

Empowering the Workforce: Strengthening Capabilities for Crisis Response

Adj A/Prof Cheng LEE, Adj A/Prof Clare YEO, Lay Lin CHAN, Tracy WEE, Christine TAN, Pamela TOH, Theresa TAY, Xin Er ONG

Summary

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a cost-effective framework to expand capabilities through direct care involvement in critical incidents and robust training programmes. Through this framework, IMH aspires to establish itself as a center of excellence, fostering community resilience and readiness for crisis response, with the goal of mitigating the mental health impact on Singaporeans.

Issue and Causes

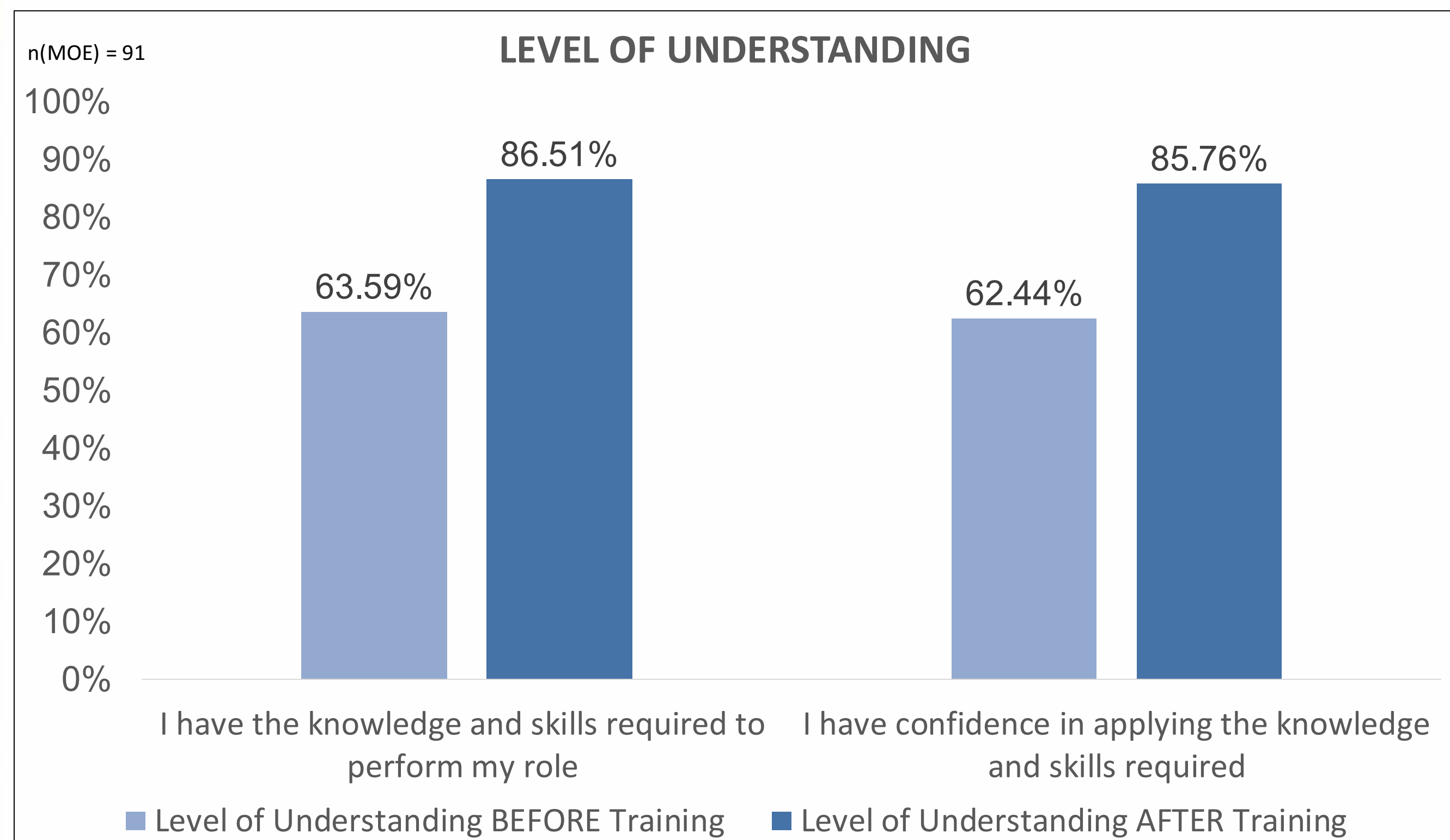
Singapore faces a significant escalation in mental health challenges over the past two decades, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Health Singapore, 2020). Rising suicide rates, increased mental illness prevalence, and heightened stress levels underscore the urgent need for robust crisis intervention (Channel NewsAsia, 2023). Recent surveys highlight mental health as a primary concern, emphasizing the critical necessity for effective crisis response capabilities (Ipsos, 2023).

Solution

CISM, developed by ICISF, offers a comprehensive crisis response akin to 'emotional first aid'. In August 2017, IMH conducted a mandatory 4-Day Pre-requisite Training Programme, facilitated by Dr Jeffrey Michael Lating, for staff to be Certified Professionals. IMH Certified Instructors and Professionals continue to expand crisis intervention services within IMH and its corporate partners. Multidisciplinary collaboration ensures a standardised approach to crisis intervention, enhancing staff competency and national preparedness.

Measurement of Improvement

	Pre-Implementation (2017)	Post-Implementation (as of March 2024)
Number of IMH-ICISF Approved Instructors	1	3
Number of IMH Staff completed ICISF Training	1	203
Number of non-IMH staff completed ICISF Training (Trained by IMH-ICISF Approved Instructor)	86	931
Existing Crisis Response Capabilities	Varied, lacking a standardised approach	Standardised crisis response capabilities – CISM framework
Readiness for Crisis Response	Not formally assessed	Assessed through post-training evaluations



Outcome: >20% reported an increase in their understanding and confidence in applying the knowledge and skills required to perform CARE duties.

References

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Effects of Change

The adoption of a standardised crisis management approach led to significant productivity gains and cost-effectiveness. By enhancing crisis response efficiency and minimizing downtime, the initiative has boosted overall productivity in crisis management. Extending training to community and corporate stakeholders has diversified the pool of individuals ready to respond to crises, which helps to extend the network of support across settings and workplaces.

Case Studies

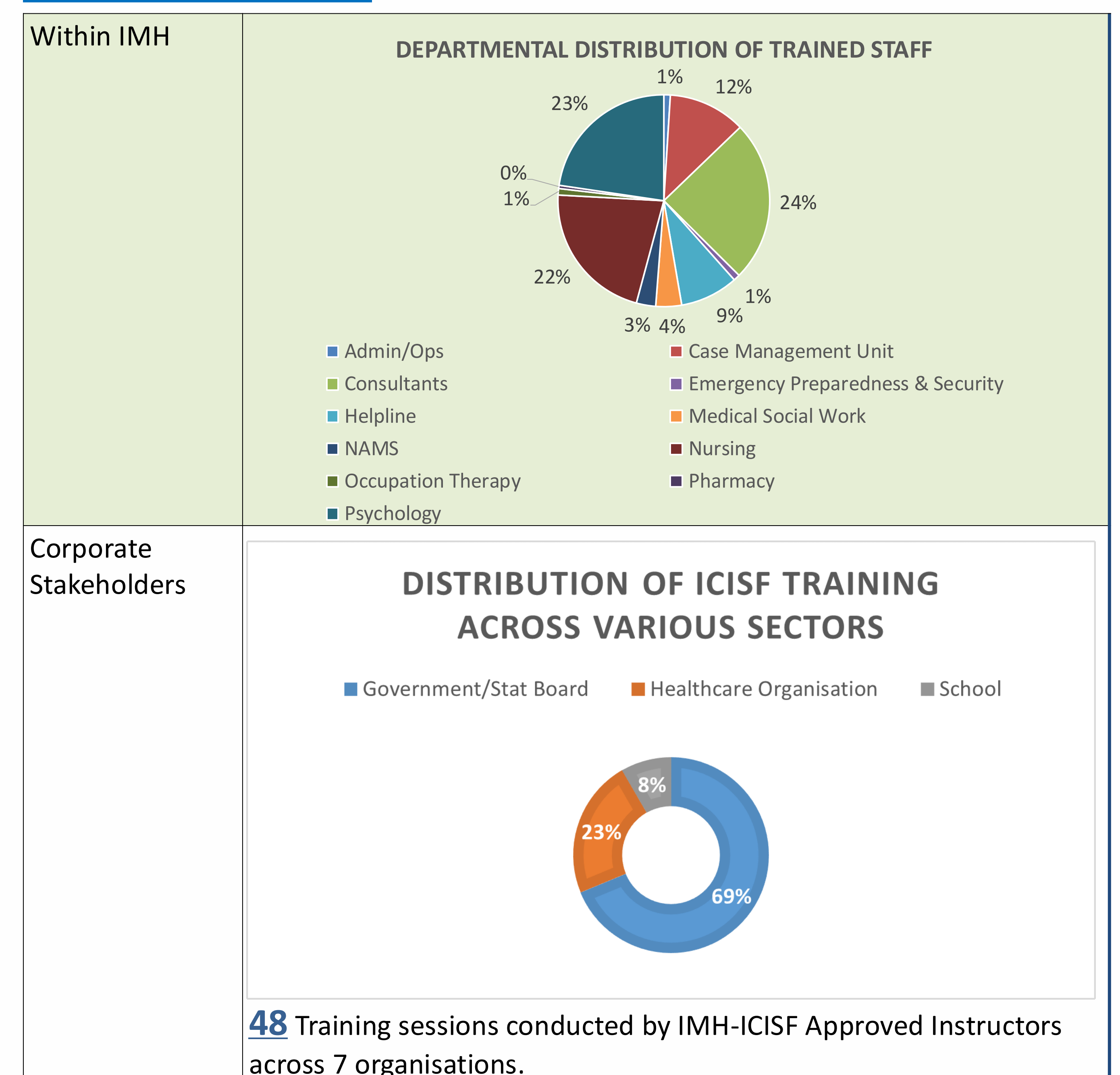
Case Study 1: Stabbing Incident at River Valley High School (2021)

In response to the incident at River Valley High School, MOE swiftly established a 'Caring Actions in Response to an Emergency' (CARE) Post, providing psychological aid to students and staff. MOE engaged 98 CARE officers and counsellors to reach affected individuals, extended resources to school principals for distress identification, and facilitated teacher-led check-in sessions upon school reopening, demonstrating unified support (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2021)

Case Study 1: Singapore's Bus Collision Crisis (2018)

Following a bus collision near Bukit Batok, leaving over 30 injured, CARE officers swiftly responded to scenes of chaos and distress. SBS Transit, SMRT, and the Land Transport Authority (LTA) mobilized care teams, underscoring Singapore's dedication to citizen well-being during crises (Channel NewsAsia, 2018).

Scale-up



Lessons Learnt

Effective communication was pivotal to the success of CISM Training Programme. Incorporating stakeholder feedback, customising training content, and offering ongoing support were key. Addressing resistance and skepticism was crucial for programme acceptance.

Anticipated Challenges

Continuously engaging participants, allocating resources for ongoing support, integrating crisis intervention skills into standard practices, and measuring long-term impact present persistent challenges. Balancing resources with operational needs and devising effective long-term assessment metrics are critical for sustained project success.