

# Traditional Wellness Gatherings

June - October 2023



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH**  
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

- Gatherings held once per month throughout June - October 2023
  - 2 virtual gatherings
  - 3 in-person gatherings
  
- In-person gatherings hosted in different Service planning Areas (SPA) throughout LA county
  - Event #2 was in SPA 7 - East LA
  - Event #4 was in SPA 3 - San Gabriel Valley
  - Event #5 was in SPA 2 - San Fernando Valley

# OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Created by the LACDMH American Indian/Alaska Native UsCC subcommittee and brought to you by So'oh-Shinálí Sister Project

## Traditional Wellness Gatherings

skoden: Strengths and Self-Efficacy

**Free gatherings** **June 10, 2023** **from 10:00am-2:00pm** **Traditional cultural activities!**

**location: Virtual/Zoom** [sssp.la/TWG-2023](https://sssp.la/TWG-2023)

Join us as we honor our minds, bodies, and spirits through grounding techniques, movement, and physical wellness

**Chelsey Luger (Anishinaube & Lakota) & Thosh Collins (Ojibwa, Osage, & Seneca-Cayuga)** are the co-founders of Well For Culture, an Indigenous wellness initiative, and are the co-authors of The Seven Circles: Indigenous Teachings for Living Well. They share a passion for pushing the wellness conversation forward in an equitable and welcoming way, defying stereotypes and demanding the inclusion of Indigenous voices and perspectives.

**Phil Hale (Diné)** has worked in the Los Angeles Native community for decades and has contributed to sustaining cultural teachings through several roles, including as an educator, singer, facilitator, and as a coach with Native youth.

Questions? Contact **Eva Powless** at [Eva@ssisterproject.org](mailto:Eva@ssisterproject.org) or (323) 916-6415

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## Traditional Wellness Gatherings

Being a Good Relative: Kinship and Connection

**Free gatherings** **July 29, 2023** **from 10:00am-2:00pm** **Traditional cultural activities!**

**location: Huntington Park Library**  
6518 Miles Ave. Huntington Park, CA 90255

**Virginia Carmelo (Gabrielino/Tongva)** has dedicated her life to Indigenous activism, with focus on the preservation and revitalization of Tongva tribal song, dance, story, and regalia. Virginia served over a decade as a Tribal Council Member and Tribal Chairperson of the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation within the Los Angeles Basin.

**Avril Cordova (Taos Pueblo & Oglala Lakota)** is an Indigenous language warrior, Entrepreneur and the Owner/Operator of AC & Associates. Avril is a prominent advocate within the Los Angeles American Indian/Alaskan Native community. Connecting, Educating and Empowering communities and Future Generations. Avril has extensive experience coordinating, hosting, and facilitating Indigenous community events.

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## Traditional Wellness Gatherings

Intergen Resilience: Plant Medicines

**Free gatherings** **August 26, 2023** **from 10:00am-2:00pm** **Traditional cultural activities!**

**location: Virtual/Zoom** [sssp.la/TWG-3](https://sssp.la/TWG-3)

**Katya Adachi Serrano, MD (Ho-chunk/Ojibwe/Japanese)** is medical director at LAGS Recovery Centers, Inc. in Santa Monica, CA as well as owner of Serrano Natural Health. She is board certified in Family Medicine, Addiction Medicine, and Integrative Medicine. Her approach to medicine is to honor and respect the whole person, using the best tools of both modern and traditional medicine to achieve balance and wellness.

**Kylee Jones, LCSW** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW #110243) at Indigenous Circle of Wellness. Kylee is a multiracial woman who has a passion for advocacy, outreach, and representation. She has worked in the urban Native community within the Los Angeles and Riverside Counties for over six years.

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## Traditional Wellness Gatherings

Modern NDN: Beading and Belonging

**Children and Full Families Welcome!** **September 23, 2023** **from 10:00am-2:00pm** **Traditional cultural activities!**

**location: South El Monte Community Center**  
(1530 Central Ave, South El Monte, CA 91733)  
Open to American Indian/Alaska Native community members within Los Angeles County

**Brighid (Birdie) Pulskamp (Diné)** is a Dine artist and the creator of June Beach Designs. She facilitates multiple spaces within the local Indigenous community to share about the art of beading and teachings of beading as medicine.

**Stephanie Mushrush (Washoe Tribe of NV & CA, and Filipino)** Stephanie works as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for American Indian Counseling Center. Stephanie has served the SoCal and broader Native community for over 20 years, as a direct service provider, community organizer, and volunteer, including her role as Many Winters Gathering of Elders Organizing Committee Chair.

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## Traditional Wellness Gatherings

Now What: Release for Healing

**Children and Full Families Welcome!** **October 14, 2023** **from 10:00am-2:00pm** **Traditional cultural activities!**

**location: Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural**  
12677 Glenoaks Blvd. Sylmar, CA 91342  
Open to American Indian/Alaska Native community members within Los Angeles County

**Jessa Calderon (Chumash/Tongva)** Justice Director for Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples. She will be offering a wellness workshop where we will explore how the mind, body, and spirit are all connected and tools to keep us healthy and balanced.

**Dr. Melanie Cain (Santa Clara Pueblo and Jicarilla Apache)** is from Espanola, New Mexico. She is a licensed psychologist and a veteran of the United States Air Force. Dr. Cain has served the Los Angeles American Indian community for 11 years and works with.

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# OUTREACH

## Local Indigneous Artists

- Graphic Designer
- Videographer
- Photograher

Google Forms

Social Media

Flyers

Weekly/bi-weekly emails

Tabling at AI/AN  
community events

Phone calls

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Total of 284 participants registered to our gatherings from all SPAs**
- **Total of 187 participants attended the 5 events**
  - Event #1 - 37 attendees
  - Event #2 - 33 attendees
  - Event #3 - 38 attendees
  - Event #4 - 47 attendees
  - Event #5 - 32 attendees

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[sssp.la/TWG-2](https://sssp.la/TWG-2)



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[sssp.la/TWG-4](https://sssp.la/TWG-4)



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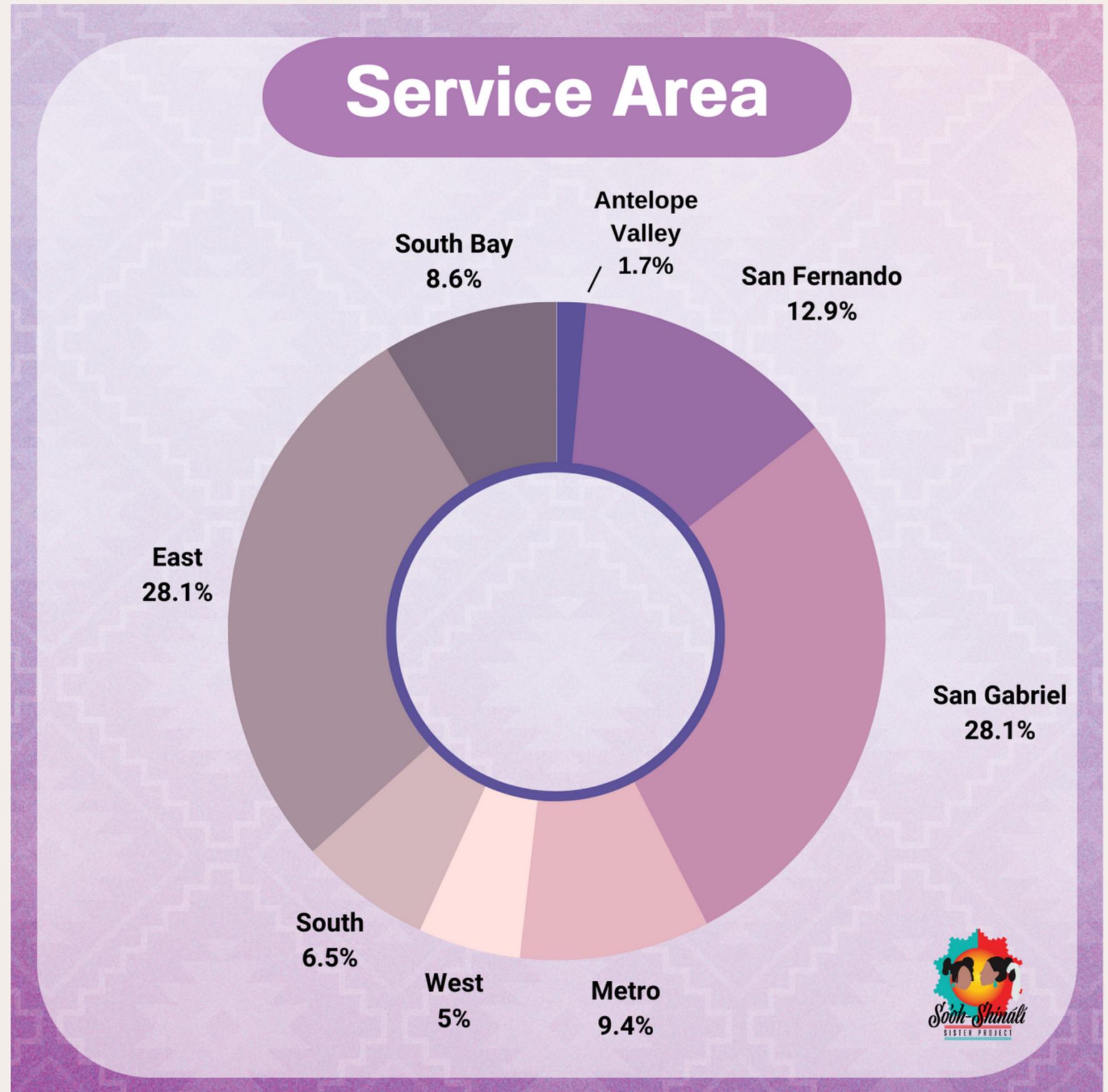
[sssp.la/TWG-5](https://sssp.la/TWG-5)



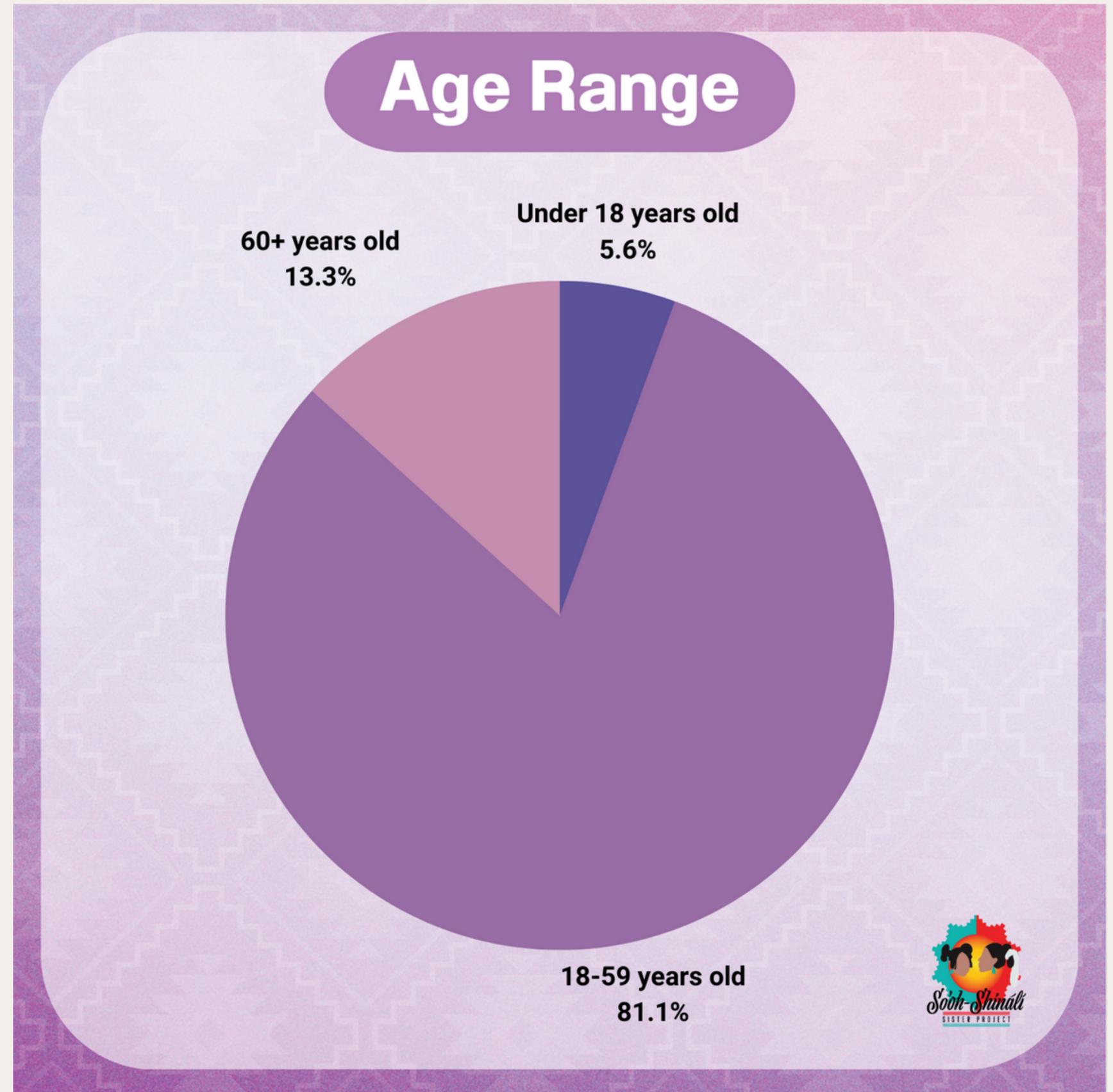
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# Survey Findings

This graph shows that majority of our attendees reside in SPA 3 (San Gabriel) and SPA 7 (East) within LA county. This graph indicates we engaged less attendees from SPA 1 (Antelope Valley), SPA 5 (West) and SPA 6 (South).

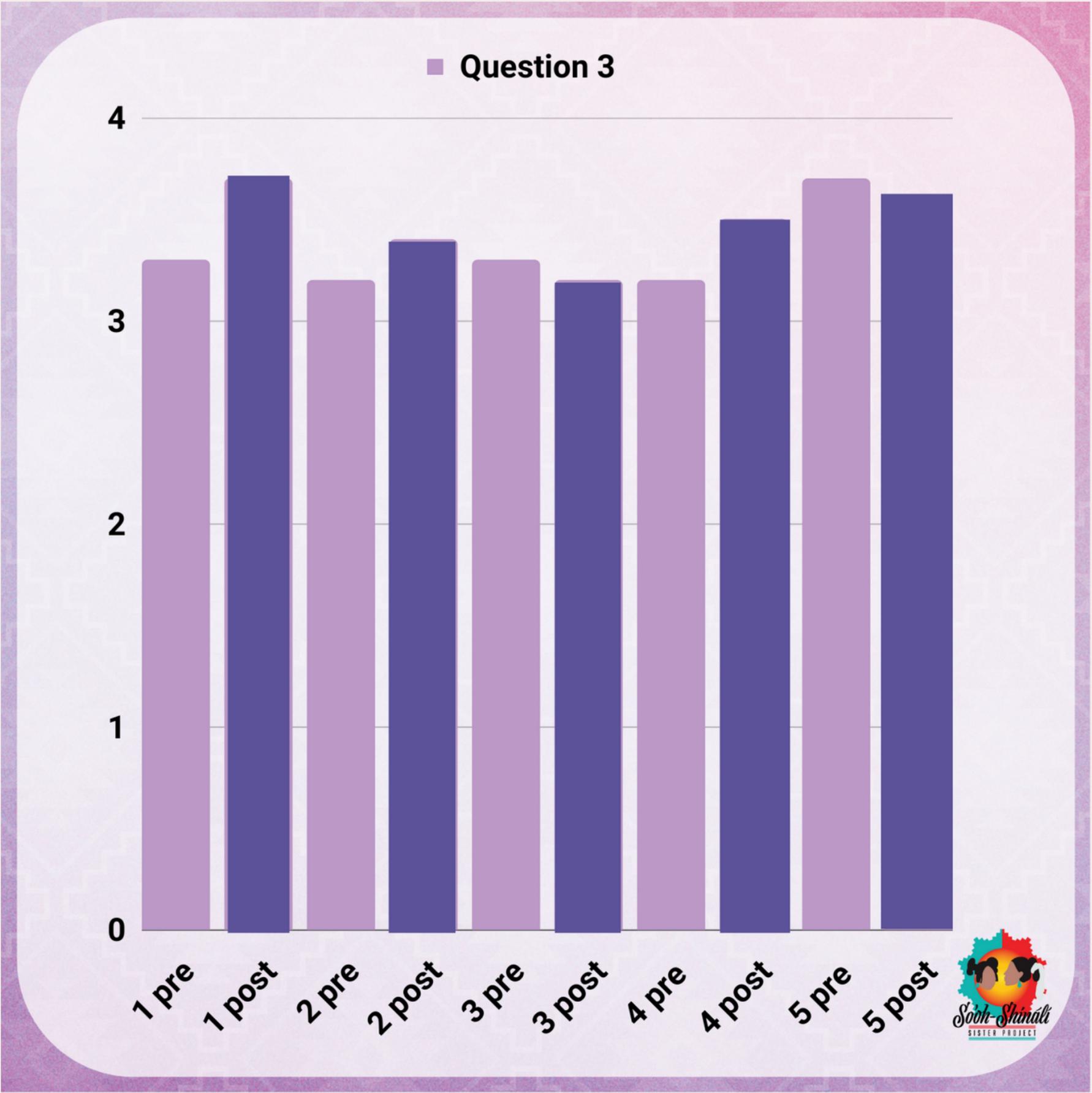


This graph shows majority of attendees were between the ages of 18-59 years old. The graph indicates we engaged less youth and elders in comparison to adults 18-59 years old.



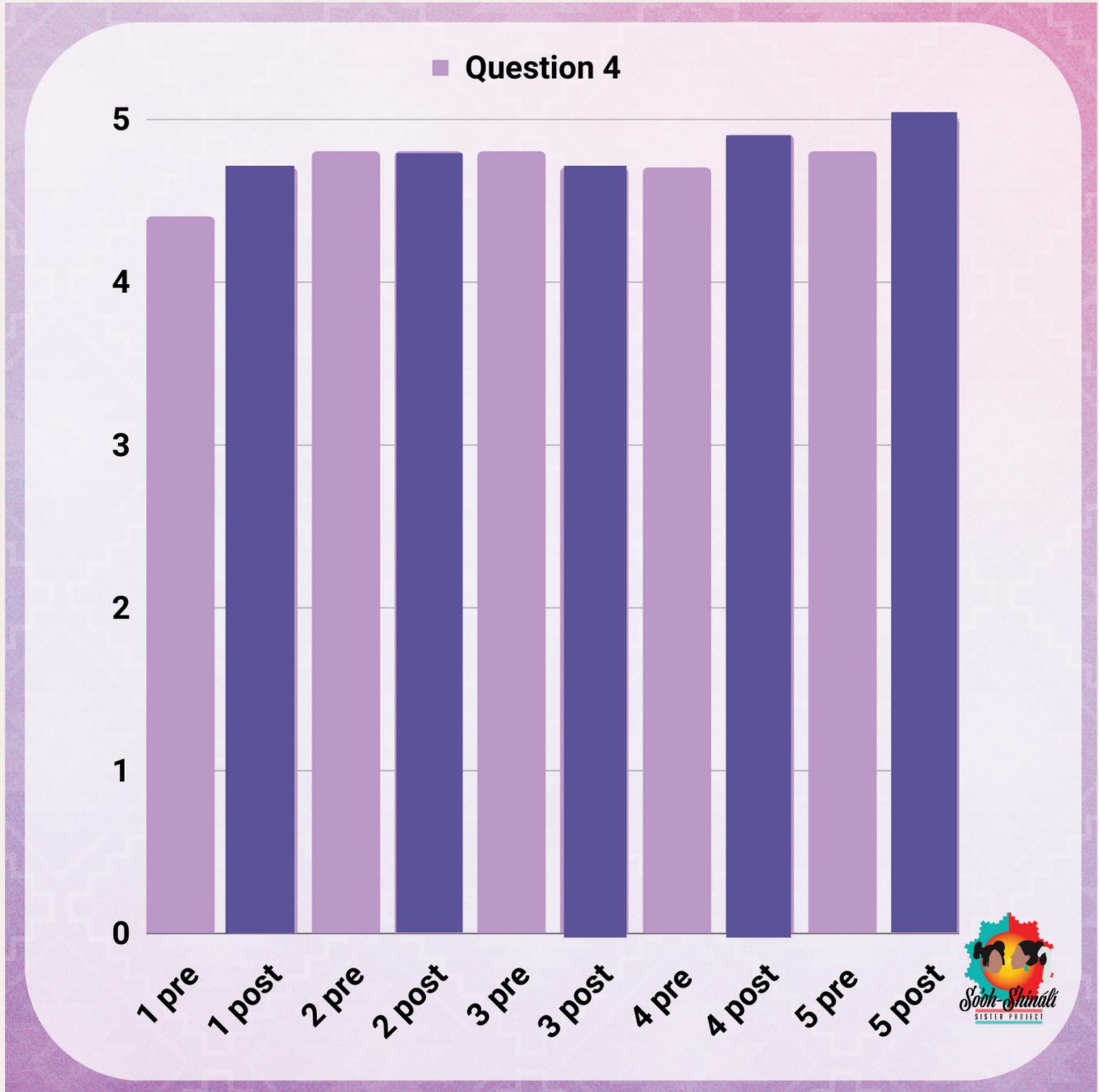
**How much knowledge do you have of the AI/AN and/or Indigenous community in Los Angeles? (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 being none at all and 5 being a great deal of knowledge)**

This graph shows that on average, attendees rated their knowledge of the AI/AN and/or Indigenous community in LA between 3-4.



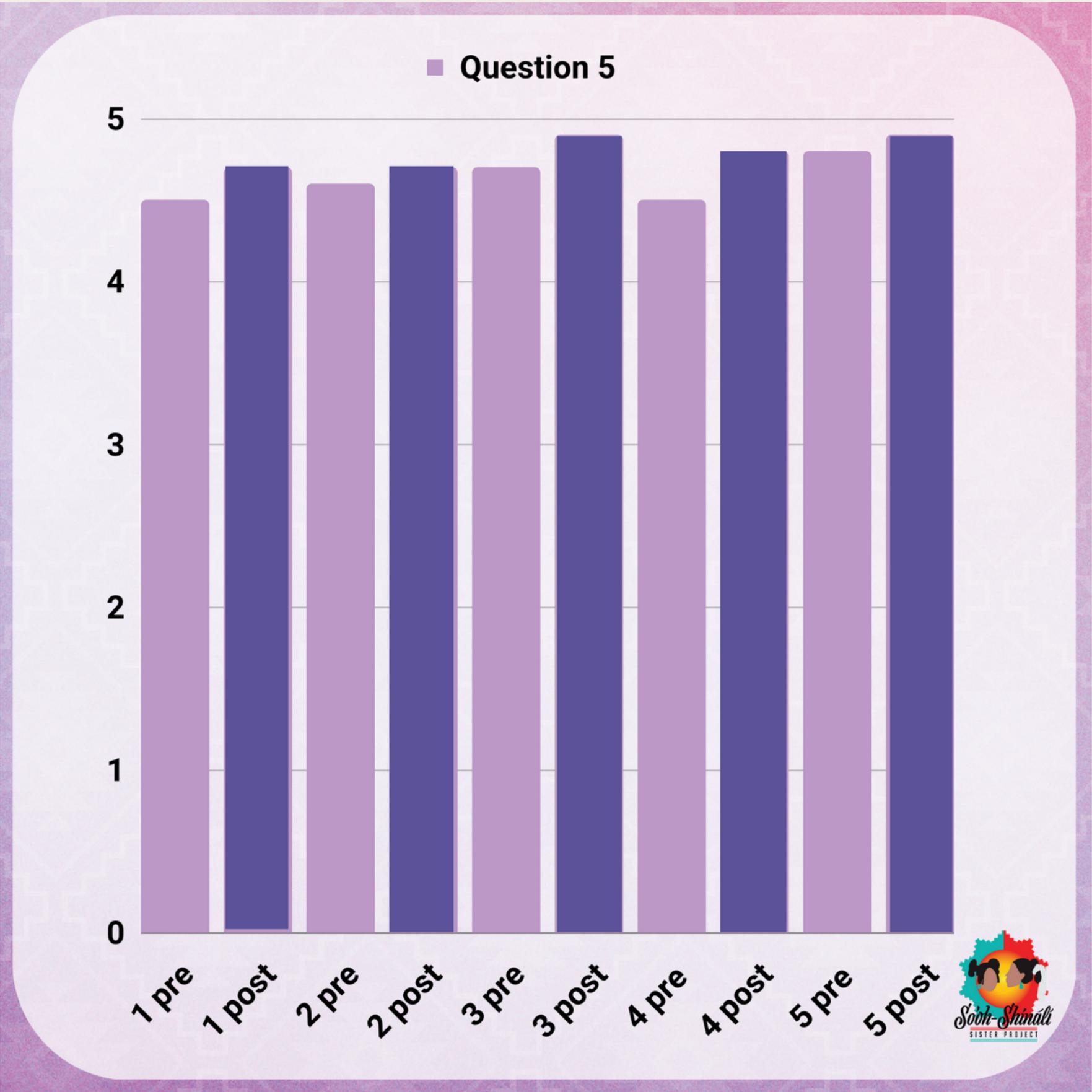
**To what extent do you think it is helpful for AI/ANs and/or Indigenous people to engage in cultural practices when experiencing mental health challenges (i.e. traditional medicines, traditional ceremony, drumming, etc.)? (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 being not at all helpful and 5 being very helpful)**

This graph shows that community members think engaging in cultural practices when experiencing mental health challenges is helpful to very helpful. This graph also shows an increase in participants agreeing with the statement after attending the gatherings, as evidenced by the post-survey data.



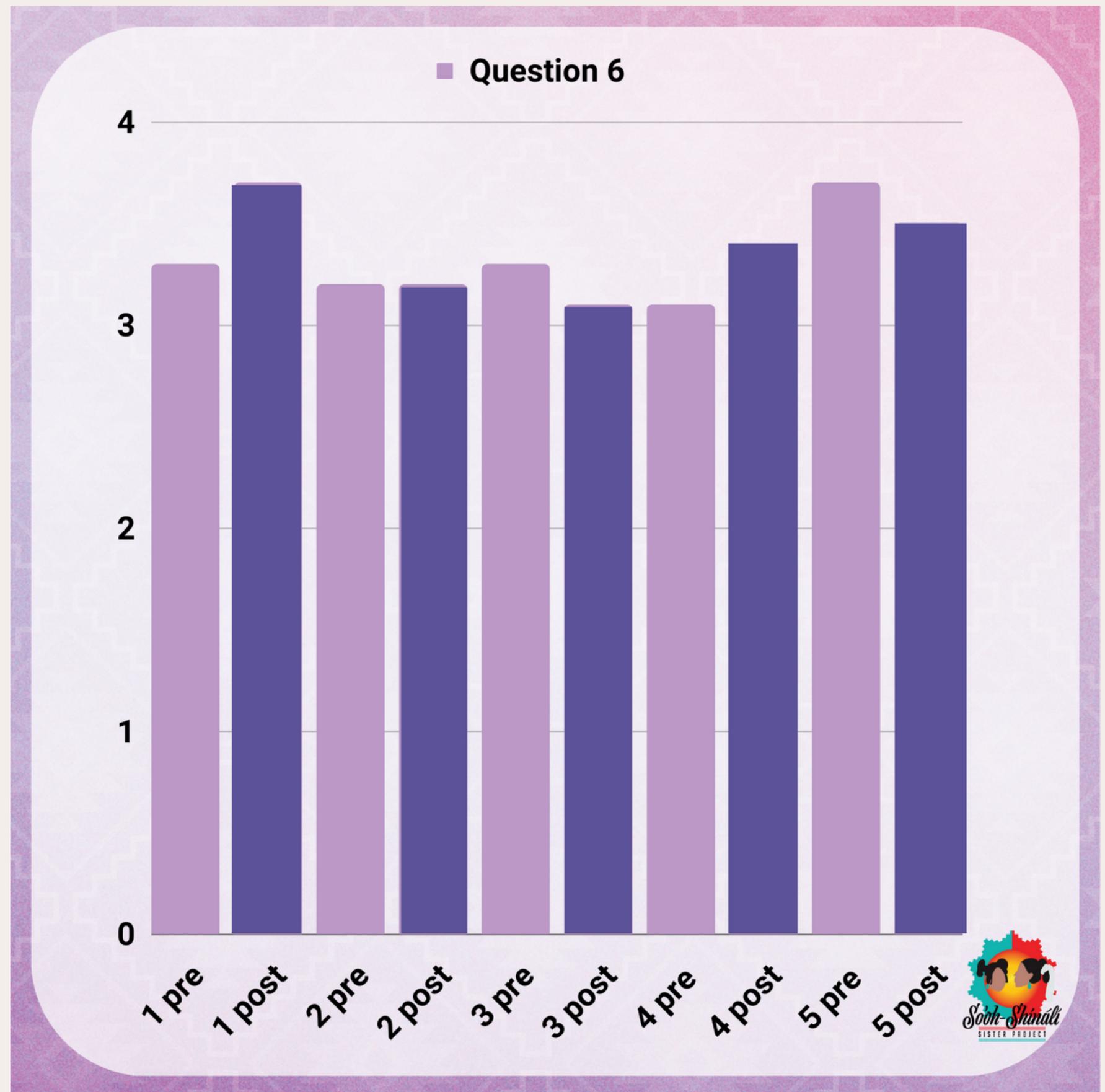
**How helpful do you think talking circles are for AI/AN and/or Indigenous peoples' mental health? (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 being not at all helpful and 5 being very helpful)**

This graph shows community members think talking circles are helpful to very helpful for AI/AN and/or Indigenous peoples' mental health. This graph also shows an increase in participants agreeing with the statement after attending the gatherings, as evidenced by the post-survey data.



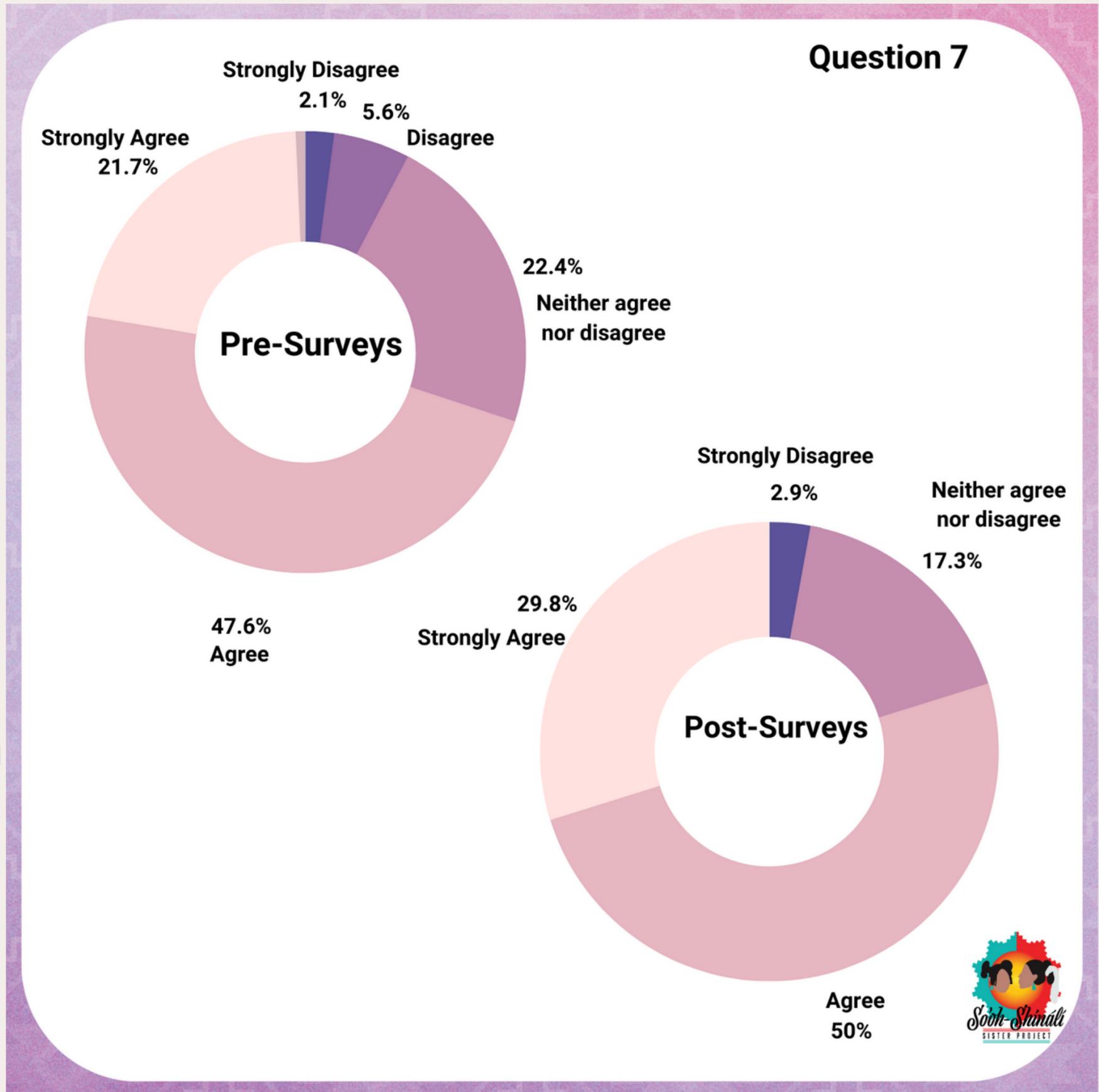
**How much knowledge do you have of traditional forms of healing? (circle one below) (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 being none at all and 5 being a great deal of knowledge)**

This graph shows that on average, attendees rated their knowledge of traditional forms of healing between 3-4. This graph also shows an overall increase in knowledge after attending the gatherings, as evidenced by the post-survey data.



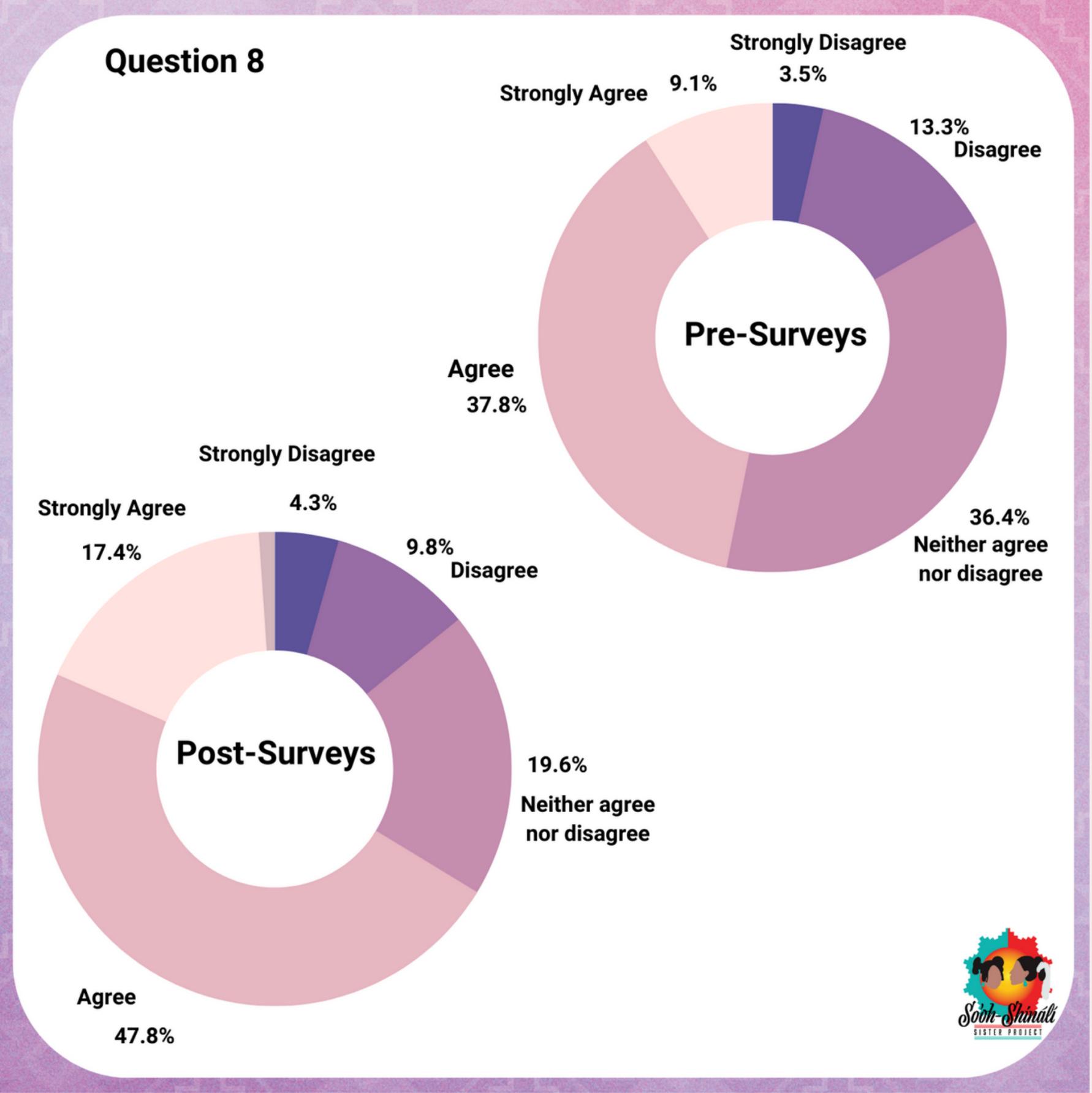
**To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am confident I have access to mental health resources in Los Angeles County.**

This graph shows an increase in participants feeling confident accessing mental health resources in LA county after attending the gatherings, as evidenced by the post-survey data.



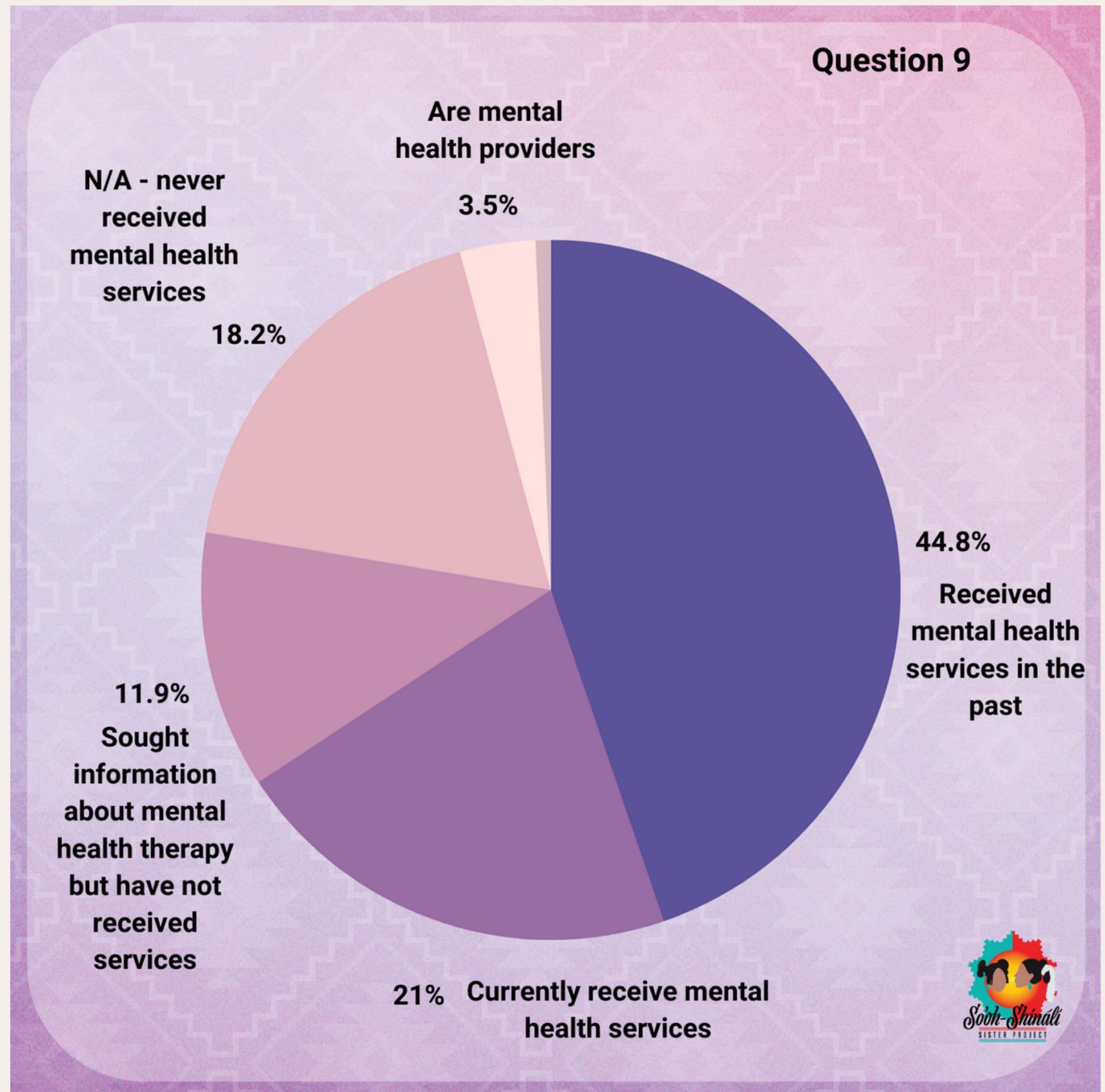
**To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am confident I have access to mental health services that are culturally sensitive to AI/AN and Indigenous peoples.**

This graph shows an increase in participants feeling confident they have access to culturally sensitive mental health resources in LA county after attending the gatherings, as evidenced by the post-survey data.



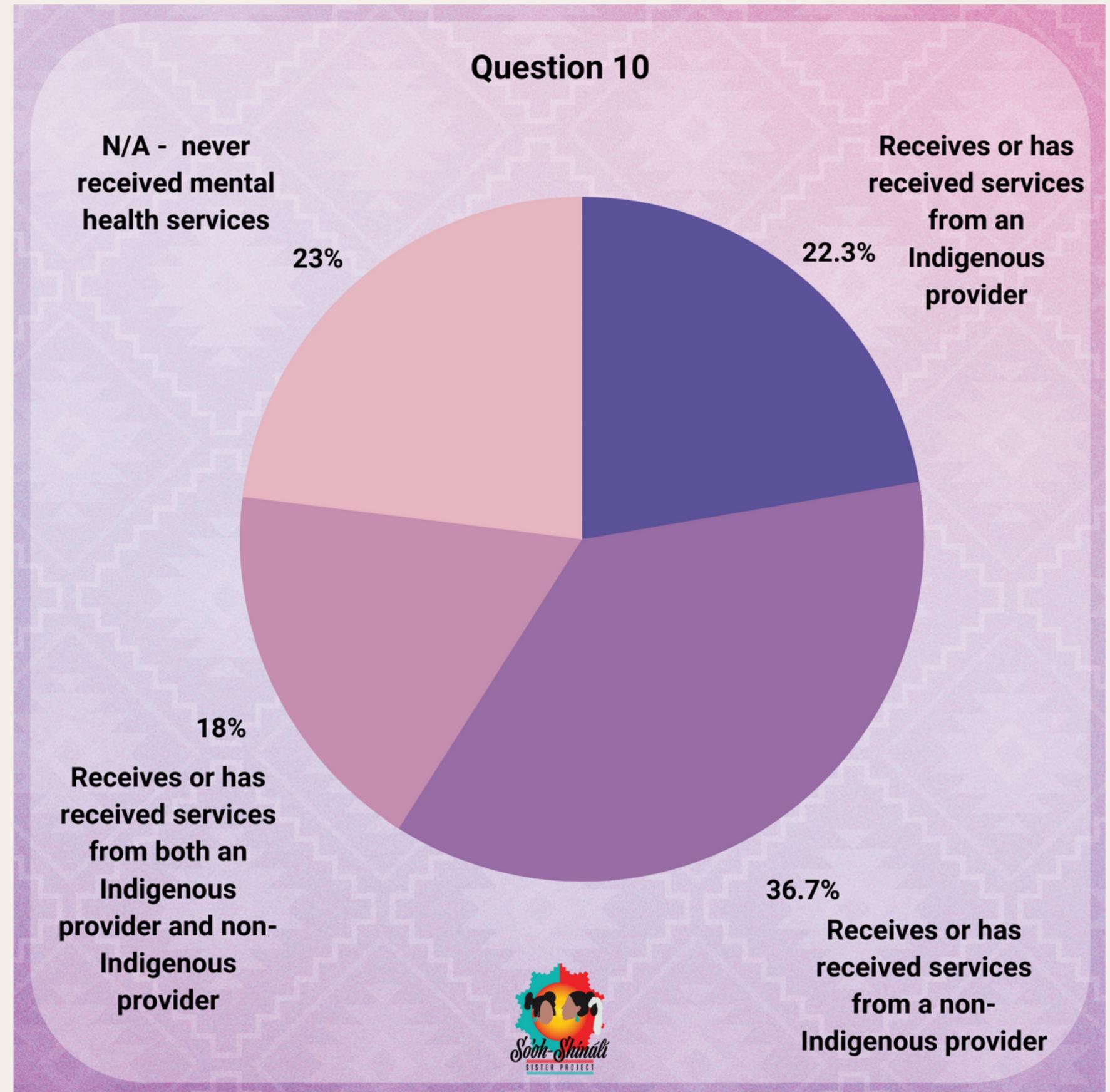
# Which describes your experience receiving mental health service?

This graph shows majority of attendees currently receive or have received mental health therapy services in the past.



**If you have received mental health services in the past, please select the option that best describes your experience:**

This graph shows that majority of attendees receive or have received services from a non-Indigenous mental health provider. This graph demonstrates a need to increase access to AI/AN and/or Indigenous providers.



# Please share any barriers to seeking mental health support:

## Question 11 - Barriers to Seeking Mental Health Services

### Financial

- Cost of services
- Affordability

### Lack of AI/AN and/or Indigenous providers

- Limited availability
- Long waitlists

### Time

- Busy personal schedules

### Discomfort

- Unsure about talking to a provider

### Wait lists

- Long delays to begin services

### Insurance coverage

- Lack of health insurance
- Lack of AI/AN provider options within network
- Insurance not accepted by AI/AN provider

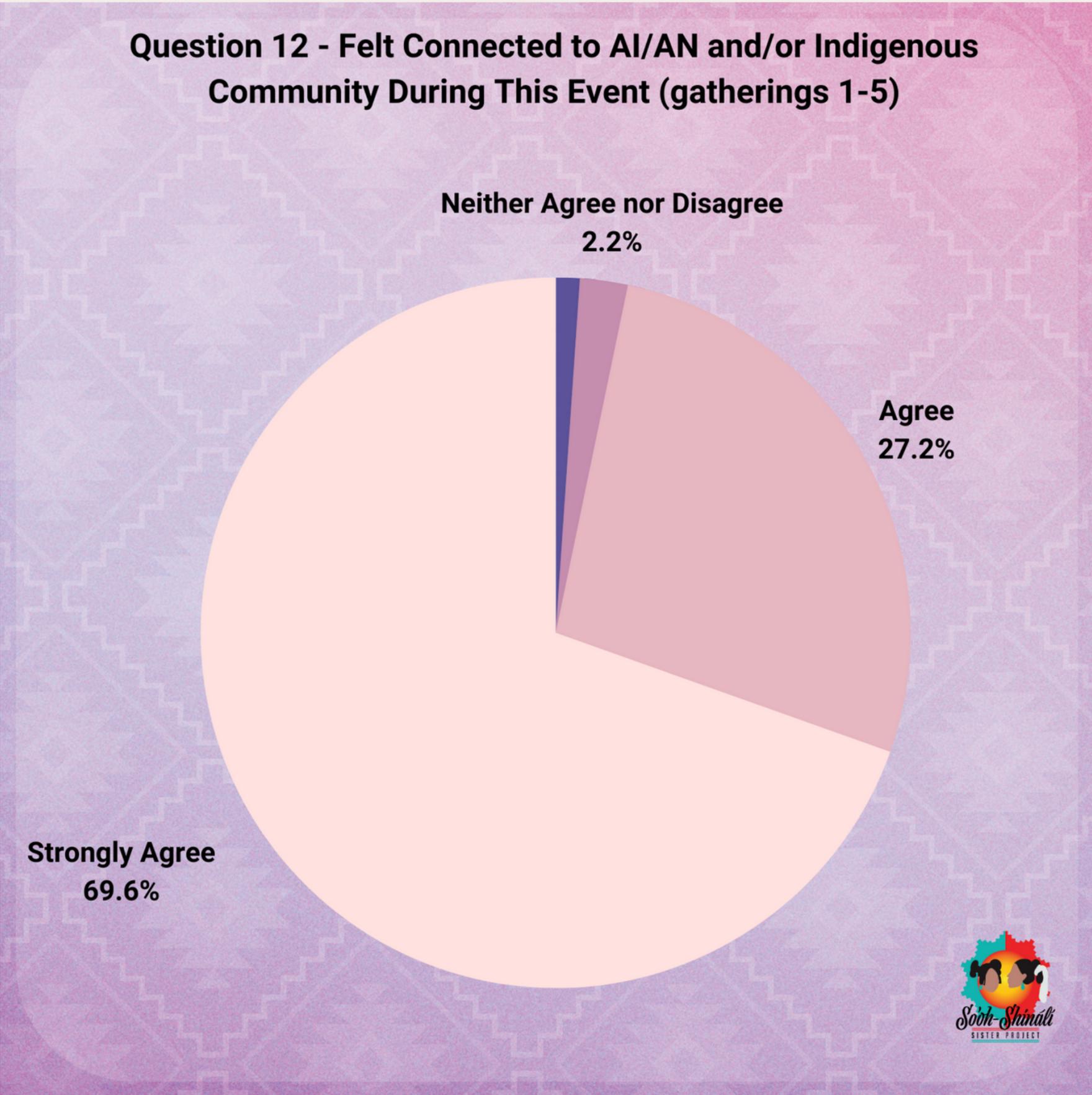
### Transportation

- Distance
- Gas prices



**To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I felt connected to the AI/AN and/or Indigenous community during this event.**

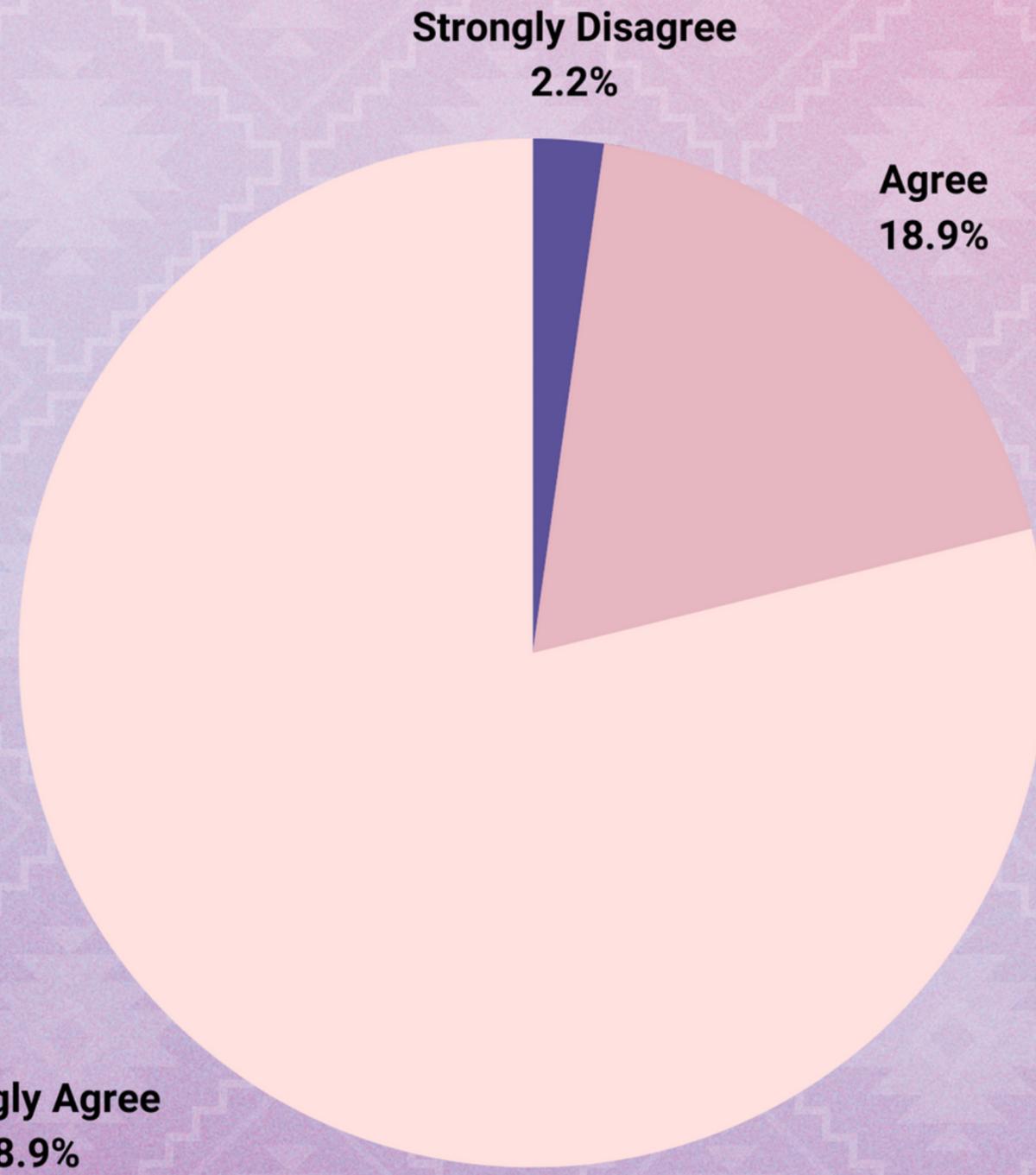
This graph shows most attendees felt connected to AI/AN and/or Indigenous community during the series of gatherings.



**To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Participating in this Traditional Wellness Gathering positively impacted my mental health.**

This graph shows most attendees felt that participating in the series of gatherings positively impacted their mental health.

**Question 13 - Participating in this Traditional Wellness Gathering Positively Impacted My Mental Health (gatherings 1-5)**



## Positive Comments/Community Feedback

“Thank you for providing this space for healing and practice. I feel like my day has started in a healthy way (Mental, Physical, and Social). I will put into my daily practice what I have learned today.”

“I genuinely see this as access to culturally relevant mental health services. Thank you so much for hosting this and I look forward to future gatherings.”

“Thank you, the gathering was mind/heart opening. Absolutely enjoy the energy and vulnerability.”

“These are very impactful events. Thank you for the care and opportunity for us to gather.”

“This wellness gave so many ways to heal. Thank You so much”



## **Recommendations**

**More support for full families/child care assistance for caregivers during events**

**Increase and improve access to AI/AN and Indigenous mental health providers and talking circles/support groups**

**Transportation assistance for attendees for the purpose of decreasing barriers to accessing events**

**More inclusive of gathering Indigenous LGBTQIA2S+ data on pre- and post- surveys**

**More programming specific to Elders**

**More programming specific to AI/AN youth**

**More collaboration,  
promotion and  
networking of AI/AN  
events within AI/AN  
organizations  
throughout LA County**

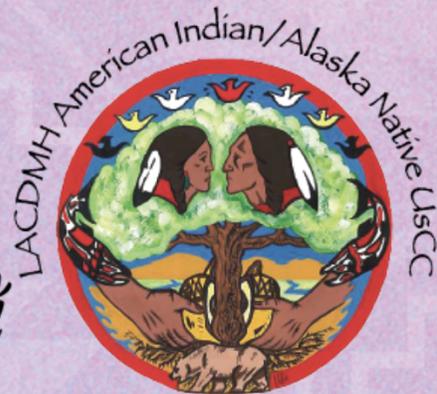
**Better incentives for  
survey completion**

**More time to secure venue  
spaces for in-person  
events**

**Continue to include pre-  
survey questions in  
participant registration**

**Transition to electronic  
pre- and post- surveys**

# Thank You!



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