

Principles of Belonging in Health Research: Development and Evaluation of an Anti-Oppression and Equity Training

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Researchers hold a collective social and ethical responsibility to dismantle ongoing legacies of structural inequity in epidemiology; this workshop presents a starting point for improving the field of epidemiology through promoting research justice and health equity.

BACKGROUND

The field of epidemiology remains impacted by historical and ongoing legacies of colonialism and other systems of oppression. (1) Training in **anti-oppressive theory and practice** is critical for epidemiologists to produce equitable research and reduce health disparities.

GAPS AND ISSUES

- Despite increases in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives in research, there is a **lack of tailored, interactive, and actionable training** on anti-oppression in epidemiology, public health, and health research broadly. (2)
- EDI training is often implemented performatively as a “checkbox” activity, without institutional or systemic change.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Develop a foundational anti-oppression and equity workshop** with key stakeholders in epidemiology, public health, global health, and medicine.
2. **Evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop** in equipping students, academics, and practitioners with the tools to apply anti-oppression to their studies or field of practice.

PRINCIPLES OF BELONGING IN HEALTH RESEARCH

FORMAT: 1.5 to 3-hour session, delivered virtually or in-person

Co-developed: The workshop is **tailored to each audience’s academic or working context** through co-development with key partners/stakeholders.

Interactive: 60-70% of the workshop is dedicated to **interactive discussion and tailored exercises**.

Practice-based: Participants practice applying anti-oppression principles to **real-world case studies** in epidemiology and public health.

Workshop Outline

Social and Structural Determinants of Health

Intersectionality Theory

Exercise: Reflect on personal and institutional positionality

Colonialism in Epidemiological and Public Health Research

Case Study 1: Tailored case study for specific audience’s working context

Critical Perspectives on Epidemiological Methods

Exercise: Interpret a health data finding through an anti-oppression lens

White Saviourism and Critical Allyship

Case Study 2: Tailored case study for specific audience’s working context

METHODS

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The workshop has been delivered to over 800 students, researchers and clinicians in North America. At the end of the workshop, we invited all participants to participate in a short online anonymous survey. A total of 119 respondents completed the survey.

POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY

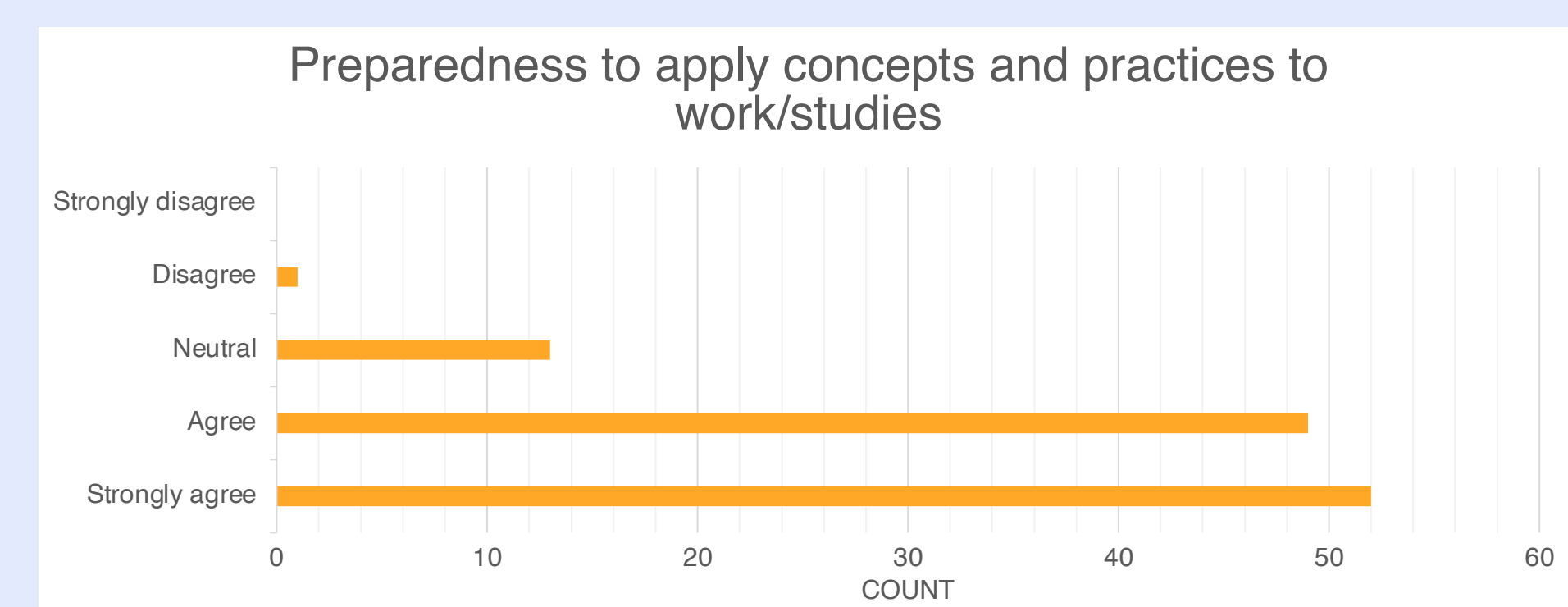
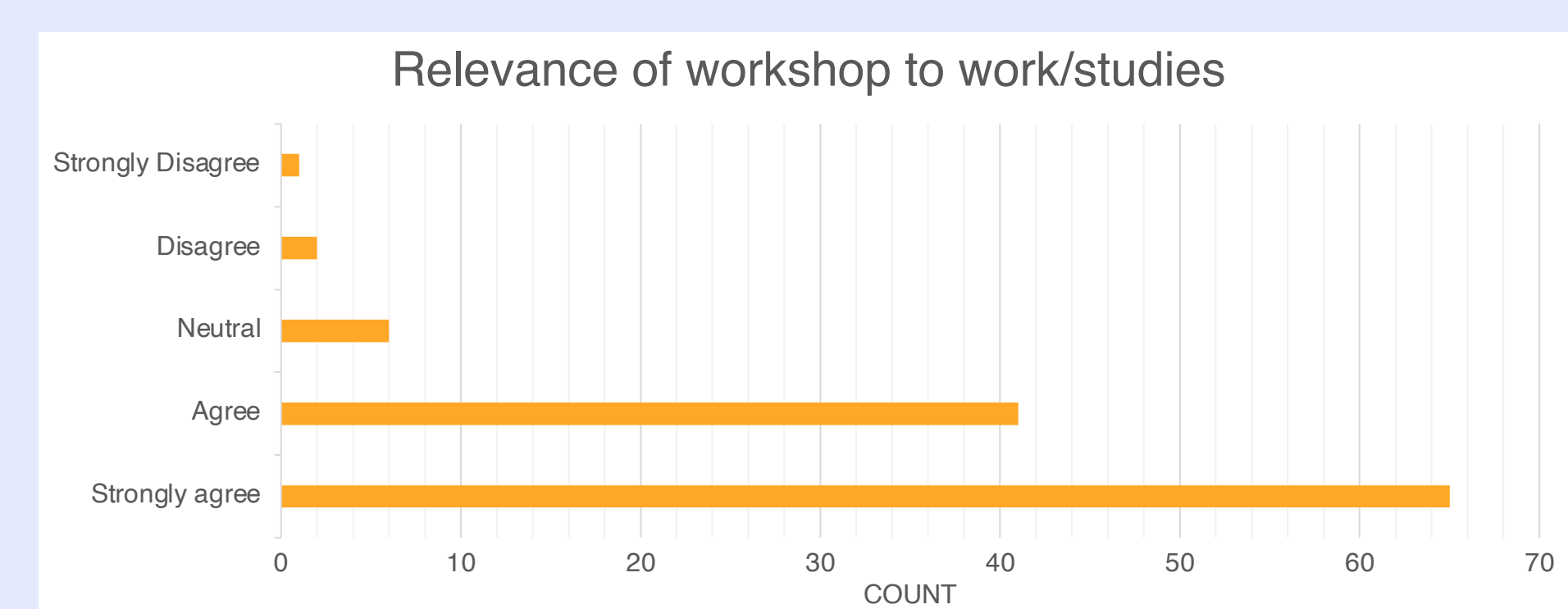
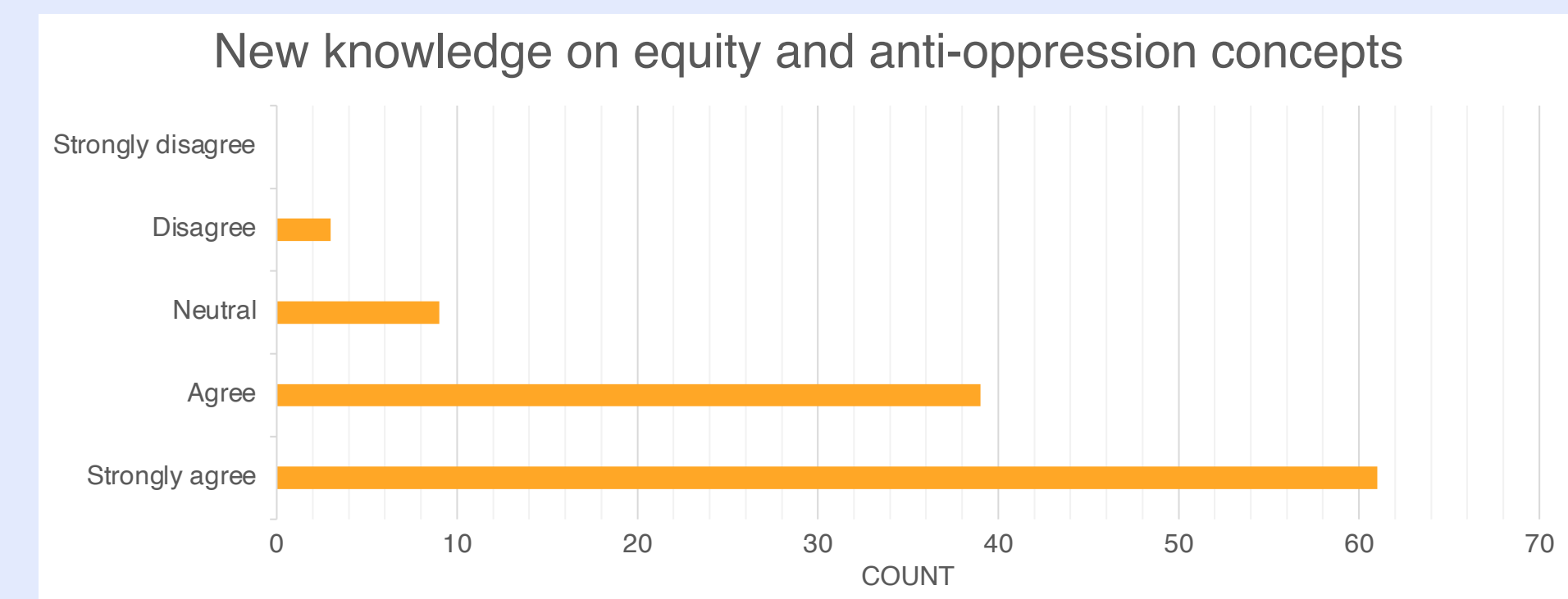
The survey included questions on the effectiveness of the workshop in providing participants with **new knowledge on equity and anti-oppression concepts** and preparing the participants to **apply these concepts and practices to their work**, and the **relevance of the workshop** in their areas of work. Participants provided **5-point Likert scale** answers to these questions. The survey also included **short-answer questions** on which part of the workshop they found to be the most useful for their work, potential topics they would like to learn through subsequent sessions, and other general feedback.

DATA ANALYSIS

To quantitatively evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop, we calculated the proportions of participants who selected each Likert scale level (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). We also qualitatively analyzed the participants' short answer responses to identify their qualitative assessments of the workshop.

RESULTS

Participants were asked to complete a brief **feedback survey** during or immediately following the workshop. **118 participants** (100 students, 18 academics) responded to the survey, and some submissions were excluded for missing or erroneous responses.



CONCLUSIONS



There is a greater need for **tailored and interactive training** on anti-oppression in the fields of epidemiology, public health, and global health.



Our findings indicate that the “Principles of Belonging” workshop is effective in educating and preparing participants to **apply these concepts and practices in their areas of study/work**.



Due to the **performative implementation** of “EDI training”, further consideration is required on how to develop **longer-term relationships** with partner organizations globally and facilitate steps toward **meaningful action** against health inequity.



These workshops serve as a starting point to improve the field of epidemiology and public health through the lens of **social justice and health equity**.

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