

Awareness and Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Findings from Health Workshops with Somali and Ethiopian Women

Bilsuma Adema | Women's Health Educator & Navigator
International Institute of Minnesota
New American Healthcare Initiative (NAHI) Women Health Workshops

Background

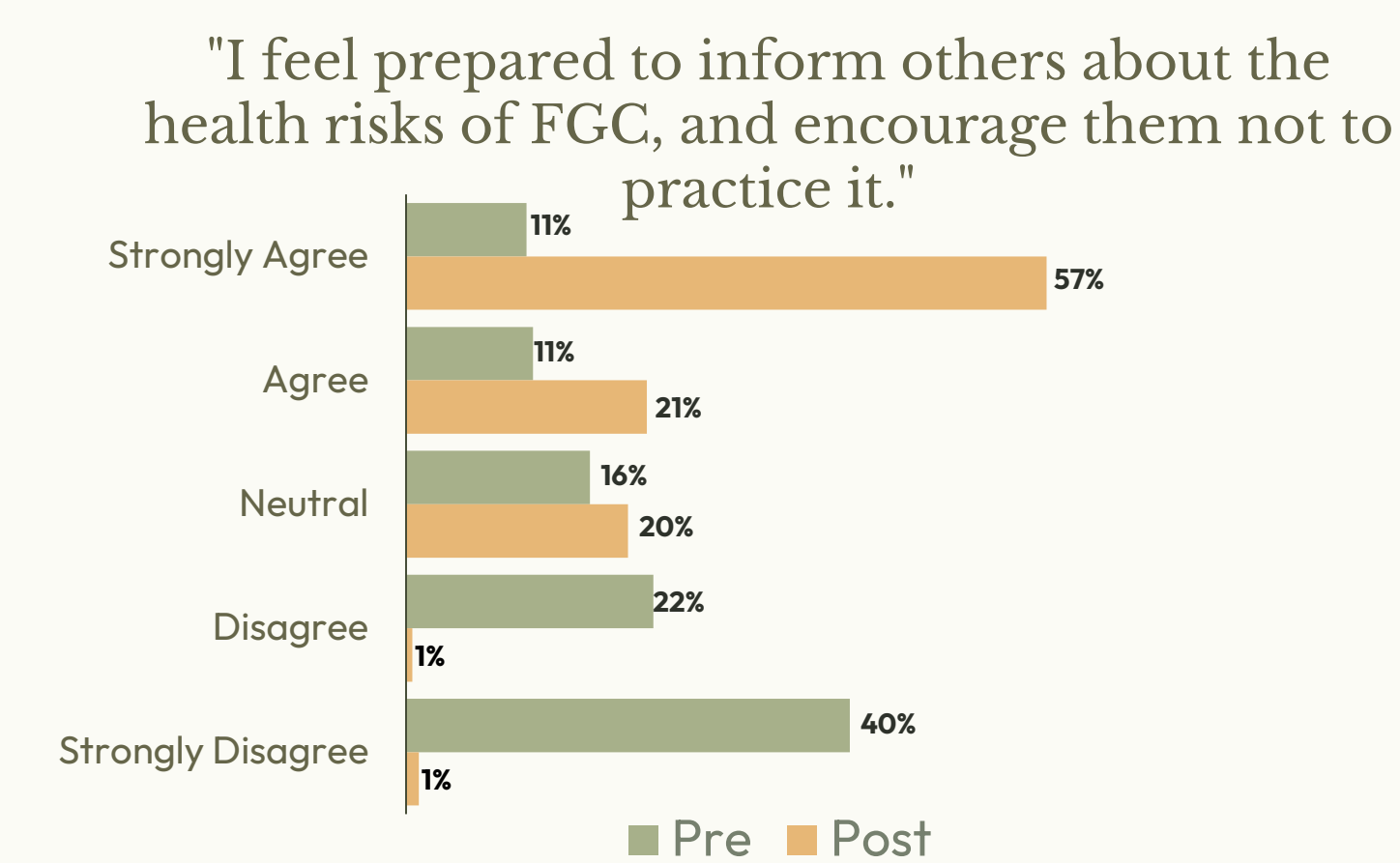
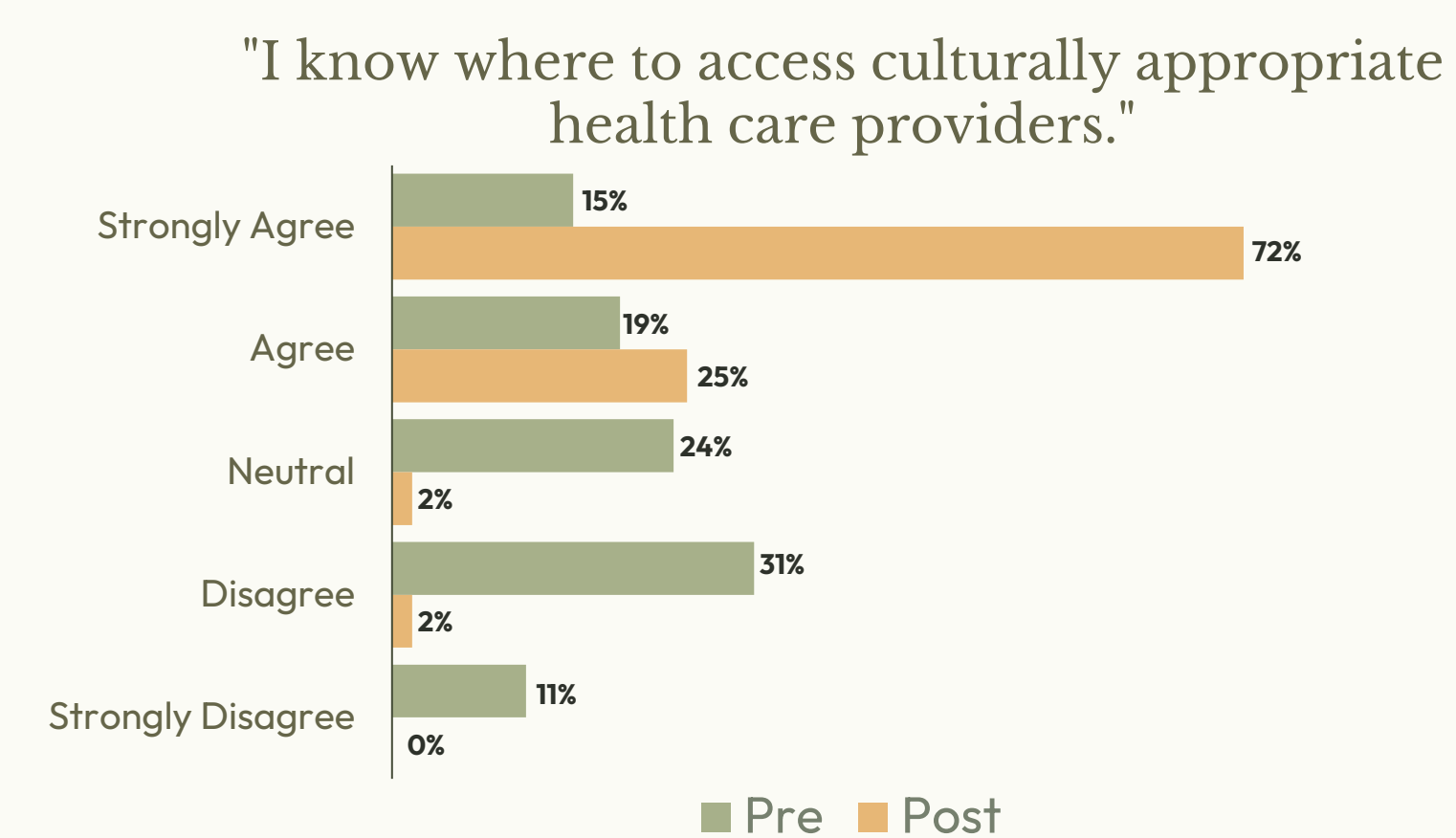
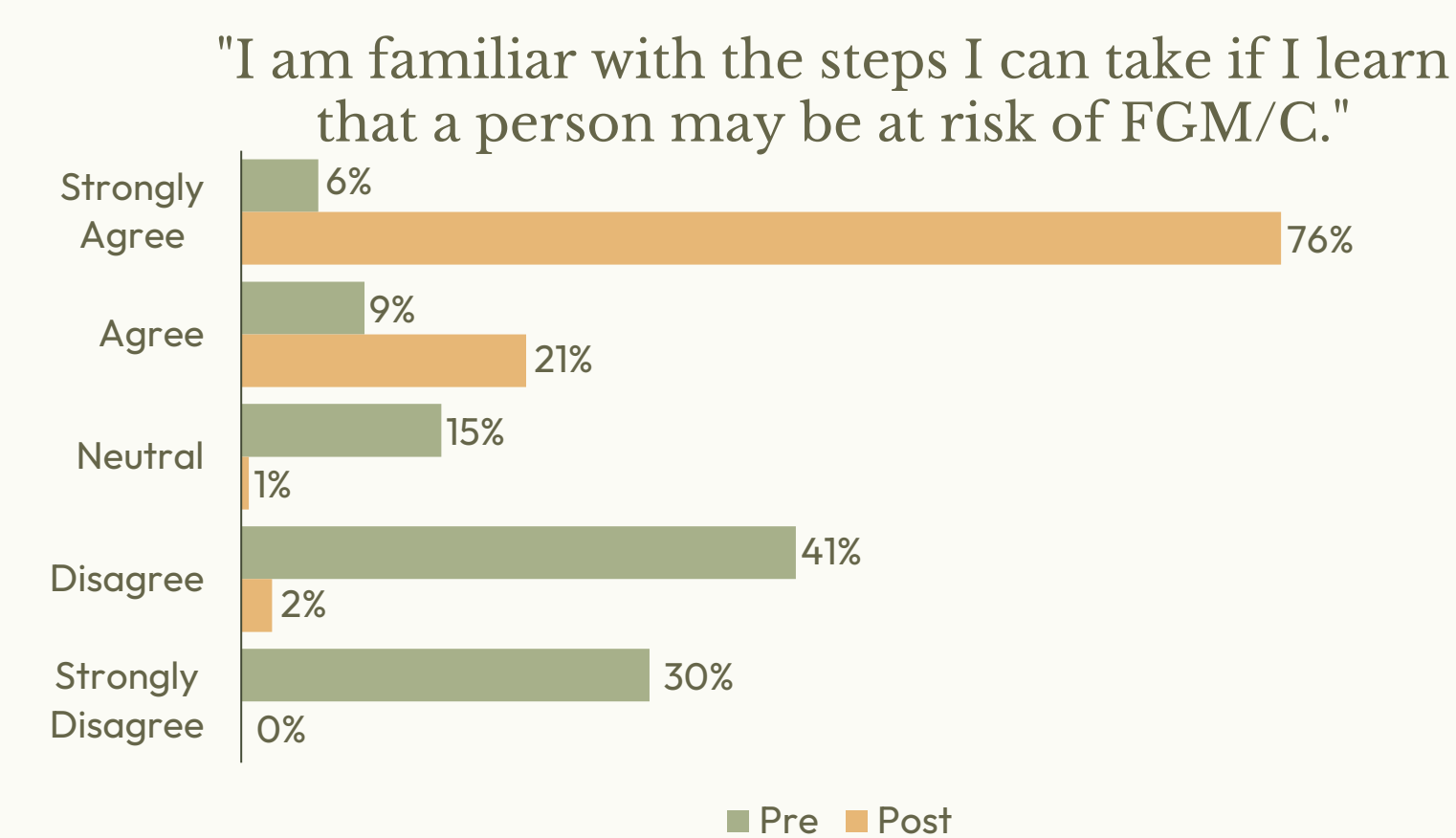
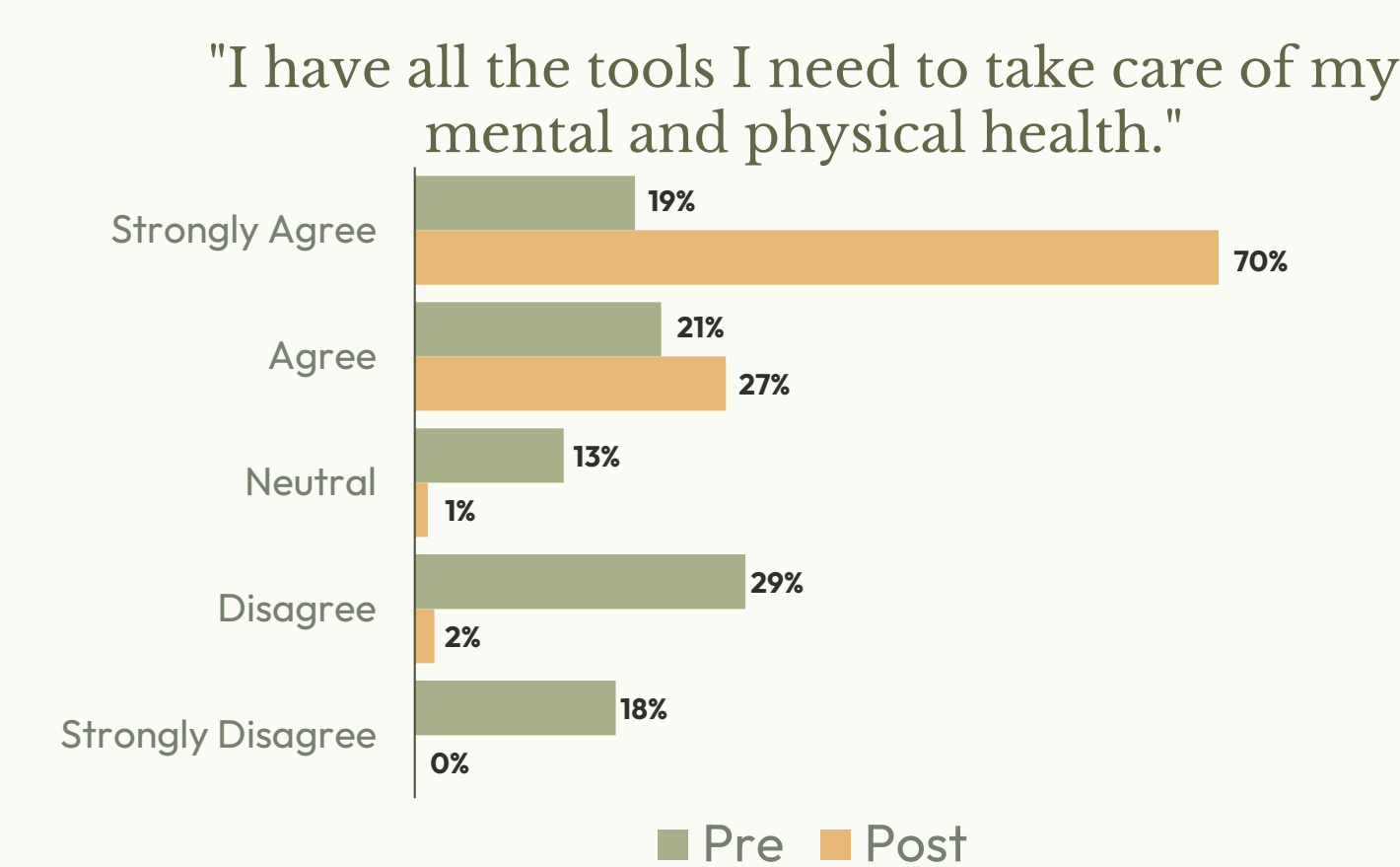
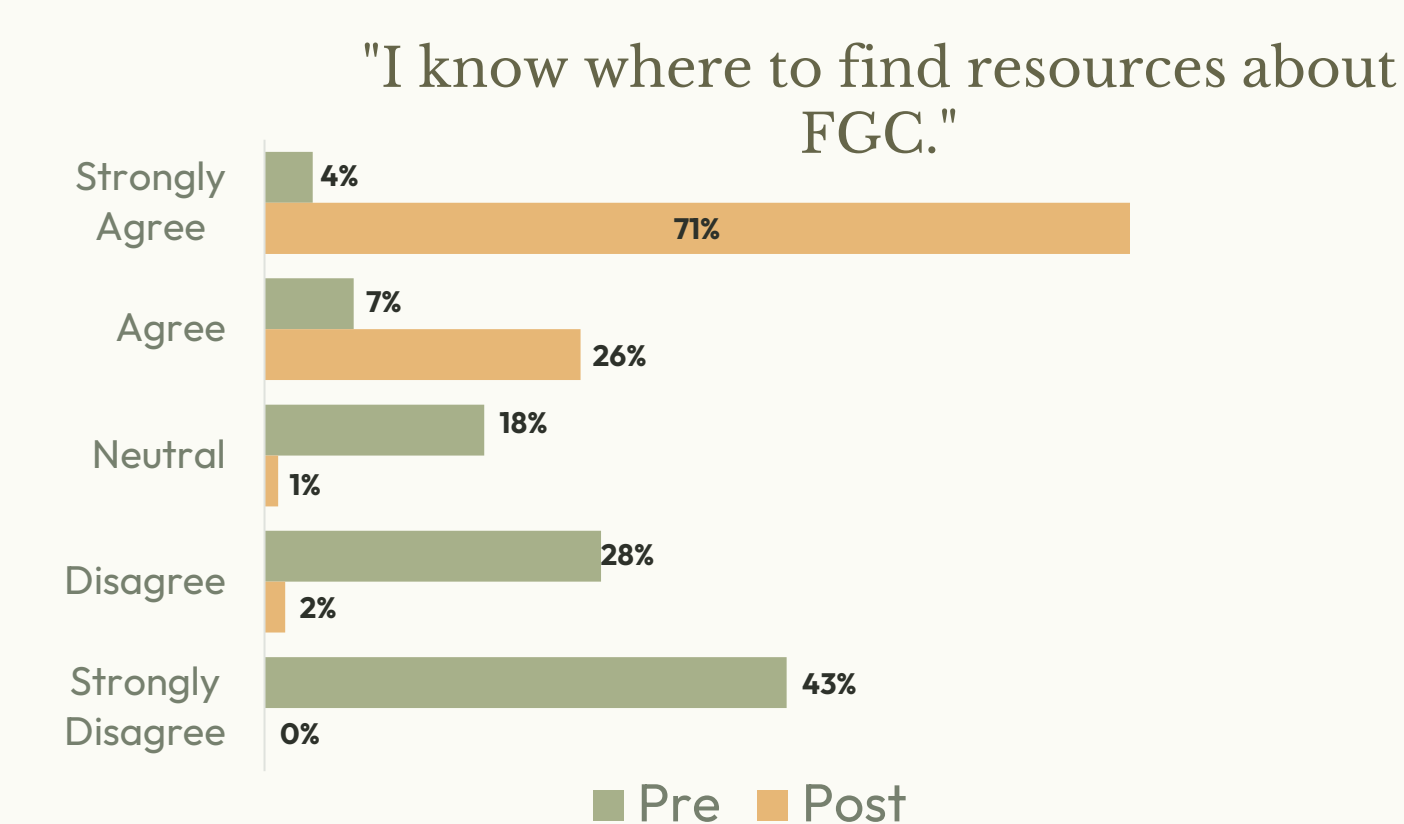
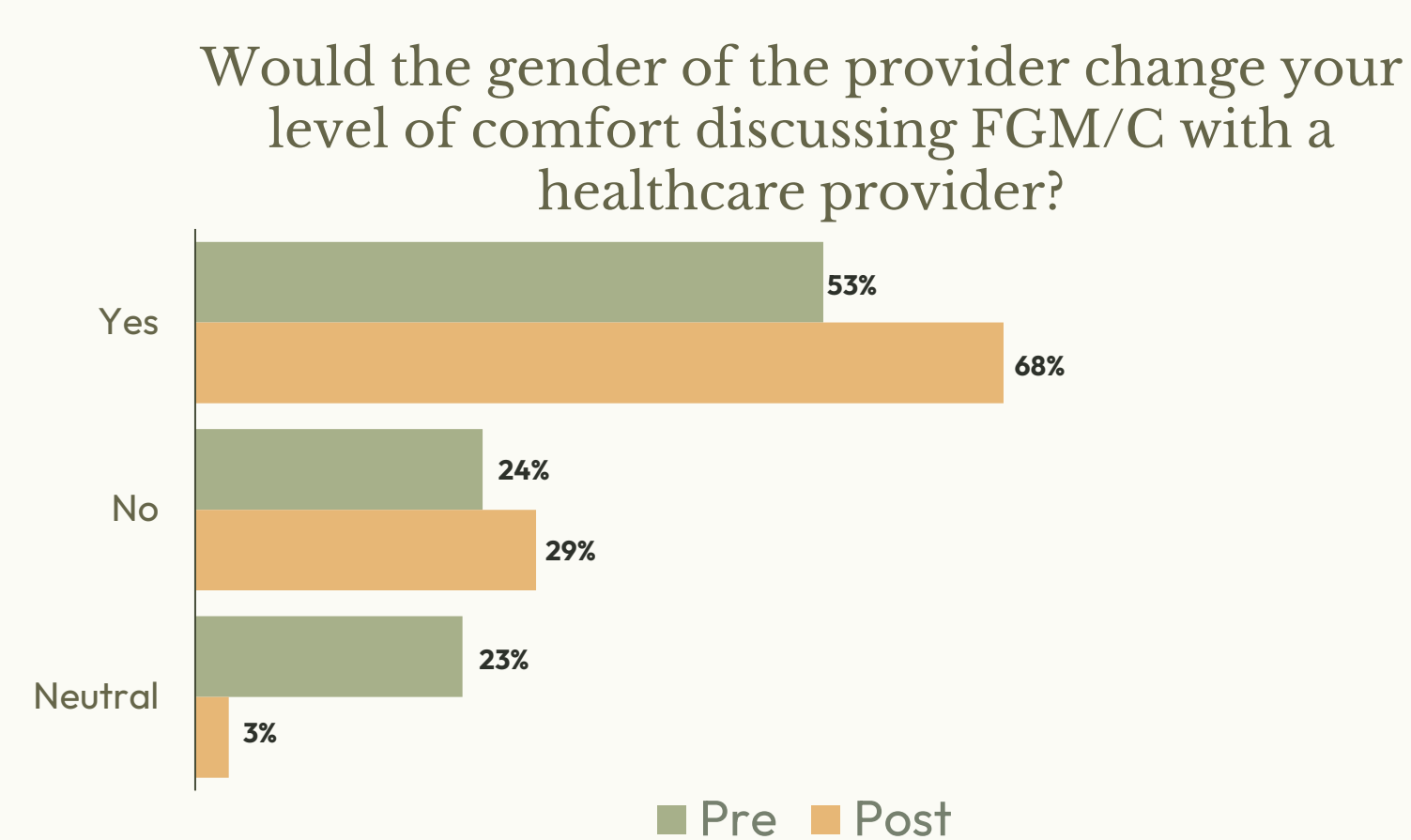
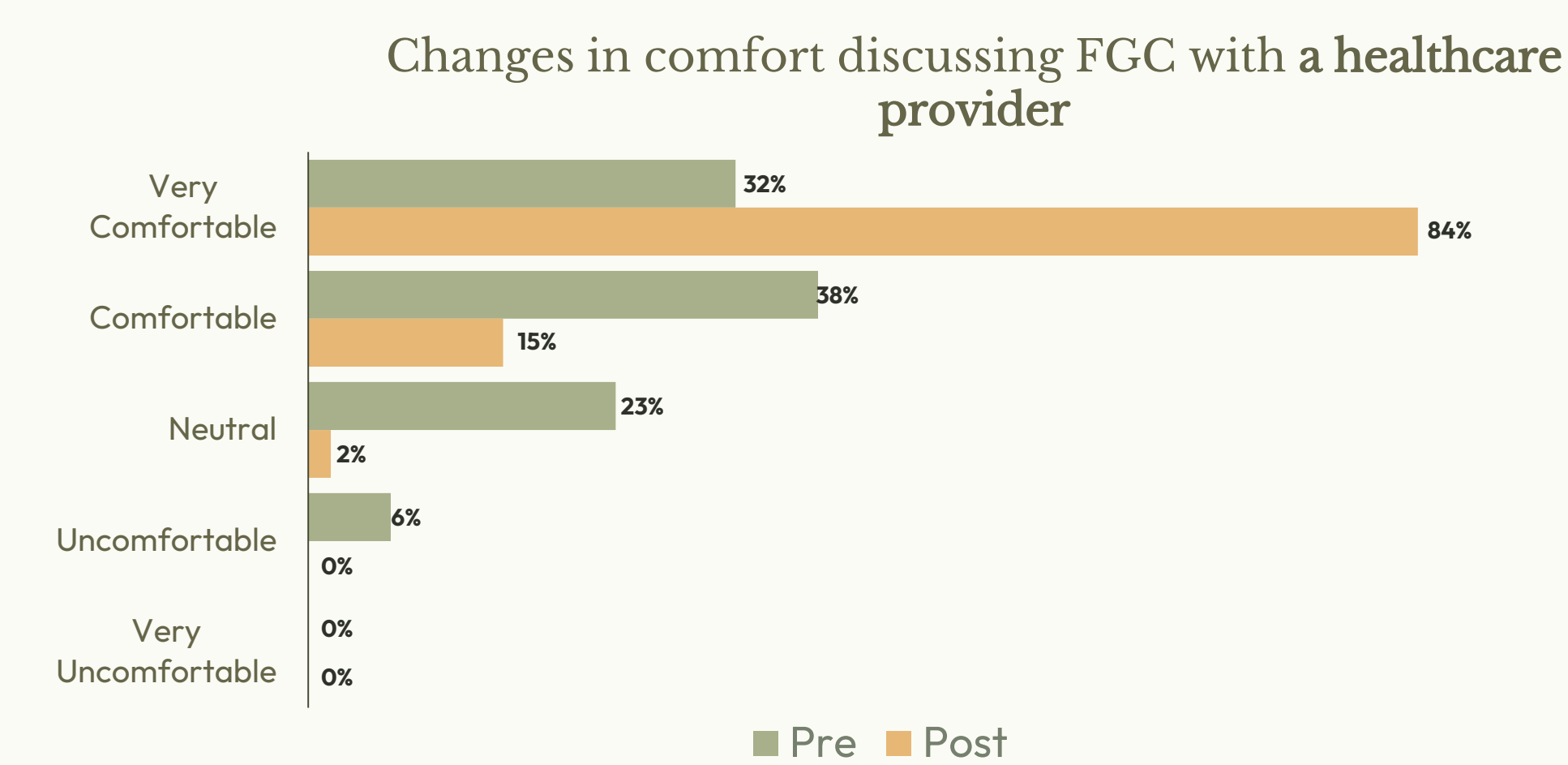
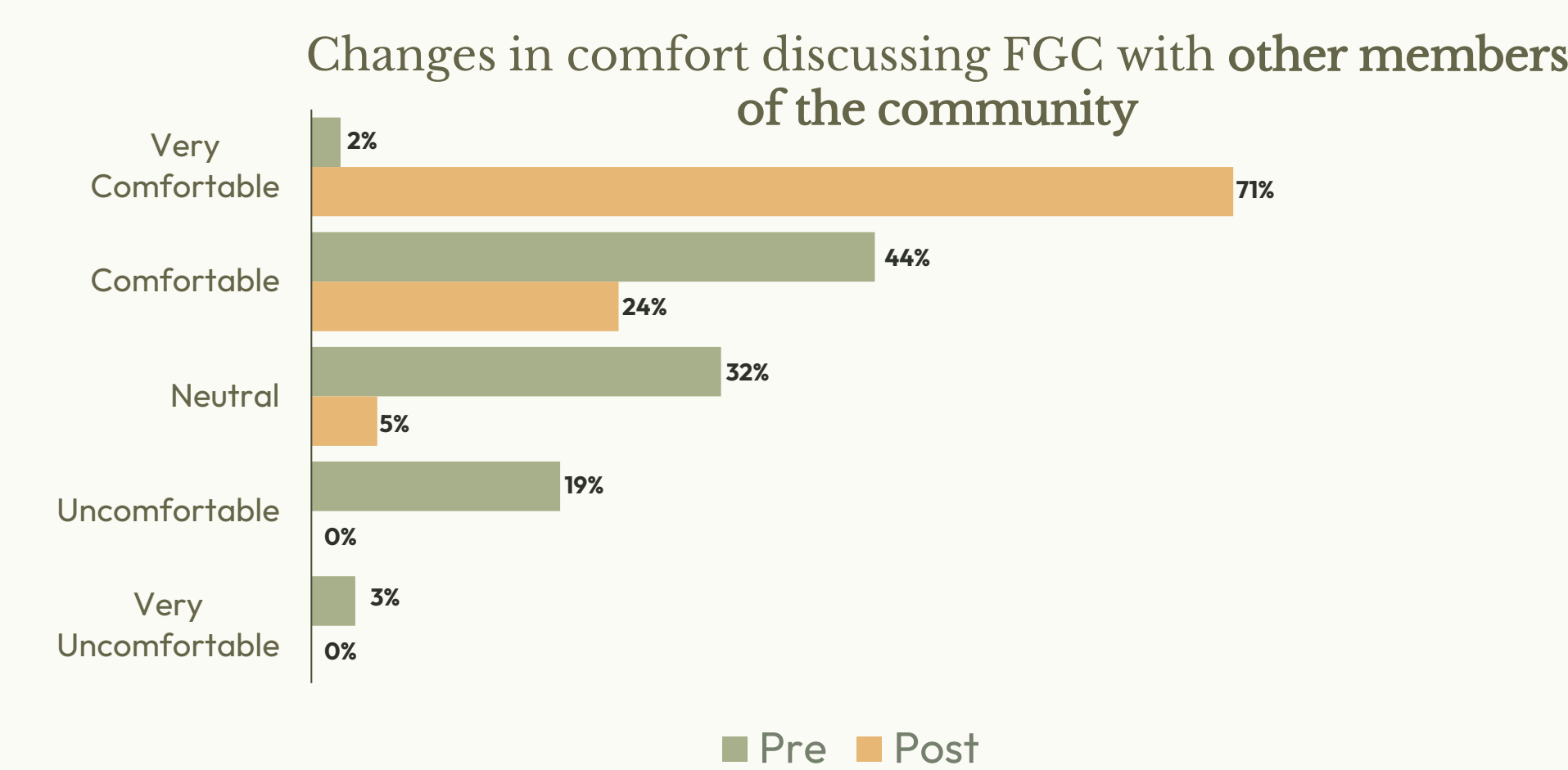
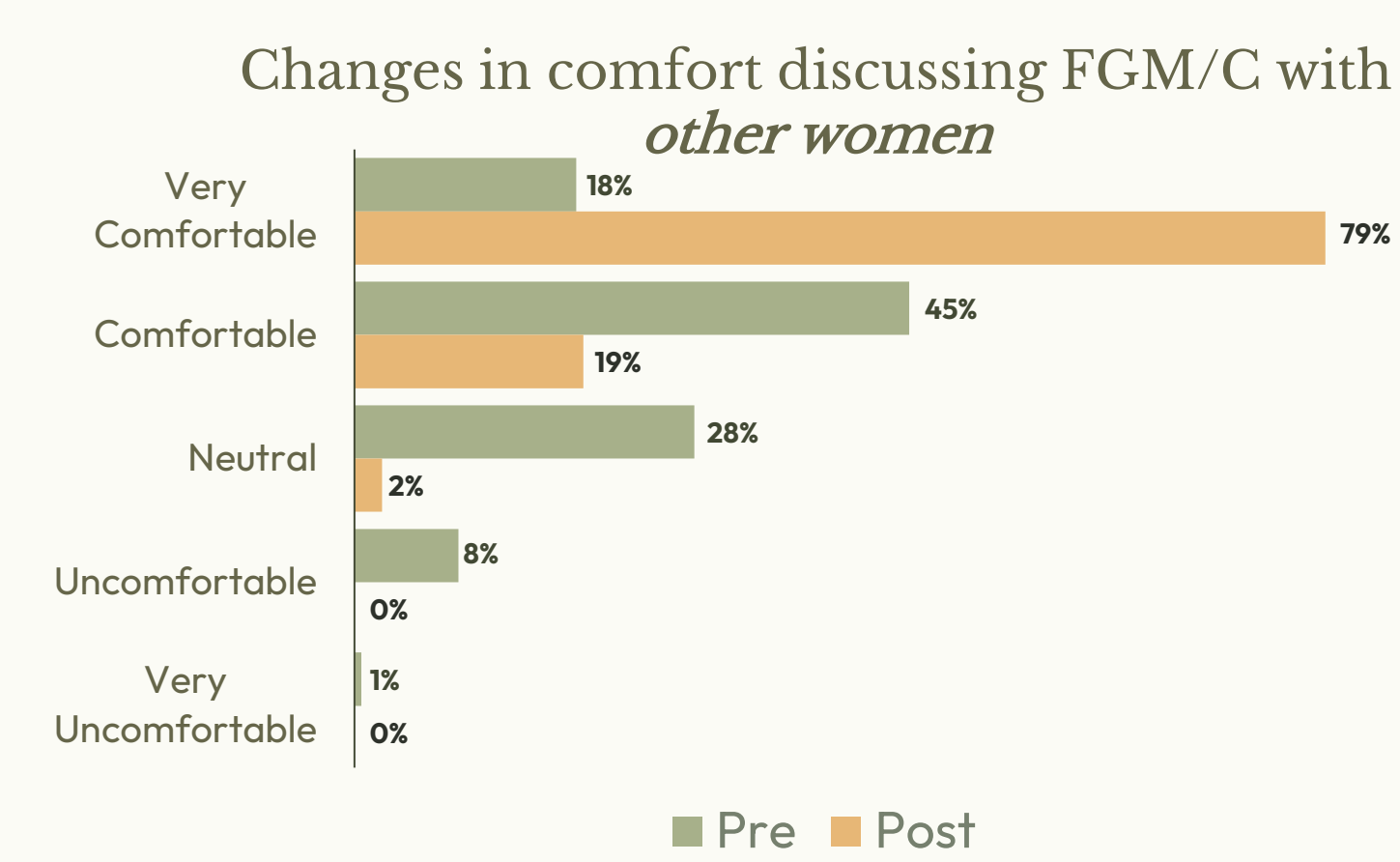
Minnesota is home to a significant East African community and the largest Somali community in the U.S. According to UNICEF, a significant number of females in Ethiopia (74%) and Somalia (98%) between 15 and 49 years old have experienced female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), which means that many girls and women likely underwent FGM/C before arrival. The International Institute of Minnesota (IIMN) supports immigrant women in the Twin Cities through health education and outreach services to help prevent FGM/C.

Methods

To assess the effectiveness of the FGM/C prevention workshops, we administered pre/post workshop questionnaires to participants, focusing on their understanding of FGM/C. The workshops, comprising six sessions of women's health education, have been held both in-person and online."

Results

Our findings indicate that women in the FGM/C prevention workgroup gained knowledge about the importance of preventive care and had an increased understanding of FGM/C health risks. Following completion of the workshops, 60% of participants reported an increased understanding of FGM/C complication, indicating readiness to advocate against this harmful cultural tradition. They valued the opportunity to discuss cultural practices impacting their well-being and received referrals to healthcare providers experienced in treating FGM/C.



Conclusion

FGM/C can lead to severe health issues such as PTSD, chronic urinary tract infections, pain during intercourse, infertility, and childbirth complications. Our women's health program has helped highlight different strategies for healthcare providers in treating women impacted by FGM/C. Furthermore, it is essential for healthcare providers to offer nonjudgmental and comprehensive care when discussing FGM/C, considering its cultural significance.

Contact

Bilsuma Adema
International Institute of Minnesota
1694 Como Ave, St. Paul MN 55108
badema@iimn.org
651-377-8612

References

United Nations Children's Fund, A Profile of Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia, UNICEF, New York, 2020

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).

Data evaluation and presentation was provided by RTI International.

Resources



Author: FBI



Authors: RTI International, John Hopkins University School of Nursing

