

Palliative Care Communication Workshops

Palliative and Supportive Care Service Mayo Clinic Health System - Northwest Wisconsin

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Communication is a skill that can be practiced and empathy is a muscle that can be strengthened.

OBJECTIVE

To design a workshop similar to Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) where health care team members practice communication skills.

COURSE FOUNDATIONS

Adult learning model – adults learn differently

Coaching – facilitators help participants discover the answers themselves

Relational learning – learning occurs through interactions with others

METHODS

LOGISTICS

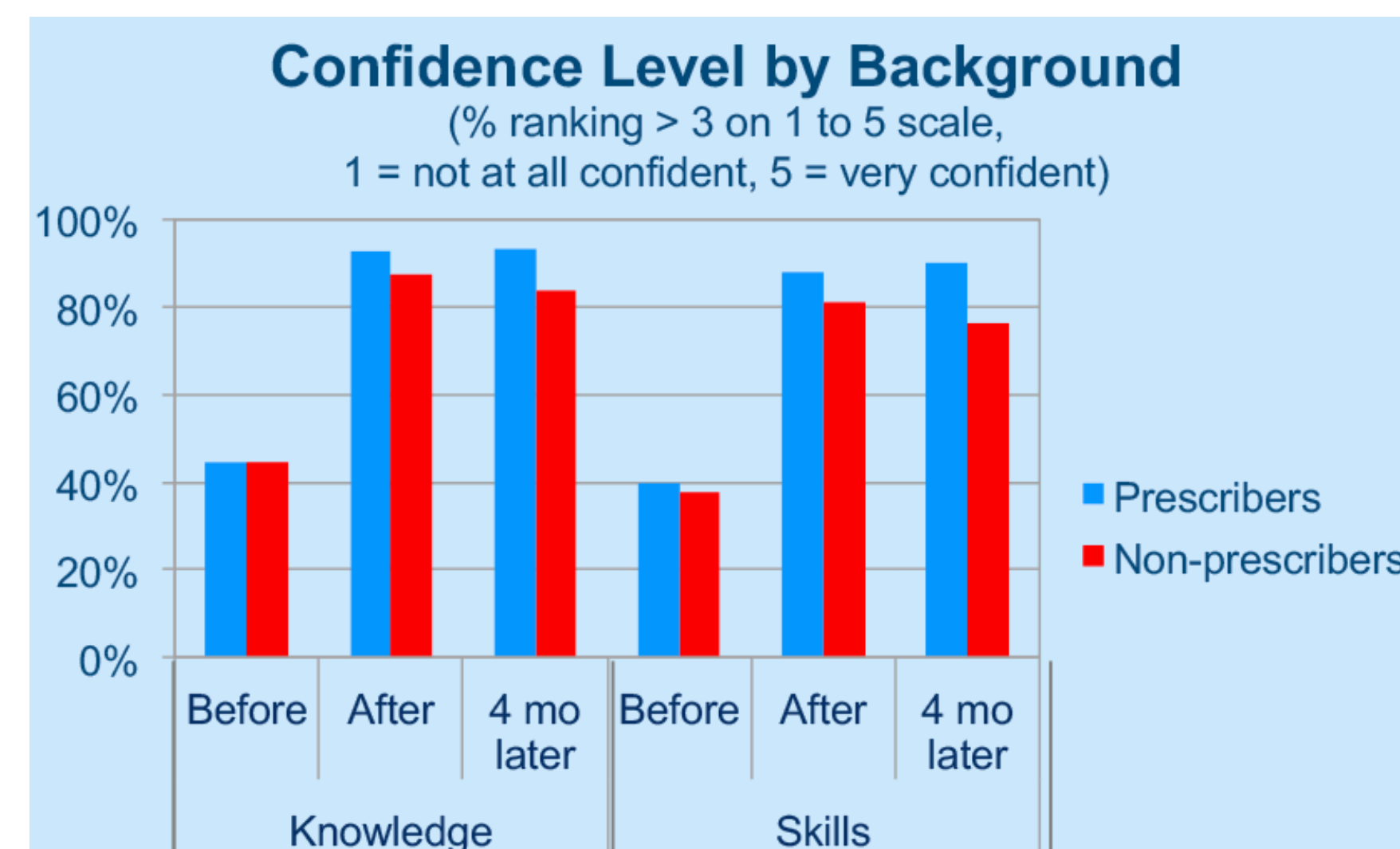
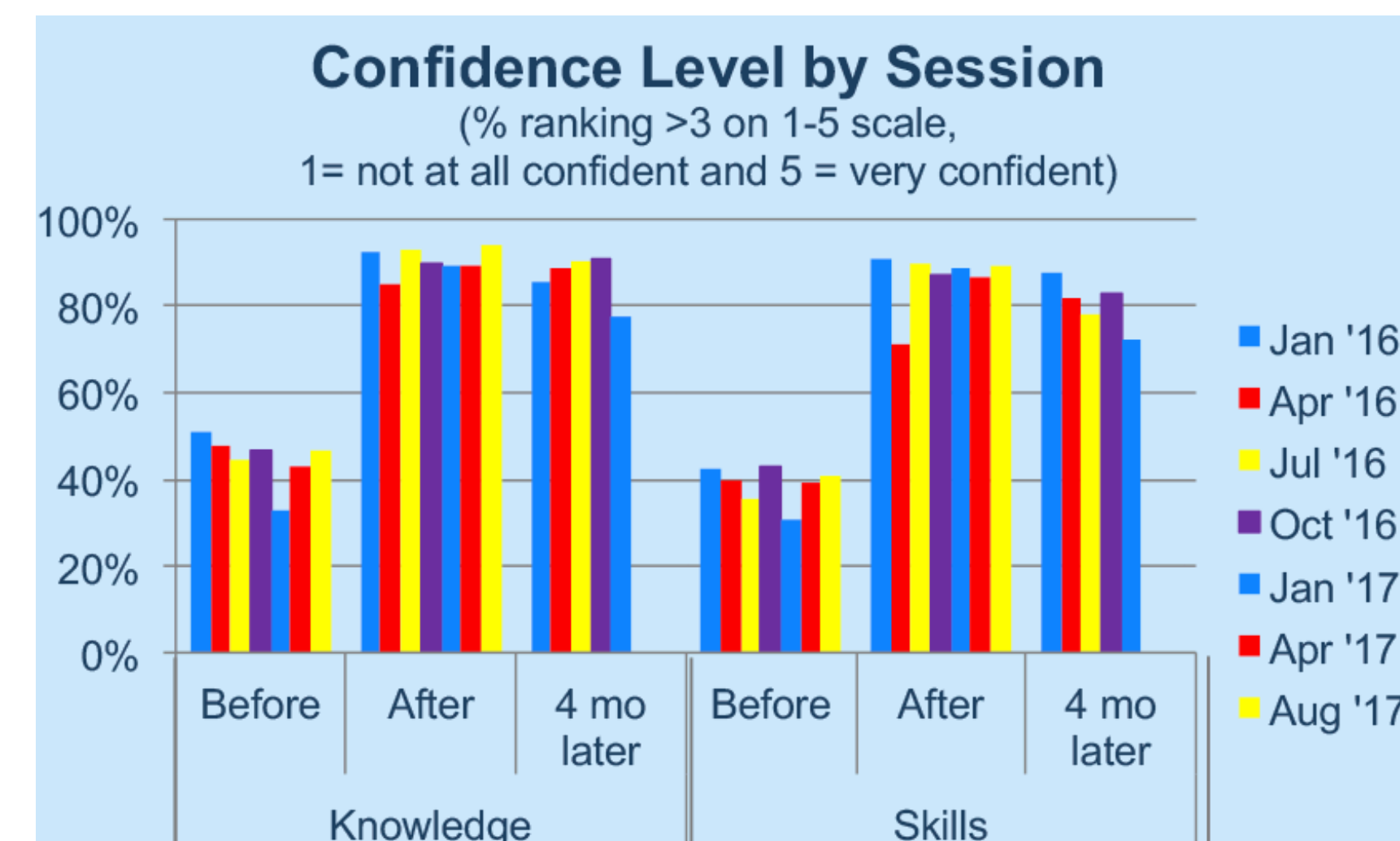
- 8 hours, 8 credits CME
- 24 participants, 6 facilitators
- Physicians, NPPA's, nurses, social workers, therapists, chaplains
- Pre-course reading material
- 6 groups of 4 learners
- 12 role-playing sessions
 - Brief intro
 - Practice
 - Five minutes per participant
 - VitalTalk facilitation template
 - Large group discussion
- Held quarterly

SCENARIOS

1. Setting the agenda
2. Reflective listening
3. Delivering bad news
4. Hope and denial
5. Advance care planning for healthy adult
6. Goals-of-care in chronic disease
7. Goals-of-care in last year of life
8. Dying patient
9. Refusing inappropriate requests
10. Advocating for a patient
11. Prognostication
12. CPR

RESULTS

- Participants reported that their confidence level in knowledge and skills rose from an average of 44% before to an average of 90% immediately after the course. This higher confidence level was maintained at 87% after four months.
- Results were similar between prescribers (physicians, NPs/PAs) and non-prescribers (nurses, therapists, social workers, chaplains).



SUMMARY

We Learned That

- Health care team members hunger to improve their communication skills.
- Paid actors are not required.
- Confidence soars with practice.
- Mixed discipline groups add depth and learning.



Conclusions

- An ACLS-like multi-disciplinary course is one effective way for non-specialists to increase their confidence levels in communication knowledge and skills.
- Efforts are needed to maintain these gains.
- This may be a way to influence organizational culture.

