

Introduction

- Climbing and bouldering are sports that will challenge athletes in grip strength, upper body strength, lower body strength, problem solving, and provide opportunities to build confidence and relationships within a community (Osborne et al., 2025).
- Therapeutic adaptive climbing is a popular sport for individuals with physical, intellectual, mental, or developmental disabilities (Gassner et al., 2022).
- Triangle Rock Club, a rock-climbing gym in North Carolina, hosts monthly adaptive climbing events supported by volunteers with varied experience working with people with disabilities.
- A recent needs assessment revealed a need to enhance the education and training of the Triangle Rock Club volunteers to support the rock-climbing experience for adaptive climbers.

Project Description

This capstone project to enhance volunteer education and training at Triangle Rock Club embodied the spirit of aloha, kuleana, pono, kokua, and laulima:

Aloha: The program emphasized the importance of building rapport and trust between the volunteer and climber, whether on or off the climbing wall, and embodies love, kindness, and harmony.

Kuleana: The program was a response to a community need and reflected a responsibility and professional commitment to lifelong learning.

Pono: The program emphasized that therapeutic adaptive climbing is an opportunity for volunteers to adaptive climbers overcome challenges. The education and training program activities supported an ethical balance, righteousness, and harmony to support volunteers and the climbing community.

Kokua: The program educated volunteers on the importance of building relationships with the climbers with a spirit of selflessness and cooperation.

Laulima: The program emphasized that many hands make small work. The volunteers were part of team with the goal that when each climber successfully reaches the top, everyone has accomplished the goal.

Purpose/Aims

The purpose of this capstone experience & project was to develop a comprehensive education and training program for Triangle Rock Club volunteers. The aim was to enhance the volunteer's confidence, level of comfort, and safety awareness when supporting adaptive climbers.

References



Methods

Approach: The volunteer education and training at Triangle Rock Club included the development of infographic handouts, training videos, and in-person volunteer training sessions.

• The infographics included information about sensory sensitivities, do's & don'ts for interacting with adaptive climbers, buddy climbing instructions, and a safety overview.

• The training video and in person session addressed: education on working with adaptive climbers

Participants: Volunteers at the Triangle Rock Club were adults between the age of 18-30

Evaluation: Data was collected using pre- and post-volunteer training surveys. Survey 1 specifically asked volunteers to rate their level of confidence/comfort level, knowledge of special training, understanding what climber's strengths were gained and the challenges overcame, and if the volunteer felt adequately trained. Survey 2 asked volunteers to rate their understanding of the the benefits of adaptive climbing.

Results/Outcomes

- Trained 30 volunteers
- The majority (90%) were active duty military
- Age ranges between 18 to 30
- 50% reported first time working with people with disabilities

Figure 1. Volunteer Training Pre-and Post Survey Results

- *39% increase in how adequately trained the volunteers felt by the end of the program
- *27% increase in confidence/comfort level
- *20% increase in special training prior
- *4% increase in strengths gained and challenges overcame being addressed within the program

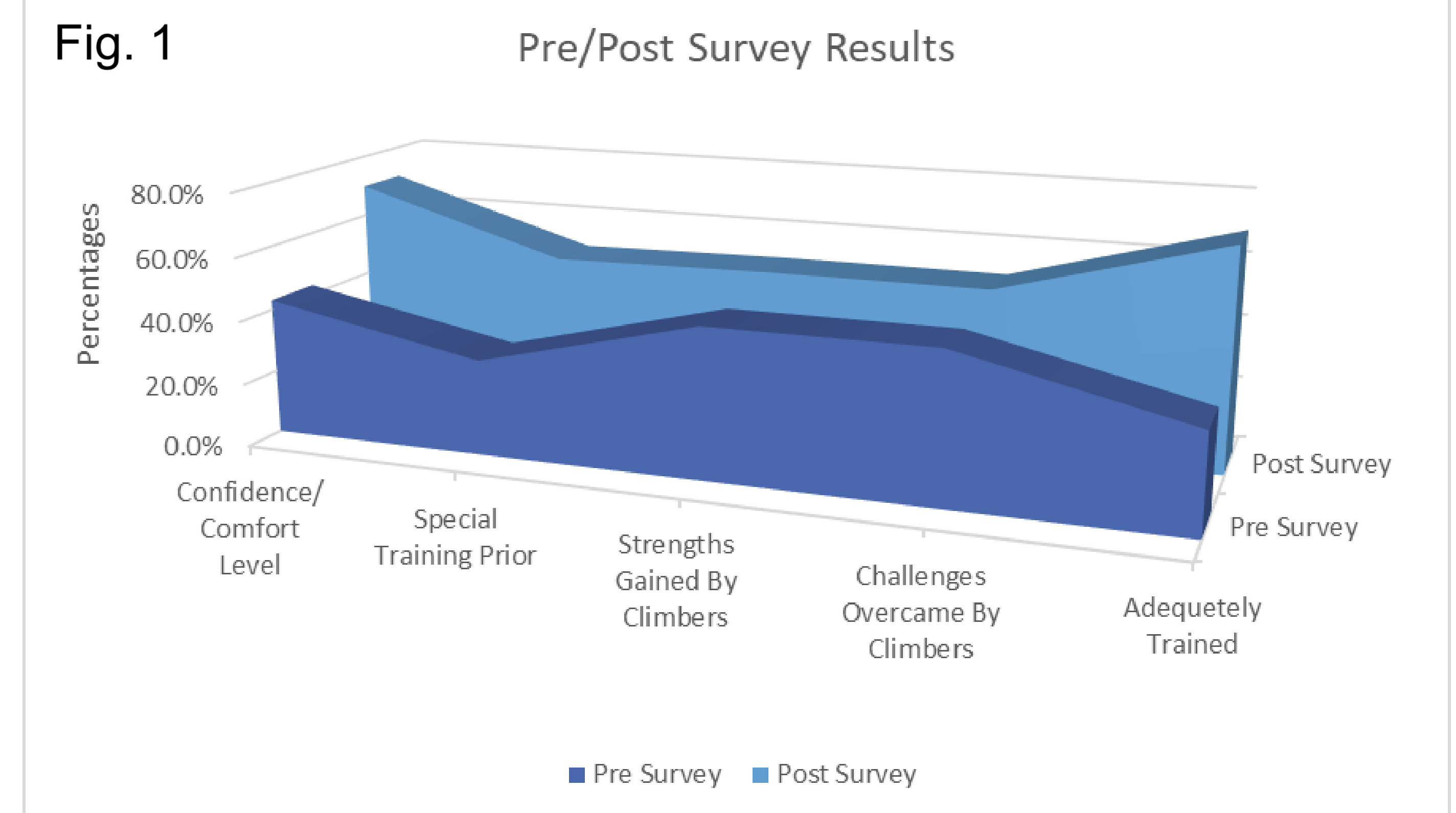


Fig. 2 Adaptive Climbing Benefit Results

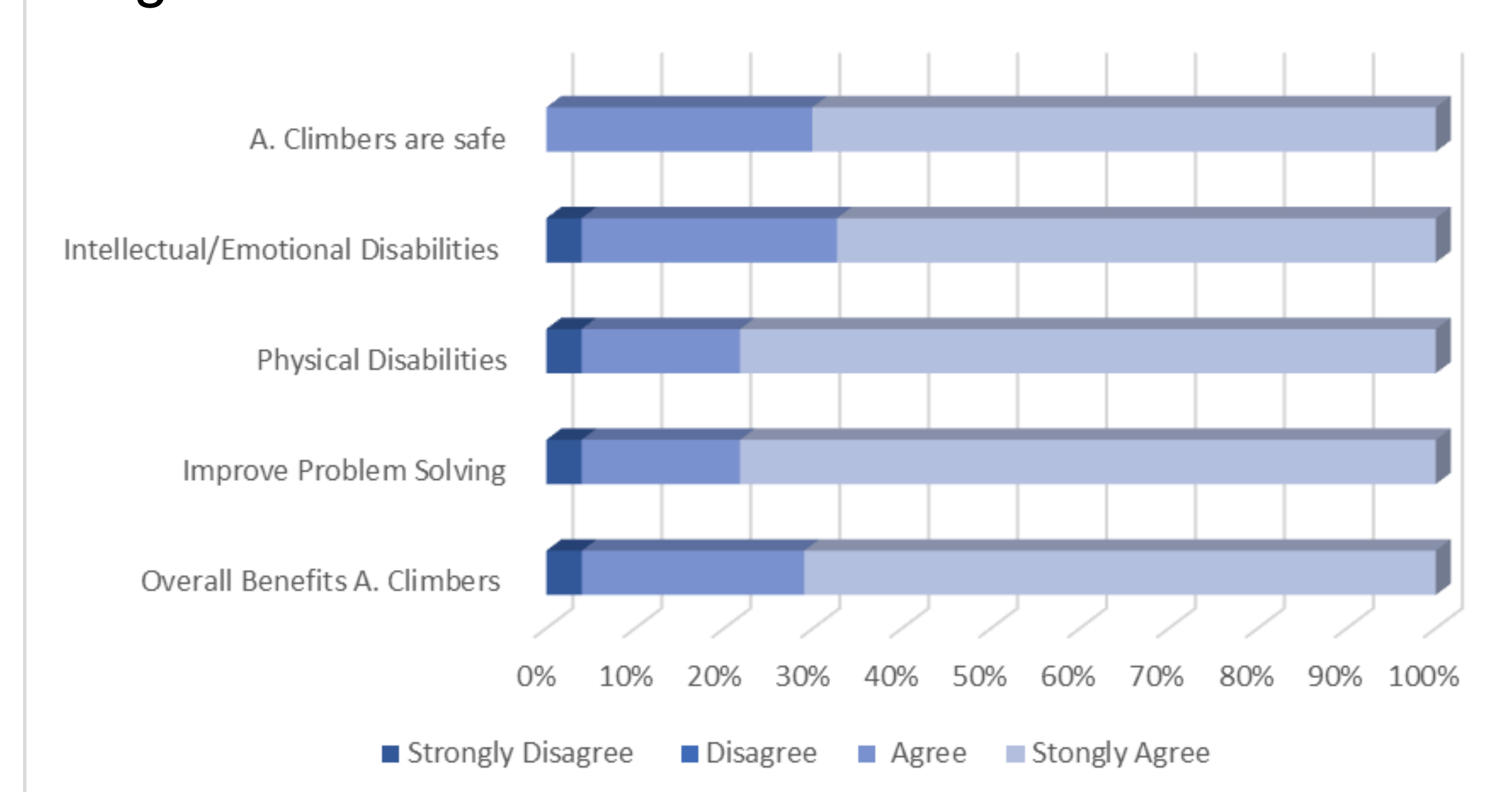
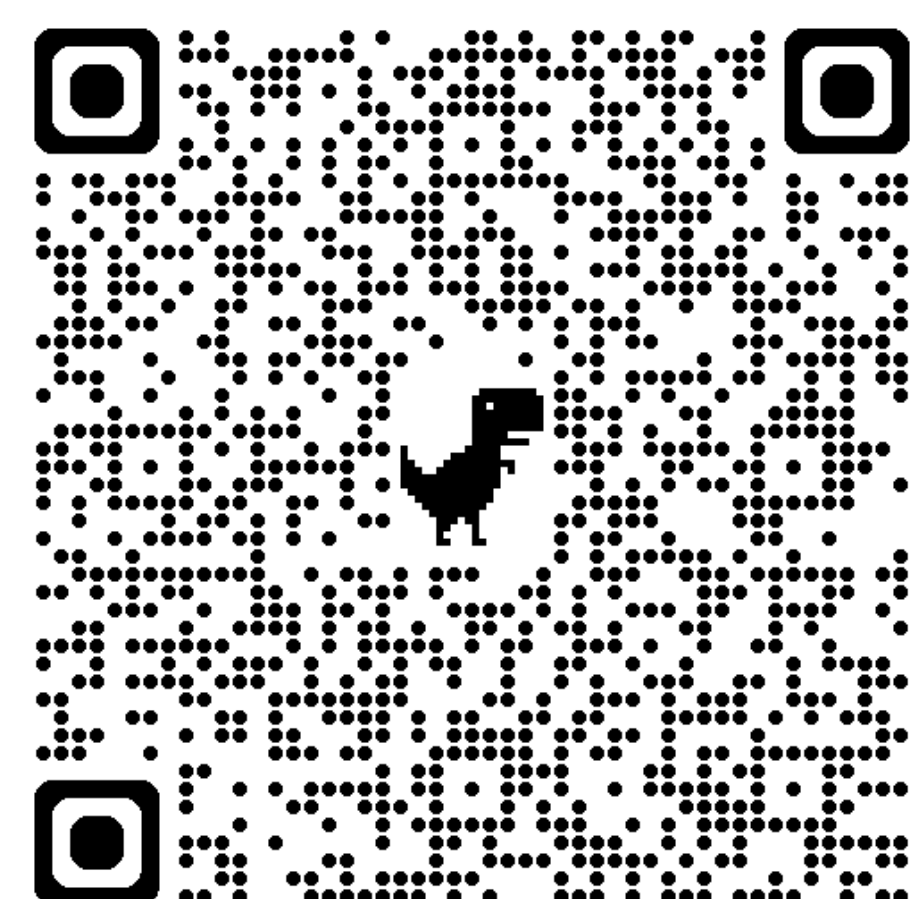


Figure 2. Volunteers perceived Benefits of Adaptive Climbing

- 78% strongly agree that adaptive climbers are safe
- 69% strongly agree that climbing helps with intellectual/emotional disabilities
- 82% strongly agree that climbing helps with physical disabilities/problem solving
- 78% strongly agree that adaptive climbers benefit overall

Photo with QR code to addition pics



Discussion

Volunteers who participated in the education and training at Triangle Rock Club:

- Gained confidence/comfort when working with adaptive climbers.
- Felt they were adequately prepared to support adaptive climbers
- As reported by Triangle Rock Club staff: the volunteers demonstrated improvement when working with adaptive climbers

Sustainable Impact: Triangle Rock Club has newly created training videos for their volunteers, infographic handouts for educating the volunteers, and the pre and post surveys for the volunteers and caregivers.