

Second Order Change Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Second Order Change¹ is a professional development series offered to youth-serving organizations in the Anchorage area each year by the Anchorage Youth Development Coalition (AYDC), housed at Center for Safe Alaskans. This series fosters leadership development and serves as a professional learning community; the series is designed to support staff at all levels in delivering high quality youth development programs. Second Order Change provides this support with the goal of strengthening participants' social and emotional intelligence, which research shows is responsible for over 50% of effectiveness in all professions and is critical in supporting youth development. The series takes place over the course of six sessions, providing opportunities to build relationships with cohort members, practice new approaches between sessions, and reflect on and integrate learning.

The six-session Second Order Change series was held from February 15, 2023 – March 29, 2023. The first and last sessions were held in person, and the remaining four sessions were held virtually. Ten participants registered for the course in 2023 and represented the following six organizations that serve the Anchorage community: Alaska Native Cultural Charter School, Camp Fire Alaska, Catholic Social Services, Center for Safe Alaskans, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and Denali Family Services.

At the end of the Second Order Change series, all participants were asked to complete a retrospective pre-post survey aimed at evaluating the program's impact in five areas of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) including skills in self-awareness, social awareness, relationships, self-management, and responsible decision-making; and four areas of Youth Program Quality including creating a safe environment, creating a supportive environment, providing an interactive environment, and providing an engaging environment. A total of seven participants completed a survey.

Findings and Recommendations

Overall, survey results indicate a positive impact of Second Order Change on participants. The average score of all participants increased in all 17 SEL skills after participating in Second Order Change that were surveyed, and only one of these skills had an average score that was less than 4 (on a scale of 1-5) after participating in Second Order Change. No fewer than two of the seven participants who completed a survey experienced a positive shift in their score after participating in Second Order Change in all 17 SEL skills. While participation in Second Order Change appeared to have a positive impact on all 17 SEL skills that were surveyed, results indicate the most significant impact was seen in the following two skills: participant ability to communicate effectively, and participant ability to seek support and help when needed. Survey results indicate the smallest amount of impact was seen in the following three SEL skills: participant ability to understand the

¹ <https://safealaskans.org/our-work/programs-initiatives/aydc/soc/>

perspectives of others including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts; participant ability to practice collaborative problem solving; and participant ability to understand their own emotions. Survey results indicate that participating in Second Order Change had a smaller impact on Youth Program Quality. Of the six participants who indicated their role includes working with youth, only two of the four areas surveyed saw a positive shift in average score, and in both cases this shift was small.

It is difficult to make recommendations based on these survey results due to the small sample size of just seven participants. Center for Safe Alaskans may wish to use these results to maintain an awareness, when planning for future Second Order Change series, of which areas may present the greatest opportunities for the program to impact participants. In addition, the feedback from participants in open-ended questions indicated they would like the opportunity to attend all sessions in person, and that one of the greatest benefits of the program is the opportunities it provides for networking and building a sense of community and connection with other professionals.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	4
Methods	4
Data Analysis	5
Limitations	6
Findings	7
Social Emotional Learning	7
Skills in Self-Awareness	7
Skills in Social Awareness	8
Skills in Relationships	10
Skills in Self-Management	12
Skills in Decision-Making	13
Youth Program Quality	15
Second Order Change Participant Feedback	17
Discussion	18

Introduction

Second Order Change² is a professional development series offered to youth-serving organizations in the Anchorage area each year by the Anchorage Youth Development Coalition (AYDC), housed at Center for Safe Alaskans. This series fosters leadership development and serves as a professional learning community; the series is designed to support staff at all levels in delivering high quality youth development programs. Second Order Change provides this support with the goal of strengthening participants' social and emotional intelligence, which research shows is responsible for over 50% of effectiveness in all professions and is critical in supporting youth development. The series takes place over the course of six sessions, providing opportunities to build relationships with cohort members, practice new approaches between sessions, and reflect on and integrate learning.

In 2019, Center for Safe Alaskans contracted with the Goldstream Group (a consulting firm located in Fairbanks, Alaska that is dedicated to helping non-profit community organizations improve the lives of Alaskans) to assist in assessment and evaluation activities related to its AYDC Wellness Initiative. Survey data collected from participants in AYDC's 2023 Second Order Change Professional Development Series were evaluated to assist Center for Safe Alaskans and AYDC in measuring the impact of its Second Order Change program and in improving future programs. This work is funded through a Comprehensive Behavioral Health Prevention and Early Intervention (CBHPEI) Services grant from the State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health.

Methods

The six-session Second Order Change series was held from February 15, 2023 – March 29, 2023. The first and last sessions were held in person, and the remaining four sessions were held virtually. Ten participants registered for the course and represented the following six organizations that serve the Anchorage community: Alaska Native Cultural Charter School, Camp Fire Alaska, Catholic Social Services, Center for Safe Alaskans, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and Denali Family Services.

At the end of the Second Order Change series, all participants were asked to complete a retrospective pre-post survey aimed at evaluating the program's impact in five areas of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) including skills in self-awareness, social awareness, relationships, self-management, and responsible decision-making; and four areas of Youth Program Quality including creating a safe environment, creating a supportive environment, providing an interactive environment, and providing an engaging environment.

Survey questions specific to SEL and Youth Program Quality were paired questions with Likert scales, with one question asking the participant to rate their skill level before Second

² <https://safealaskans.org/our-work/programs-initiatives/aydc/soc/>

Order Change, and another question asking the participant to rate their skill level after Second Order Change. Several open-ended questions at the end of the survey asked participants to describe how their Second Order Change experience impacted them the most, as well as provide suggestions for improving the Second Order Change program in the future. Surveys were administered using SurveyMonkey, an online survey tool (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>).

Table 1: Number of registered participants attending each Second Order Change session in 2023. A total of 10 participants registered for the course in 2023.

Number of Sessions Completed	Number of Participants
Session 1 (in-person)	9
Session 2 (virtual)	10
Session 3 (virtual)	9
Session 4 (virtual)	10
Session 5 (virtual)	8
Session 6 (in-person)	9

Data Analysis

A total of seven surveys were completed, representing 70% of the registered participants. All survey responses were downloaded from SurveyMonkey into Excel for analysis. Likert scale responses to all closed-ended questions were converted to a numerical scale as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Numerical Conversion of Likert Scale Responses for Retrospective Pre-Post Survey (n=7)

Likert Scale Response	Numerical Conversion
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly Agree	5

Numerical scores from each participant were then averaged to arrive at an average participant score for each question *before* participating in Second Order Change, and *after* participating in Second Order Change to allow for overall comparison from pre to post. Individual changes for each participant from pre to post were also analyzed to identify what percentage of participants had a positive shift in their responses, what percentage of

participants had a negative shift in their responses, and what percentage of participants had no shift in their responses from pre to post for each of the skills that were included in the survey. Results are reported using descriptive statistics.

Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed for themes, and results are reported using descriptive statistics.

Limitations

1. There were two SEL skills included in the survey for which one participant indicated a *decrease* in their skill level from pre to post (“I recognize my strengths and limitations with a sense of purpose,” and “I practice collaborative problem solving”). We do not know whether this was because these participants truly felt their skill level decreased after participating in Second Order Change, because they recognized that they had perceived their skill level to be higher than it actually was before participating in Second Order Change, or because they misunderstood the question.
2. There were 10 registered participants in Second Order Change in 2023, and seven of these individuals completed surveys at the end of the series. While this represents 70% of participants, this is a very small sample size and just one response represents 14.3% of all surveys completed. It would be easy for one outlying response to have a significant influence on the overall survey results. Results should therefore be interpreted with caution. Caution should also be used when comparing results to previous years.

Findings

Results indicate a positive impact of Second Order Change on participants. There was an increase in the average participant score in all 17 of the SEL skill areas that were surveyed, and an increase in the average score in two of the four areas of Youth Program Quality that were surveyed.

Social Emotional Learning

The average participant score after participating in Second Order Change was greater than 4 (scale of 1-5) for 16 of the 17 SEL skills that were included in the survey indicating that overall, participants felt confident in their SEL skills following the program. All 17 SEL skills that were included in the survey saw a positive shift in the average participant score from pre to post. The amount of this shift ranged from a low of 0.28 to a high of 0.72. A breakdown of results by SEL skill area is below.

Skills in Self-Awareness

All four skills in self-awareness that were included in the survey saw an increase of 0.57 in the average score of all participants after Second Order Change. The fact that the average score for all four skills in self-awareness was 4.00 before participating in Second Order Change indicates that participants entered the program with an already strong sense of self-awareness. Despite this, more than half of participants indicated that their participation in Second Order Change had a positive impact on their belief that they can improve their skills and abilities.

Table 3: Summary of Skills in Self-Awareness for All Participants Before and After Second Order Change (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)

	Average score before SOC	Average score after SOC	Change in average score	Participants with positive shift in individual score
I am aware of my emotions, thoughts, and values. (n=7)	4.29	4.86	0.57	42.9%
I am aware of how my own emotions, thoughts, and values influence my behavior. (n=7)	4.14	4.71	0.57	42.9%
I recognize my strengths and limitations with a sense of confidence and purpose. (n=7)	4.00	4.57	0.57	42.9%
I believe I can improve my skills and abilities. (n=7)	4.29	4.86	0.57	57.1%

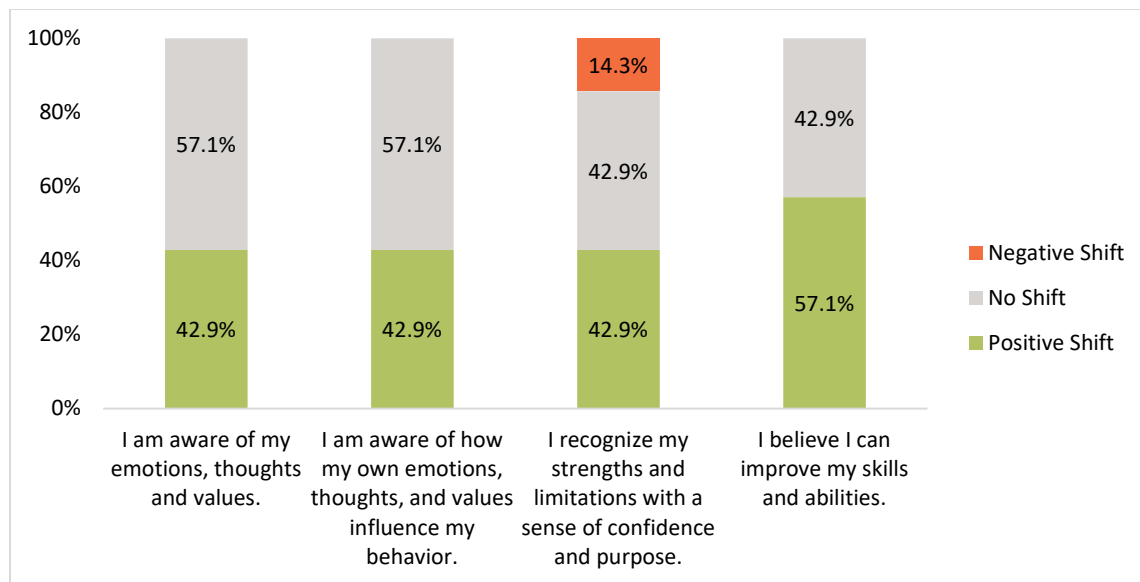


Figure 1: Percentage of Participants with a Positive Shift in their Individual Scores for Skills in Self-Awareness After Participating in Second Order Change (n=7)

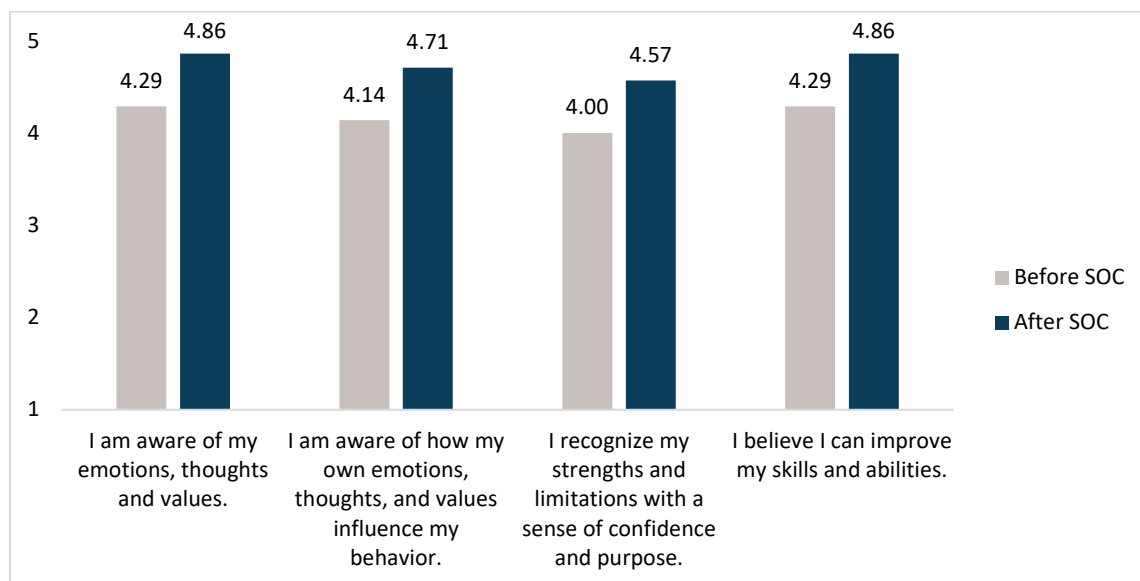


Figure 2: Summary of Average Scores for Skills in Self-Awareness Before and After Second Order Change (n=7) (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Skills in Social Awareness

For both of the social awareness skills that were included in the survey, two of the seven participants who completed a survey (28.6%) indicated that Second Order Change had a positive impact on them. The average score of all participants showed a positive shift after participating in Second Order Change in both skill areas.

*Table 4: Summary of Skills in Social Awareness for All Participants Before and After Second Order Change
(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Average score before SOC	Average score after SOC	Change in average score	% With a positive shift in individual score
I understand the perspectives of others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. (n=7)	3.57	3.86	0.29	28.6%
I empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. (n=7)	4.00	4.43	0.43	28.6%

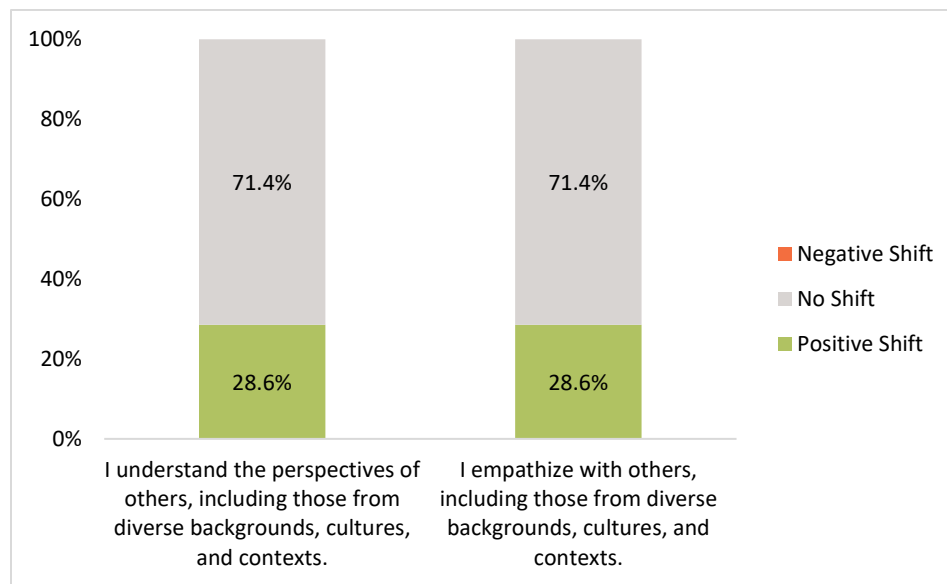


Figure 3: Percentage of Participants with a Positive Shift in their Individual Scores for Skills in Social Awareness After Participating in Second Order Change (n=7)

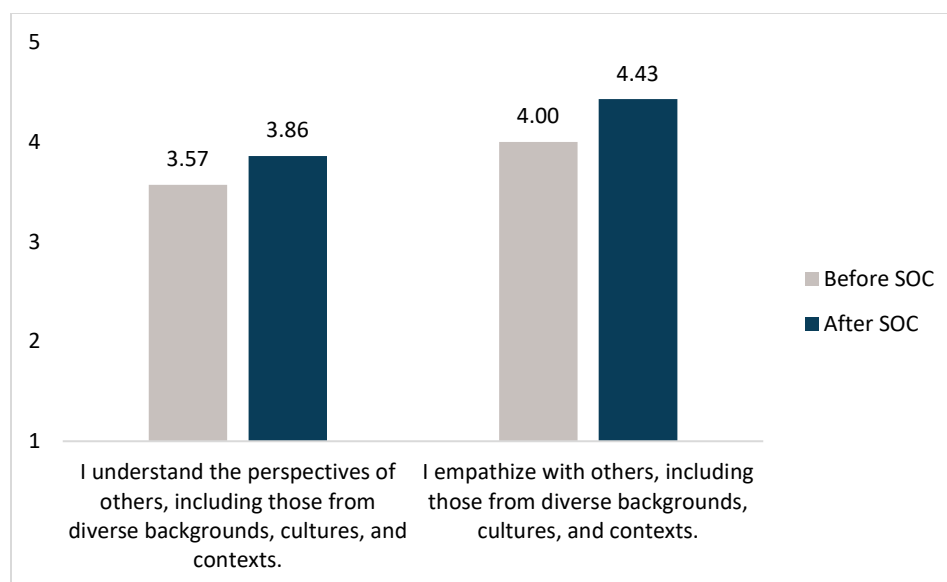


Figure 4: Summary of Average Scores for Skills in Social Awareness Before and After Second Order Change (n=7) (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Skills in Relationships

More than half of participants indicated that Second Order Change had a positive impact on their ability to communicate effectively (57.1%) and to seek support and help when needed (57.1%). The largest shifts in average score for all participants after Second Order Change were for “I communicate effectively” (shift of 0.72), “I seek support and help when needed” (shift of 0.72), and “I develop positive relationships” (shift of 0.71).

Table 5: Summary of Skills in Relationships for Participants Before and After Second Order Change (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)

	Average score before SOC	Average score after SOC	Change in average score	% With a positive shift in individual score
I develop positive relationships. (n=7)	3.86	4.57	0.71	42.9%
I communicate effectively. (n=7)	3.57	4.29	0.72	57.1%
I seek support and help when needed. (n=7)	3.57	4.29	0.72	57.1%
I offer support and help when needed. (n=7)	3.86	4.29	0.43	42.9%
I practice collaborative problem solving. (n=7)	3.86	4.14	0.28	28.6%

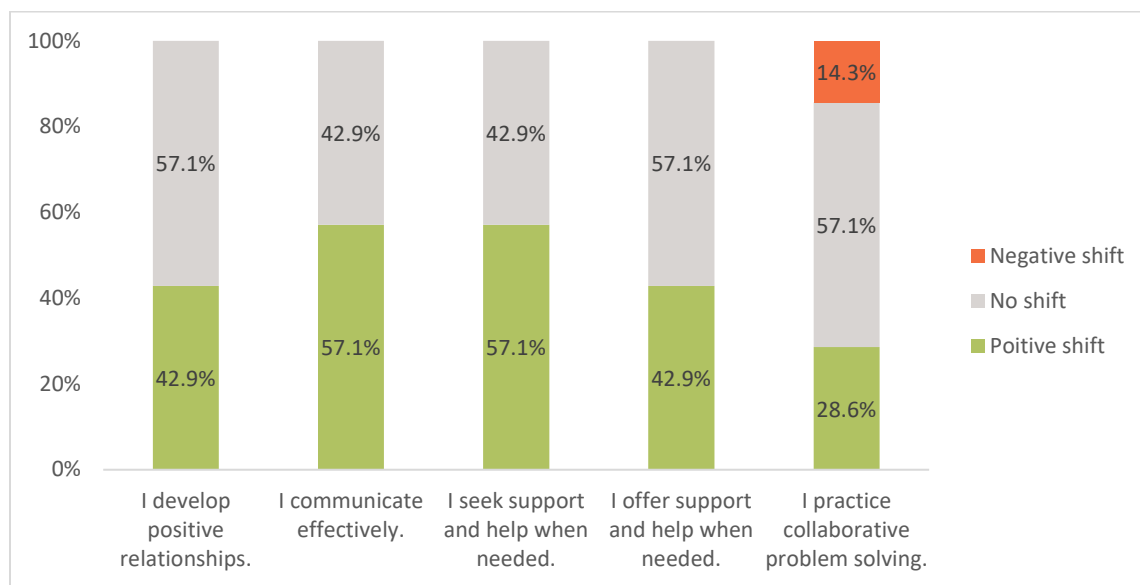


Figure 5: Percentage of Individual Participants with a Positive Shift in their Scores for Skills in Relationships After Participating in Second Order Change (n=7)

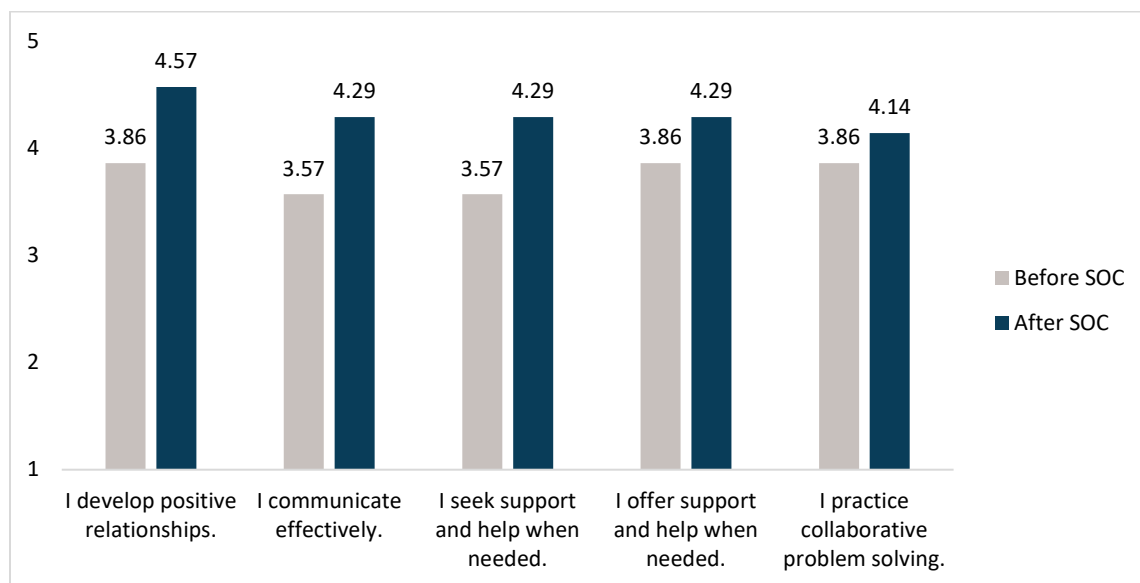


Figure 6: Summary of Average Scores for Skills in Relationships Before and After Second Order Change (n=7) (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Skills in Self-Management

More than half of participants (57.1%) indicated a positive shift in their ability to identify stress management strategies following Second Order Change, and the average score for all participants in this same skill increased by 0.57 from pre to post. Average scores shifted similarly for the ability to use stress management strategies (shift of 0.58) and the ability to manage their own emotions (shift of 0.57) after participating in Second Order Change.

*Table 6: Summary of Skills in Self-Management for Participants Before and After Second Order Change
(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Average score before SOC	Average score after SOC	Change in average score	% With a positive shift in individual score
I understand my own emotions. (n=7)	4.14	4.43	0.29	28.6%
I manage my own emotions. (n=7)	3.86	4.43	0.57	42.9%
I identify stress management strategies. (n=7)	4.00	4.57	0.57	57.1%
I use stress management strategies. (n=7)	3.71	4.29	0.58	42.9%

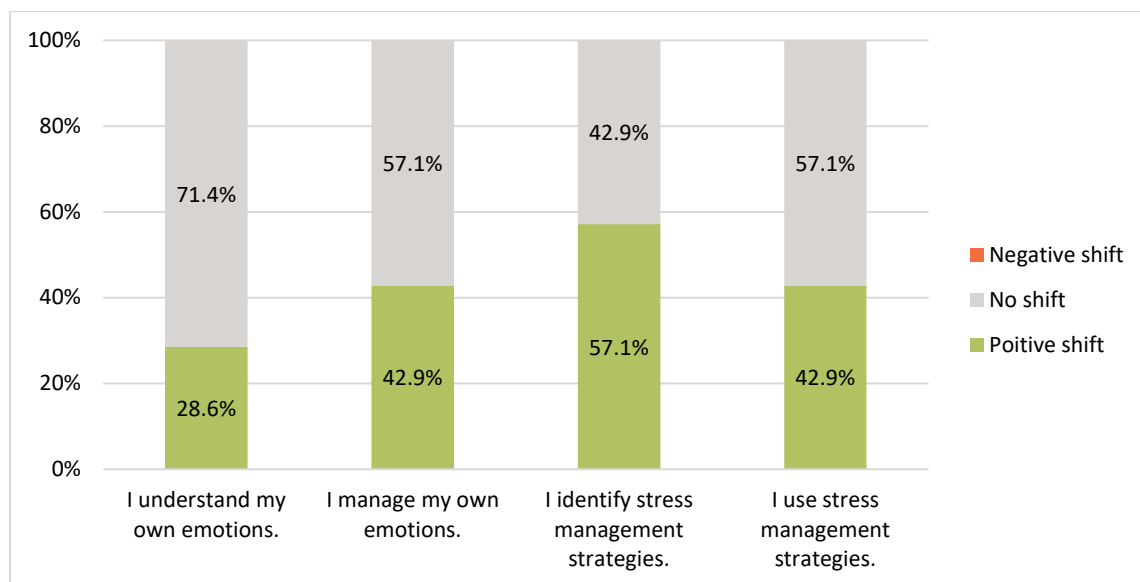


Figure 7: Percentage of Participants with a Positive Shift in their Scores for Skills in Self-Management After Participating in Second Order Change (n=7)

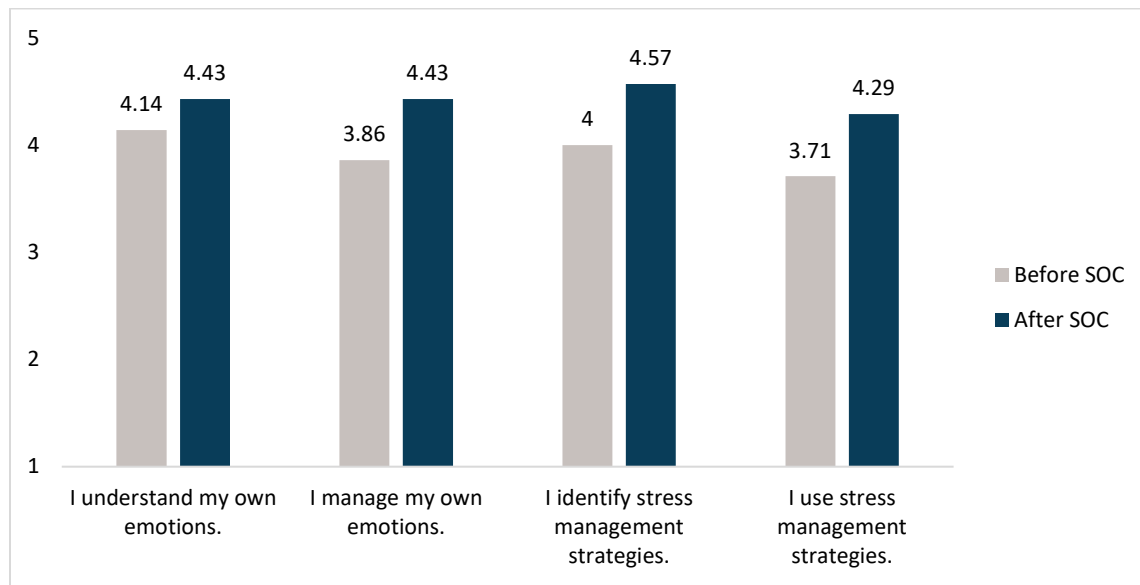


Figure 8: Summary of Average Scores for Skills in Self-Management Before and After Second Order Change (n=7) (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Skills in Decision-Making

More than half of participants (57.1%) indicated a positive impact of Second Order Change on their ability to make caring and constructive choices about their personal behavior across diverse situations. This skill, as well as the ability to make caring and constructive choices about social interactions across diverse situations both saw an increase in the average score of all participants of 0.57 after participating in Second Order Change.

Table 7: Summary of Skills in Decision-Making for Participants Before and After Second Order Change (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)

	Average score before SOC	Average score after SOC	Change in average score	% With a positive shift in individual score
I make caring and constructive choices about my personal behavior across diverse situations. (n=7)	3.57	4.14	0.57	57.1%
I make caring and constructive choices about my social interactions across diverse situations. (n=7)	3.57	4.14	0.57	42.9%

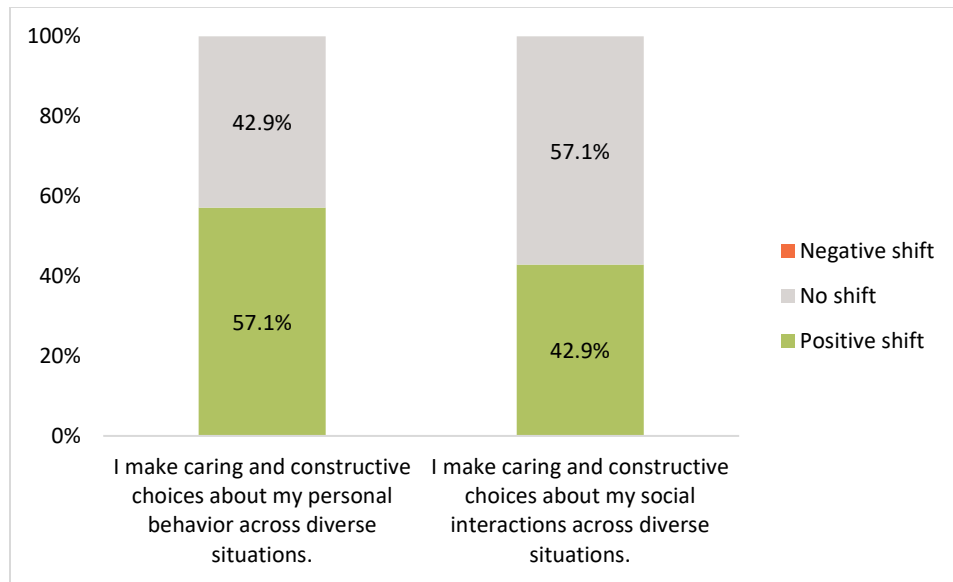


Figure 9: Percentage of Individual Participants with a Positive Shift in their Scores for Skills in Decision Making Before After Participating in Second Order Change (n=7)

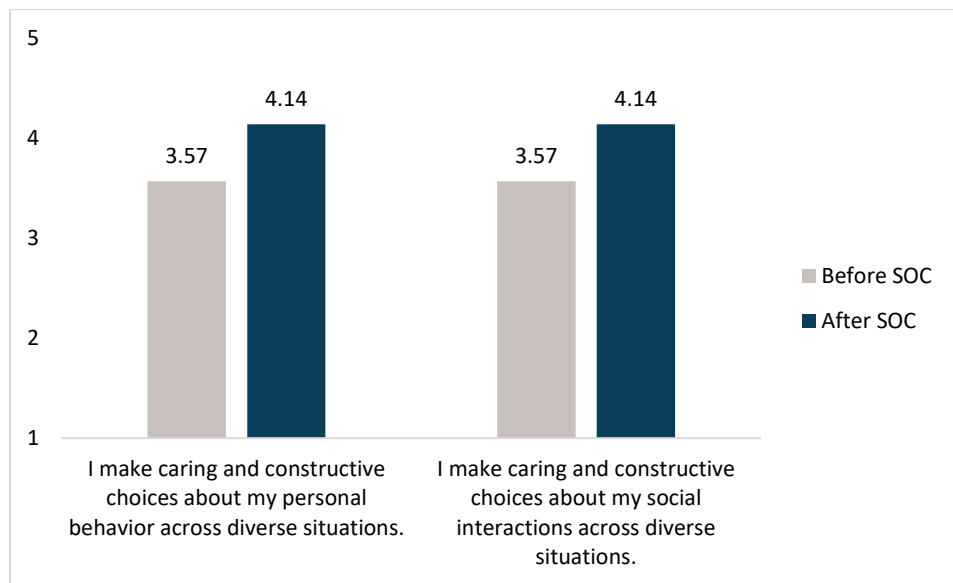


Figure 10: Summary of Average Scores for Skills in Decision Making Before and After Second Order Change (n=7) (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Youth Program Quality

Six of the Second Order Change participants who completed a survey (85.7%) indicated that their role includes working with youth. Of these six participants, one (16.7%) indicated that Second Order Change had a positive impact on their ability to create a safe environment for youth, and two (33.3%) indicated that Second Order Change had a positive impact on their ability to create an engaging environment for youth. This led to small changes in the average score for all participants in both cases (change of 0.17 for creating a safe environment and 0.33 for creating an engaging environment). There were no participants who indicated a positive impact of Second Order Change on their ability to create a supportive environment for youth or to create an interactive environment for youth.

*Table 8: Summary of Indicators of Youth Program Quality Before and After Second Order Change
(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Average score before SOC	Average score after SOC	Change in average score	% With a positive shift in individual score
I create a safe environment for youth. (n=6)	4.33	4.50	0.17	16.7%
I create a supportive environment for youth. (n=6)	4.17	4.17	0.00	0.0%
I create an interactive environment for youth. (n=6)	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.0%
I create an engaging environment for youth. (n=6)	3.67	4.00	0.33	33.3%

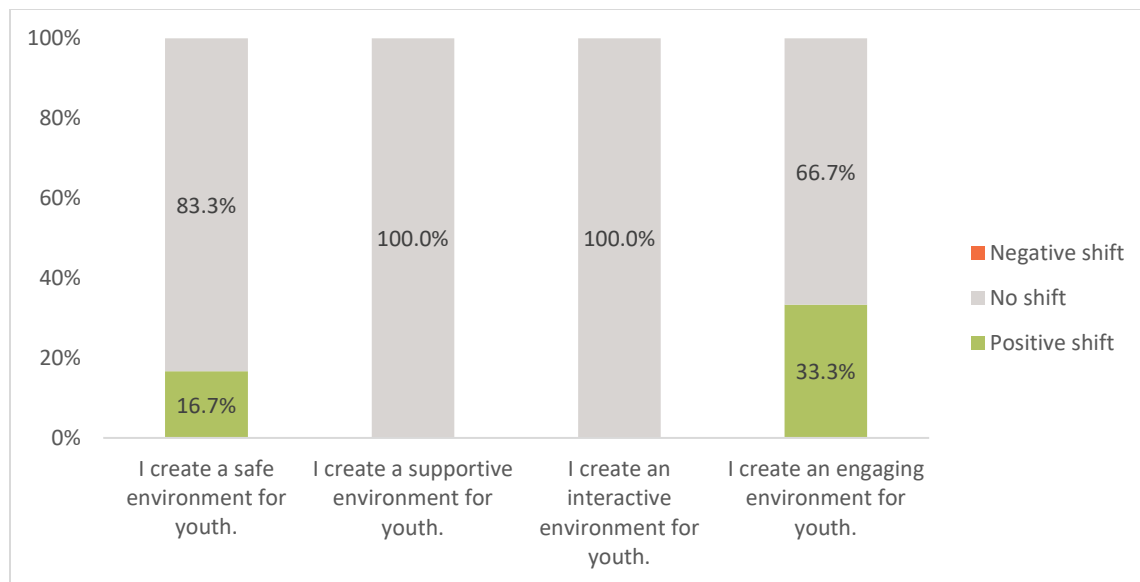


Figure 11: Percentage of Participants with a Positive Shift in their Scores for Indicators of Youth Program After Participating in Second Order Change (n=6)

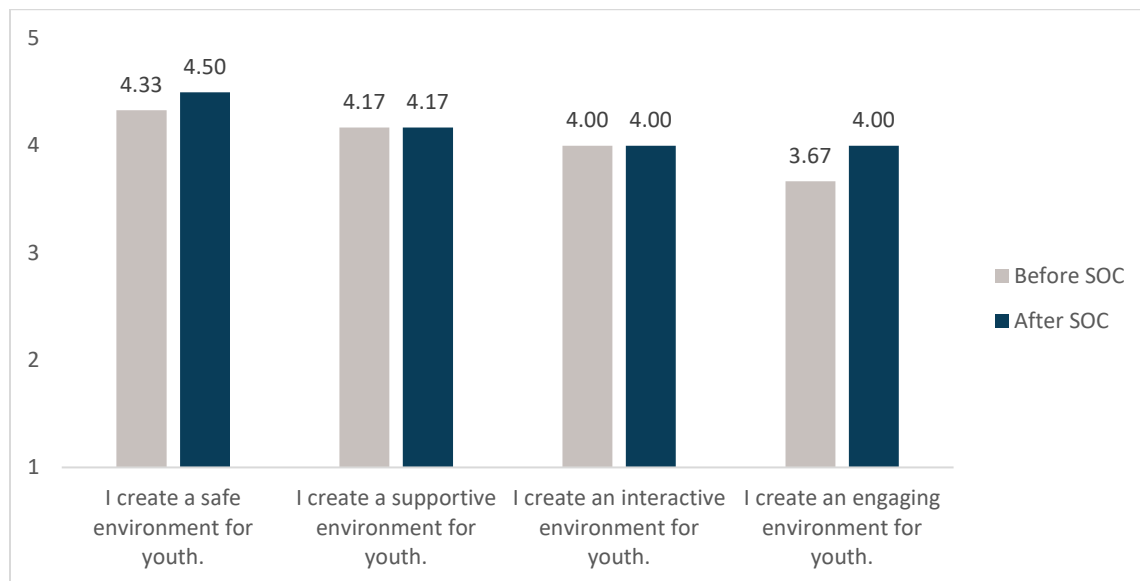


Figure 12: Summary of Indicators of Youth Program Quality Before and After Second Order Change (n=6) (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Second Order Change Participant Feedback

Participants were asked four open-ended questions at the end of the survey targeted at obtaining feedback to improve future programs. A summary of responses to each of the four questions is included below.

“How has your AYDC Second Order Change experience impacted you?”

Six participants responded to this question and described a number of ways their Second Order Change experience impacted them. Three participants referenced networking or building connections and a sense of community. Other responses included building an awareness of leadership competencies; building a deeper sense of self-reflection; and feeling more open to hearing other people’s perspectives, to sharing, and to feeling vulnerable.

“Please give an example of a time you changed your practice with youth or staff that was a result of your participation in Second Order Change.”

Six participants responded to this question with examples. Examples included putting more emphasis on ways they show up and collaborate, feeling more confident around superiors, pausing before taking situations personally, and developing better relationships with coworkers. One participant responded with “helping foster parents leave,” and another participant stated that they are still working on incorporating new skills in their workplace.

“If you were to redesign AYDC Second Order Change, what would you do differently?”

Four participants provided suggestions for improving the Second Order Change program. Three of these individuals suggested making all sessions in person rather than virtual. One participant suggested having more lecture time.

“Is there anything else you would like to share?”

Three participants responded to this question. Two participants expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the course, while the third stated they had nothing else to share.

Discussion

Overall, survey results indicate a positive impact of Second Order Change on participants. The average score of all participants increased in all 17 SEL skills after participating in Second Order Change that were surveyed, and only one of these skills had an average score that was less than 4 (on a scale of 1-5) after participating in Second Order Change. This skill was “I understand the perspectives of others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.” Table 9 below displays those SEL skills with the largest shift in average score after participation in the program, and those skills the smallest shift in average score after participating in the program.

Table 9: Summary of SEL Skills with the Largest and Smallest Shift in Average Score for All Participants After Participating in Second Order Change (n=7)

Skills with <i>Largest</i> Shift in Average Score after Participating		Skills with <i>Smallest</i> Shift in Average Score after Participating	
Skill	Shift in Average Score	Skill	Shift in Average Score
I develop positive relationships.	0.71	I understand the perspectives of others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.	0.29
I communicate effectively.	0.72	I practice collaborative problem solving.	0.28
I seek support and help when needed.	0.72	I understand my own emotions.	0.29

When examining changes in scores for each SEL skill for individual participants, all SEL skills had no fewer than two of the seven participants (28.6%) indicate a positive impact from participating in Second Order Change. The largest percentage of individual participants who indicated a positive impact of Second Order Change on any one skill was 57.1%. Table 10 displays those SEL skills with the largest percentage of participants indicating a positive impact of participating in Second Order Change, and those skills with the smallest percentage of participants indicating a positive impact of participating in Second Order Change.

Table 10: Summary of SEL Skills with the Largest and Smallest Percentage of Participants Indicating a Positive Impact of Participating in Second Order Change (n=7)

Skills with the <i>Largest</i> Percentage of Participants Indicating a Positive Impact of SOC		Skills with <i>Smallest</i> Percentage of Participants Indicating a Positive Impact of SOC	
Skill	Percent of Participants	Skill	Percent of Participants
I believe I can improve my skills and abilities.	57.1%	I understand the perspectives of others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.	28.6%
I communicate effectively.	57.1%	I empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.	28.6%
I seek support and help when needed.	57.1%	I practice collaborative problem solving.	28.6%
I identify stress management strategies.	57.1%	I understand my own emotions.	28.6%
I make caring and constructive choices about my personal behavior across diverse situations.	57.1%		

Participation in Second Order Change appeared to have a smaller impact on Youth Program Quality. Of the six participants who indicated their role includes working with youth, only two of the four areas surveyed saw a positive shift in average score, and this shift was small.

Recommendations

Survey results indicate that participation in Second Order Change had a positive impact on participants in all 17 SEL skills that were surveyed. When comparing those SEL skills that saw the largest and smallest shift in average scores, with those SEL skills that saw the largest and smallest percentage of individual participants who indicated a positive impact of Second Order Change, it appears that Second Order Change had the most significant impact on the following two SEL skills: participant ability to communicate effectively, and participant ability to seek support and help when needed. It appears that Second Order Change had the smallest amount of impact on the following three SEL skills: participant ability to understand the perspectives of others including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts; participant ability to practice collaborative problem solving; and participant ability to understand their own emotions. Survey results indicate that participating in Second Order Change had a smaller impact on Youth Program Quality.

It is difficult to make recommendations based on these survey results due to the small sample size of just seven participants. Center for Safe Alaskans may wish to use these results to maintain an awareness, when planning for future Second Order Change series, of which areas may present the greatest opportunities for the program to impact participants. In addition, the feedback from participants in open-ended questions indicated they would like the opportunity to attend all sessions in person, and that one of the greatest benefits of the program is the opportunities it provides for networking and building a sense of community and connection with other professionals.