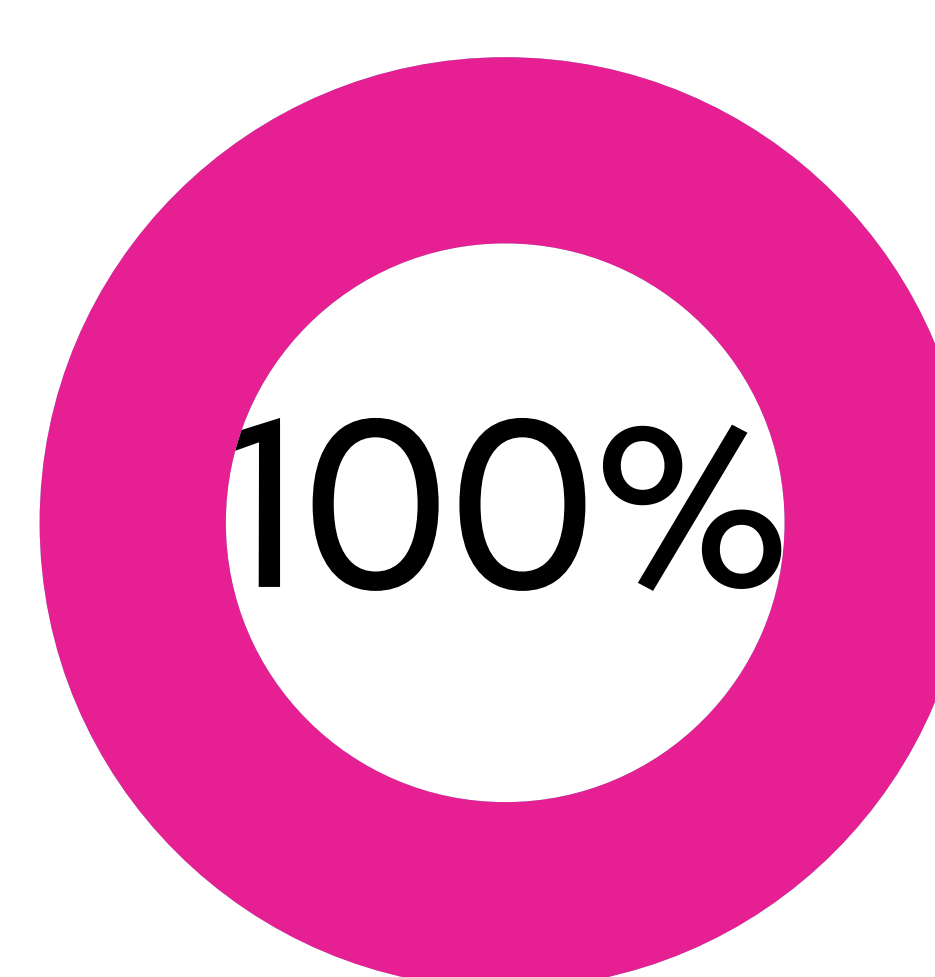


Figure 5: All respondents are interested to join similar program in the future

Key Learning Insights

The survey also included an open-ended question to gather insights on what respondents learned from the mental health program series.



Conclusion

The mental health program effectively addressed the specific needs of low-income residents in Selayang, especially as they faced increased psychological challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative provided a series of tailored sessions covering crucial topics such as stress management, Psychological First Aid (PFA), problem-solving techniques, and strategies for building strong social support networks. These practical skills empowered participants to manage their mental well-being more effectively. The program's success was demonstrated through high attendance, positive feedback, and a strong interest in future sessions. It reflects attainment of the community's psychological needs and played an important role in fostering resilience. This program holds great potential for expansion to other parts of the community, ensuring broader access to essential mental health support.