

Feasibility and Acceptability During Community Implementation of the Stepped Transition to Employment and Postsecondary Success (STEPS) Program



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BACKGROUND

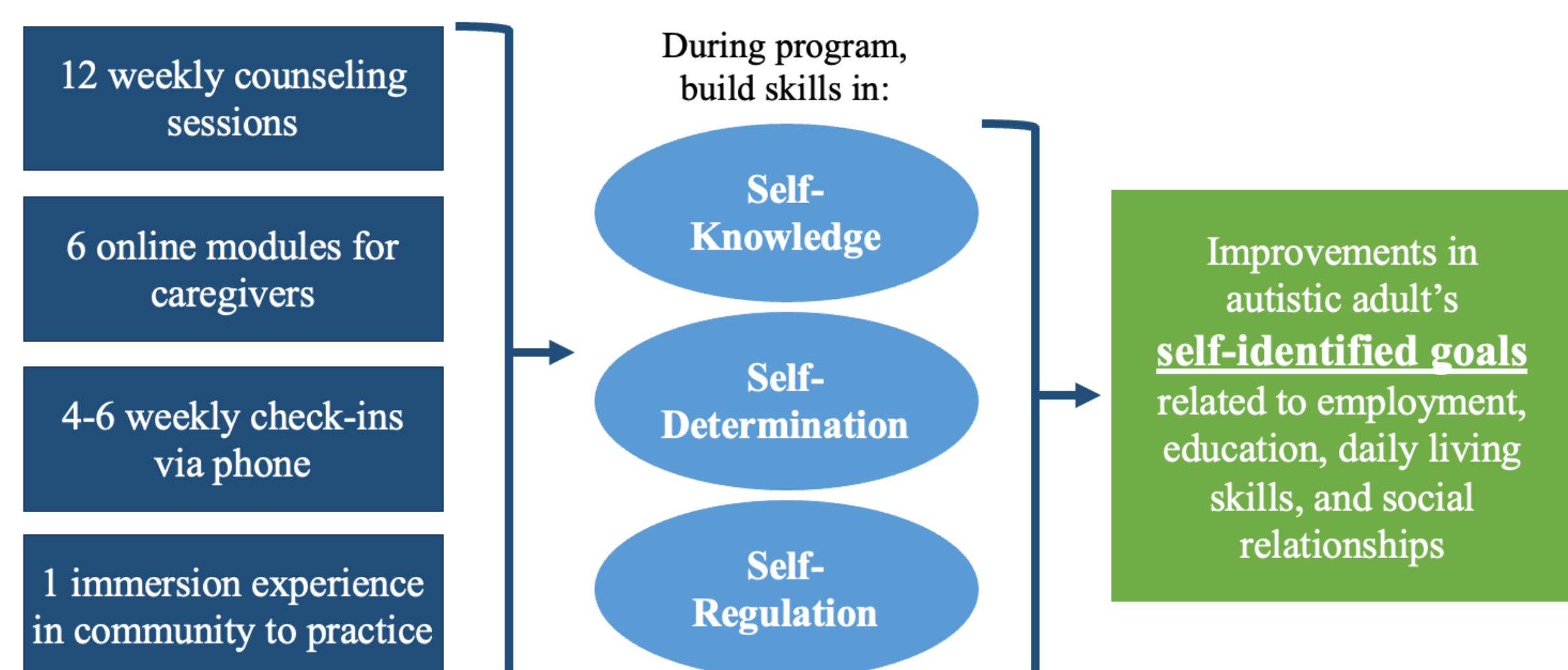
- Autistic people experience lower rates of employment and postsecondary school enrollment¹⁻³
- STEPS is a CBT-based program designed to support autistic people aged 16-25 during the **transition to adulthood** and **build age-appropriate independence**^{4,5}

OBJECTIVE:

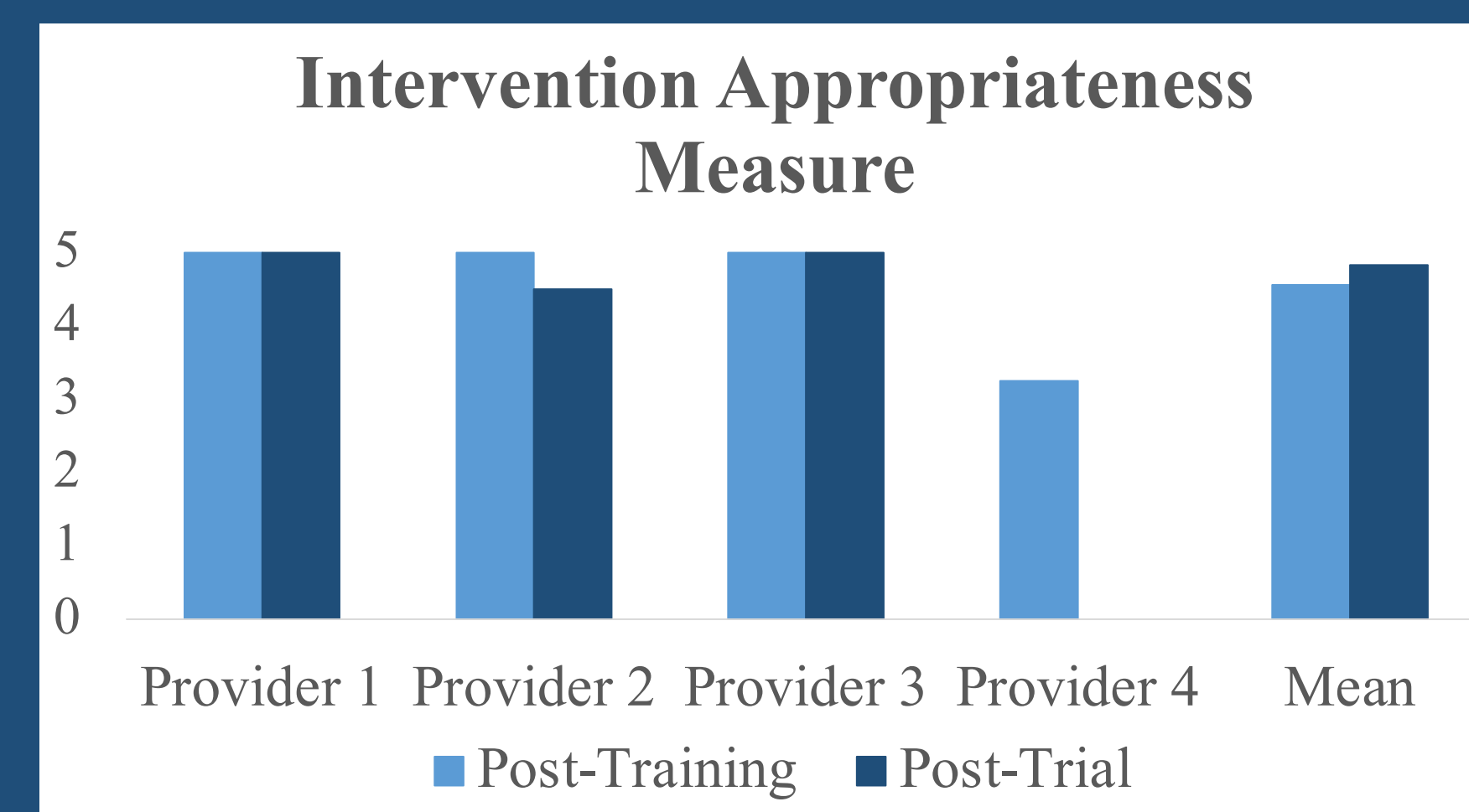
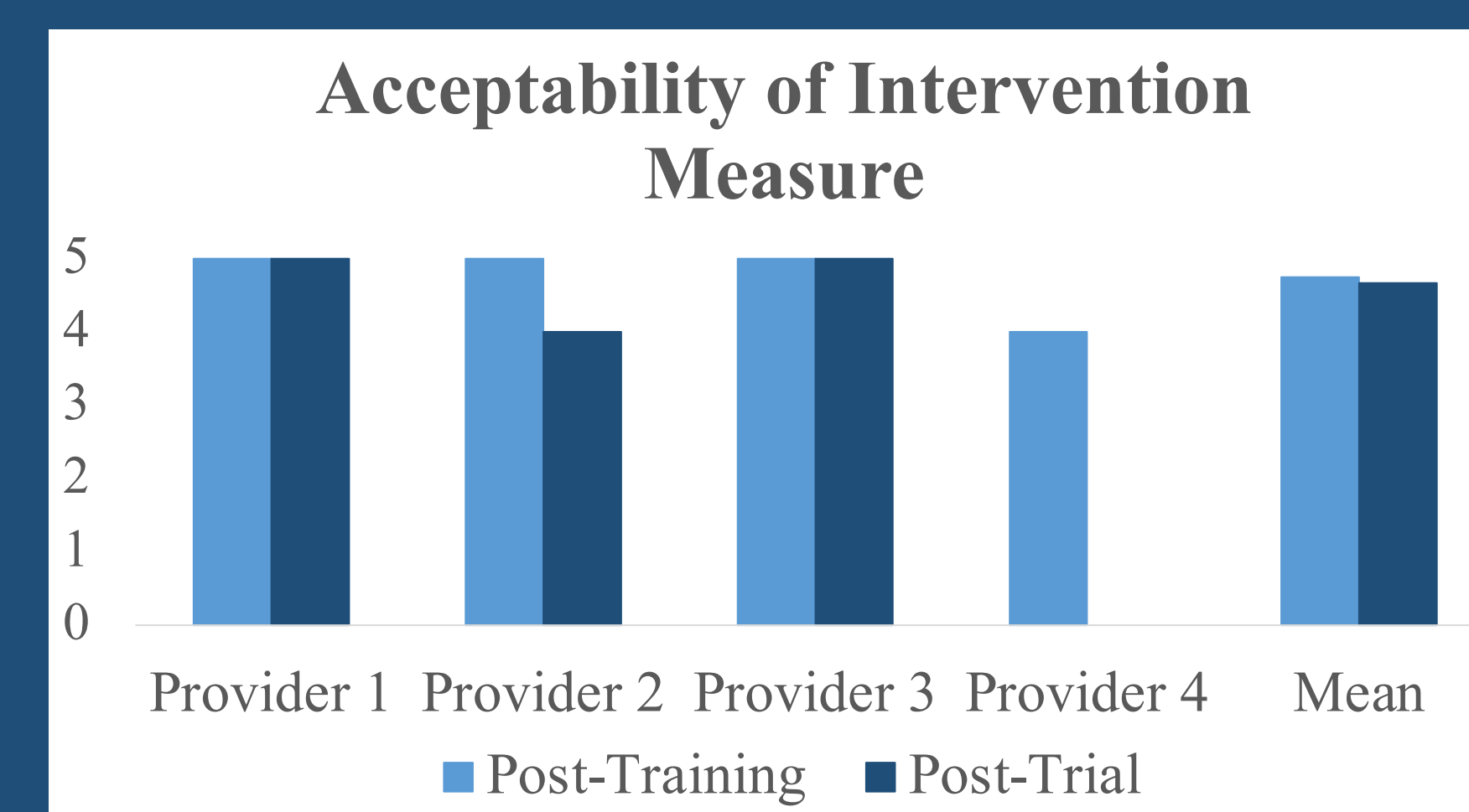
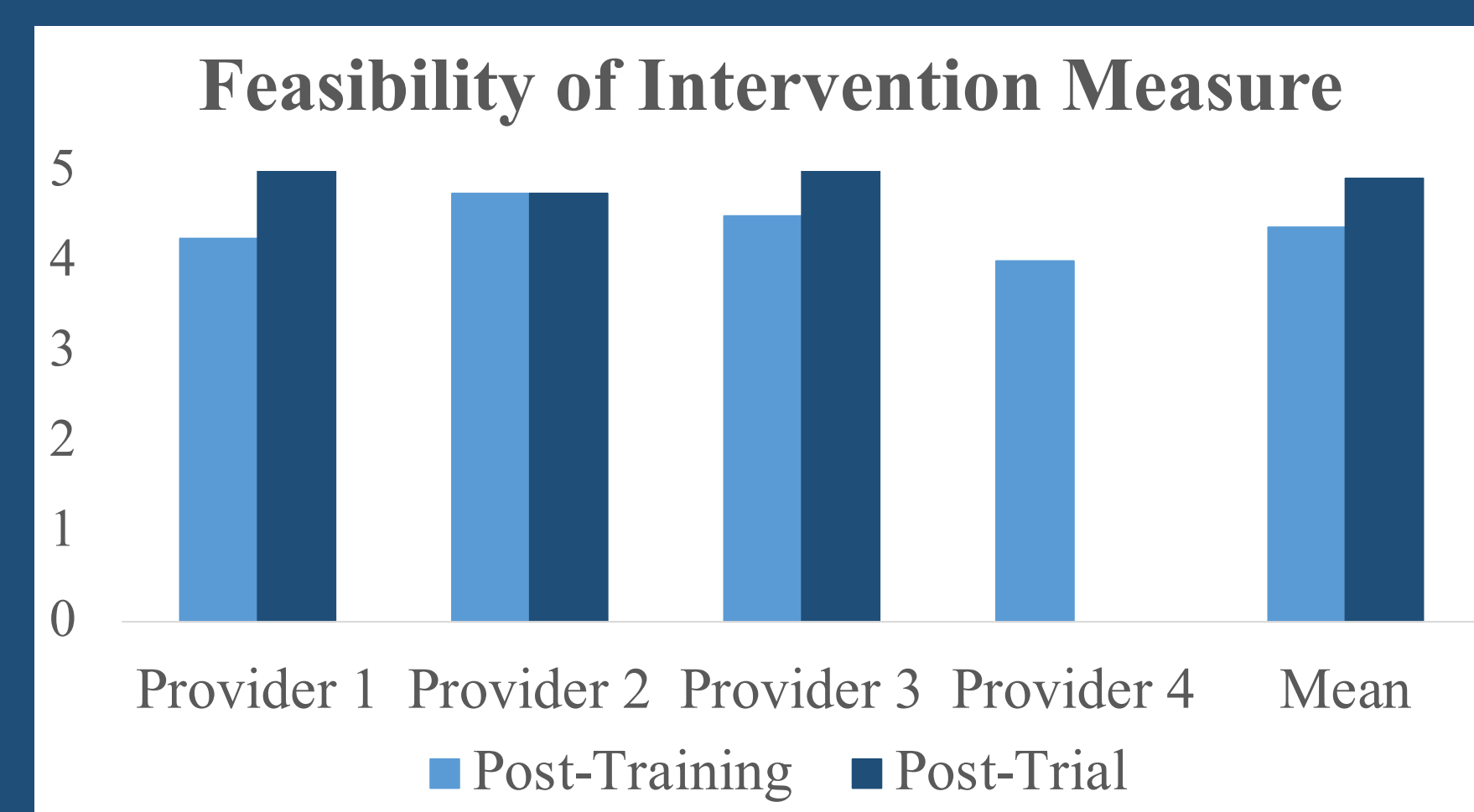
To examine initial feasibility and acceptability of community implementation of STEPS in a Hybrid Type 1 implementation-effectiveness open trial with 24 autistic adolescents and adults

STEPS PROGRAM:

- The initial RCT suggested good feasibility, acceptability, and initial clinical impact⁵

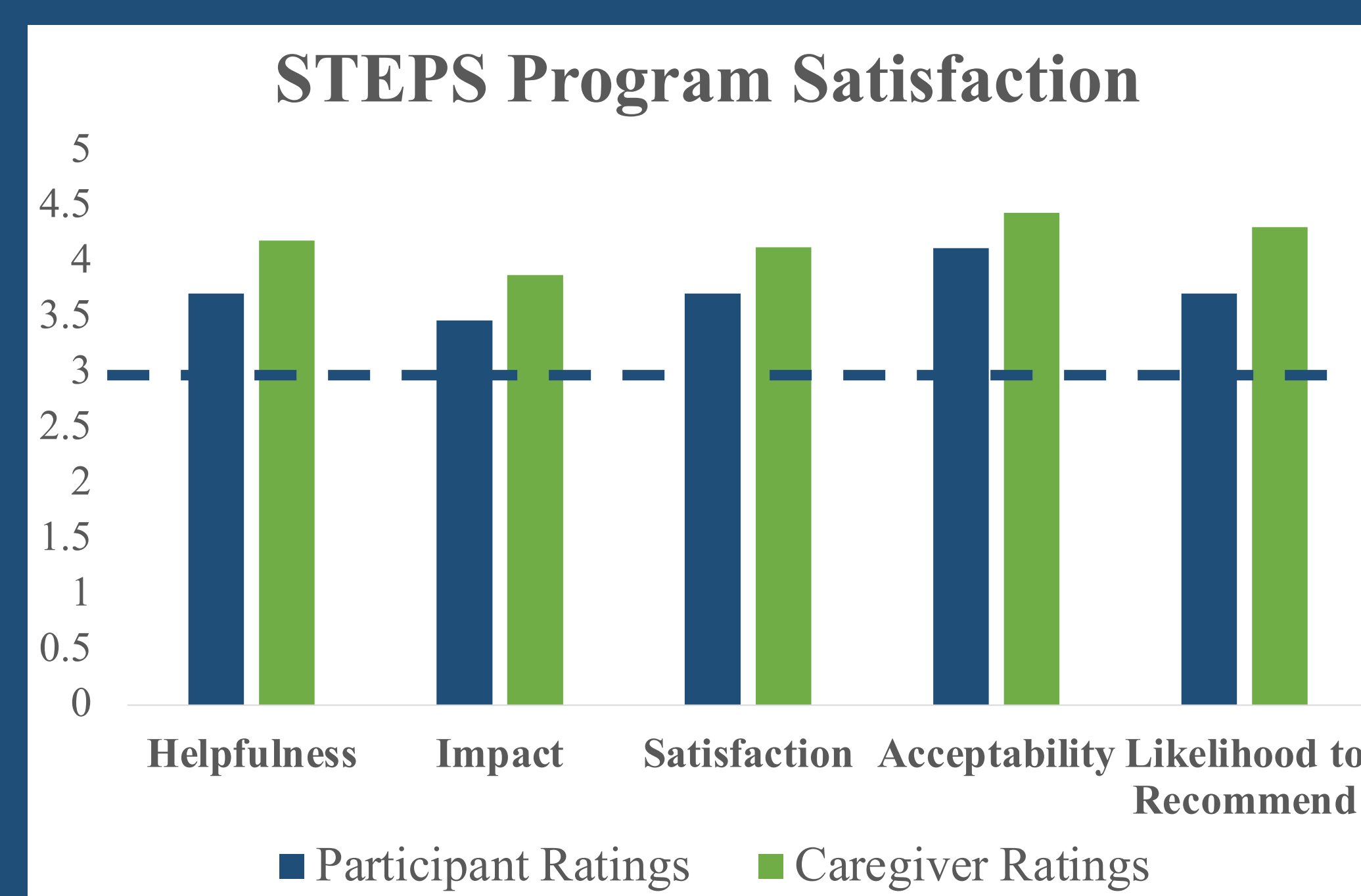


STEPS is feasible to implement by clinicians in the community and moderate-to-highly acceptable to autistic adults, their caregivers, and community clinicians.



Clinician-Report

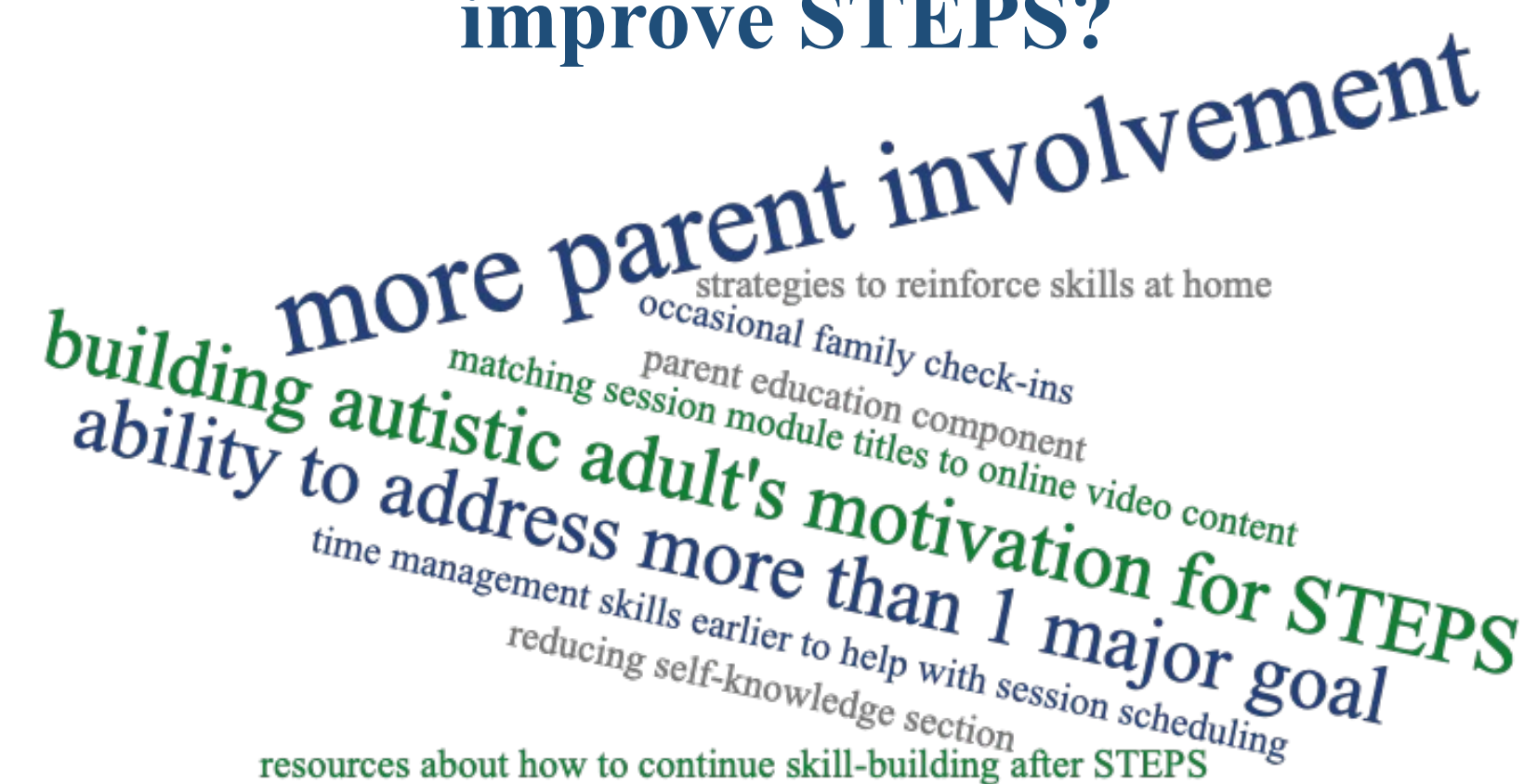
Autistic Adult and Caregiver Ratings



What did you like or what was helpful about STEPS?



What suggestions do you have to improve STEPS?



METHODS

- 4 clinicians (50% female) working with North Georgia Autism Foundation
- 24 autistic individuals (M age: 21 years, age range: 16-29 years, 77.30% male, 95.50% white, 18.20% also had co-occurring ID)

RESULTS

- Feasibility:**
 - 96.49% of treatment objectives across 267 sessions delivered as intended
 - An independent rater co-coded 10% of sessions and found that 84.07% of objectives were delivered as intended
 - Moderate-to-high clinician-rated feasibility after STEPS training and trial
- Acceptability:**
 - 91.67% retention rate (2 out of 24 participants withdrew from trial)
 - Moderate-to-high participant and caregiver satisfaction of STEPS
 - Moderate-to-high clinician-rated acceptability and intervention appropriateness after STEPS training and after trial

DISCUSSION

- STEPS was feasible to implement and acceptable to families and clinicians
- Next steps:** continuing to test STEPS compared to services as usual, within multiple community-based agencies as part of a Hybrid Type 1 trial (R34MH131599)



Thank you to the families and clinicians who participated in STEPS and to our community partner, the North Georgia Autism Foundation (NGAF)!

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