

This is what you shall do; Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body.

~ Walt Whitman, Preface to *Leaves of Grass* (1892)



**Worth the Energy!**

**The Effects of Spiritual/Energy Healing Upon Spiritual Health Indicators.**



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# Spiritual/Energy Healing and Spiritual Health

- Spiritual/Energy Healing used in Spiritual Health Pastoral Care for over 30 years, in hospitals, hospices, private clinics.
- Found no research specific to Spiritual Health.
- Anecdotally, one of our most successful Spiritual Health interventions, offered both to staff and patients.

- Working within an evidence-based healthcare system emphasizes the importance of research in determining best healthcare practices for all our healthcare disciplines.
- Spiritual Health became a recognized healthcare profession under the Health Care Act, Province of British Columbia in January 2013.

## Our Working Definition: Spiritual/Energy Healing.

A *prayerful* intervention for the purpose of supporting the recipient's holistic system to heal itself; healing modalities may include (but are not limited to) the following: Healing Pathways, Reiki, Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch, Thought-Field Therapy, Body/Emotion Code, and Quantum Touch. We view these services as a form of focused prayer. Some people experience a sensation of warmth or vibration. Some find that these modalities promote relaxation and general wellness. We make no medical claims.



# Four Part Research Project

Our Research Project was conducted from January 2014 to March 2015 at the University Hospital of Northern British Columbia (Prince George, B.C.) collaboratively with University of Northern British Columbia, College of New Caledonia and Vancouver School of Theology.

The research project included:

1. Developing a Spiritual Health Lens and Indicators,
2. Reviewing Medical Research Literature,
3. Conducting Primary Healing Research,
4. Considering Theological Implications.



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## Spiritual Health Lens and Indicators.

- In my previous work as a teacher and a therapist, I used measures of learning outcomes and mental health inventories. I could find no such measures in hospital ministry.
- Spiritual Health assessments tend to focus on whether the individual needs spiritual health intervention and support.

- Spiritual Health practice is interfaith and multi-faceted. Measures of Christian faith are not adequate to our ministry.
- Together with six fourth-year biomedical students, we began our research by asking, what determines that an individual is spiritually healthy? How would we know someone was experiencing spiritual health unwellness?



# What are Some Interfaith Indicators of Spiritual Health?

Brainstorm how you would know that you or someone else was spiritually healthy. What are some virtues and/or characteristics you would expect to see or experience?

# What are Some Interfaith Indicators of a Lack of Spiritual Health?

Brainstorm how you would know that you or someone else was facing spiritually health difficulties. What are some behaviours and/or characteristics you would expect to see or experience?



Resentment	Forgiveness
Insecurity	Self-Esteem
Chaos	Meaning-Making
Feeling Judged	State of Grace
Guilt	Honour
Disinterested	Engaged
Shame	Dignity
Regret	Acceptance
Anger	Peace
Guarded	Open
Helpless	Using Freewill
Despairing	Hopeful
Fear	Courage
Isolation	Belonging
Confusion	Clarity
Lack of Empathy	Compassionate
Self-Absorption	Gratitude
Doubt	Faith

Reference	Study Design	Modality	Population (size and condition)	Spiritual Health Indicators Assessed	Major Findings
Reiki Articles					
<p>Baldwin, A. L., Fullmer, K., Schwartz, G. E. (2013). Comparison of physical therapy with energy healing for improving range of motion in subjects with restricted shoulder mobility. <i>Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine</i>, 2013: 329731</p>	<p>Randomized controlled trial</p>	<p>Reiki &amp; Reconnective Healing</p>	<p>78 self-ambulatory adults with a nongenetic ROM limitation of the shoulder and no prior experience of energy healing</p>	<p>Pain</p>	<p>Pain was reduced significantly amongst participants who received Reiki and Reconnective Healing treatments. There were also significant improvements in range of motion noted in both treatment groups.</p>



# From Providence Health, CPE Verbatim Template

Source(s) of Meaning,  
Coping Strategies/Traditions,  
Attitudes/Feelings about Current Situation,  
Distrust/Faith, Isolation/Connection,  
Shame/Honour, Conflict/Peace,  
Optimism/Pessimism, Value/Futility,  
Engaged/Stagnant, Regret/Forgiveness.

# Medical Literature Review on Spiritual/Energy Healing

- 43 articles reviewed
- Preference for articles in the last 10 years, in North America, the UK, New Zealand and Australia; 39 articles fit this geographically criteria.
- A variety of spiritual/energy healing techniques used.



- In 40 studies, research subjects experienced medical benefits.
- In 3 studies, no medically measurable benefits, but improvement in comfort, etc..
- Caused no harm, even with premature infants.



## Primary Research

- 25 research subjects received a single Reiki healing session.
- 20 F, 5 M; Aged 20s to 60s; 17 European heritage, 3 Indigenous, 5 unspecified.
- The healing session was 45 to 55 minutes in duration.
- 3 Reiki masters. 2 Roman Catholic background, 1 Indigenous shamanic.

- Participants given option of either “hands above” or “light touch”.
- Quantitative spiritual health indicators survey pre- and post-healing.
- Some demographic information.
- Question: “How are you feeling right now: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually?” pre- and post- healing.

## Limitations of the Study.

- Validity and reliability were limited by the lack of control group/small sample.
- Effects of one session, rather than a course of healing sessions.
- No follow-up to see the duration of the change.

Survey's effectiveness is limited by at least 6 factors.

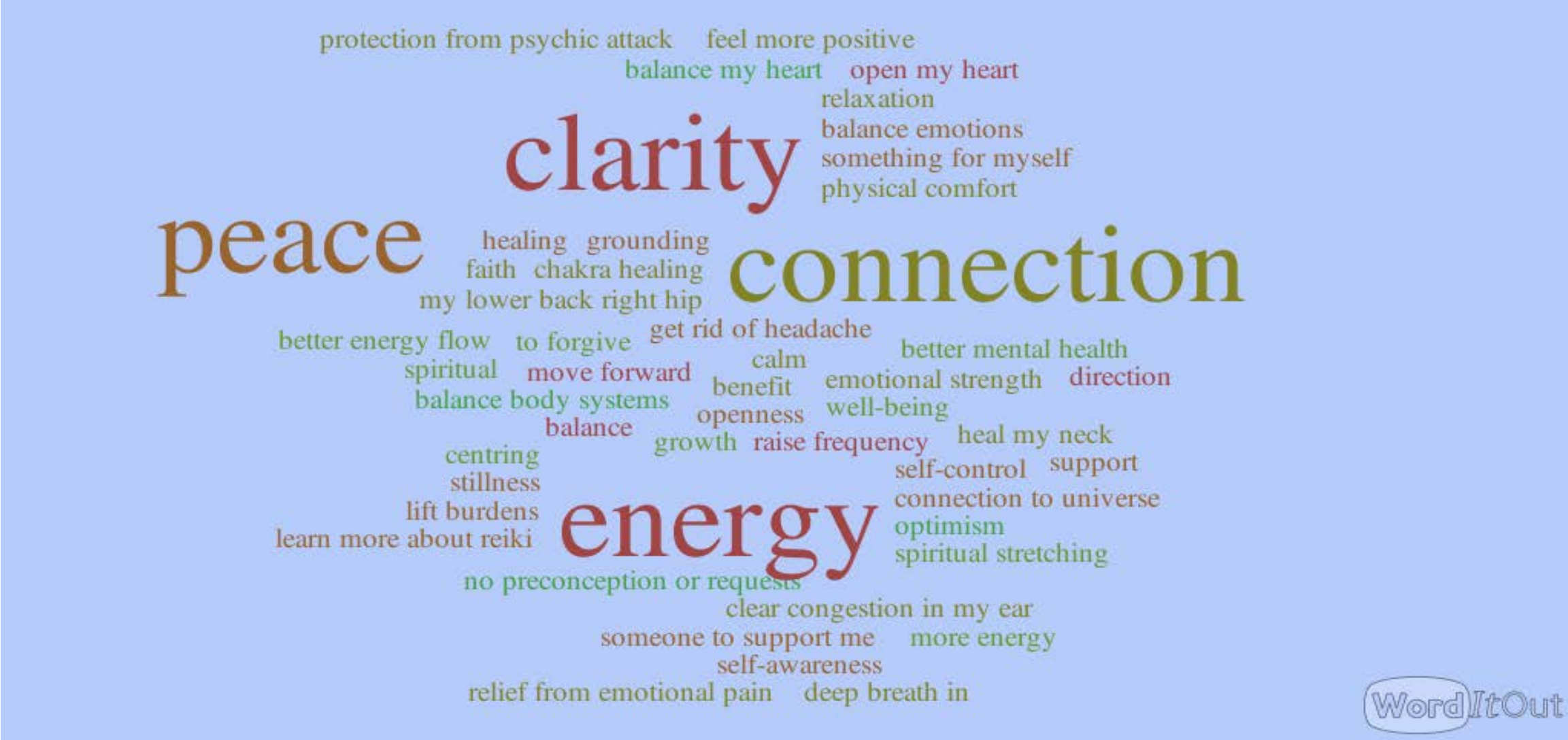
1. Spiritual health indicators as appropriate measures of spiritual health.
2. No standardized or normative values.
3. Individual's ability to accurately self-report.
4. Variation of individual's state.
5. Understandable language for participants.
6. Interviewer's consistency, clarity, not influencing outcomes.



## Qualitative Results

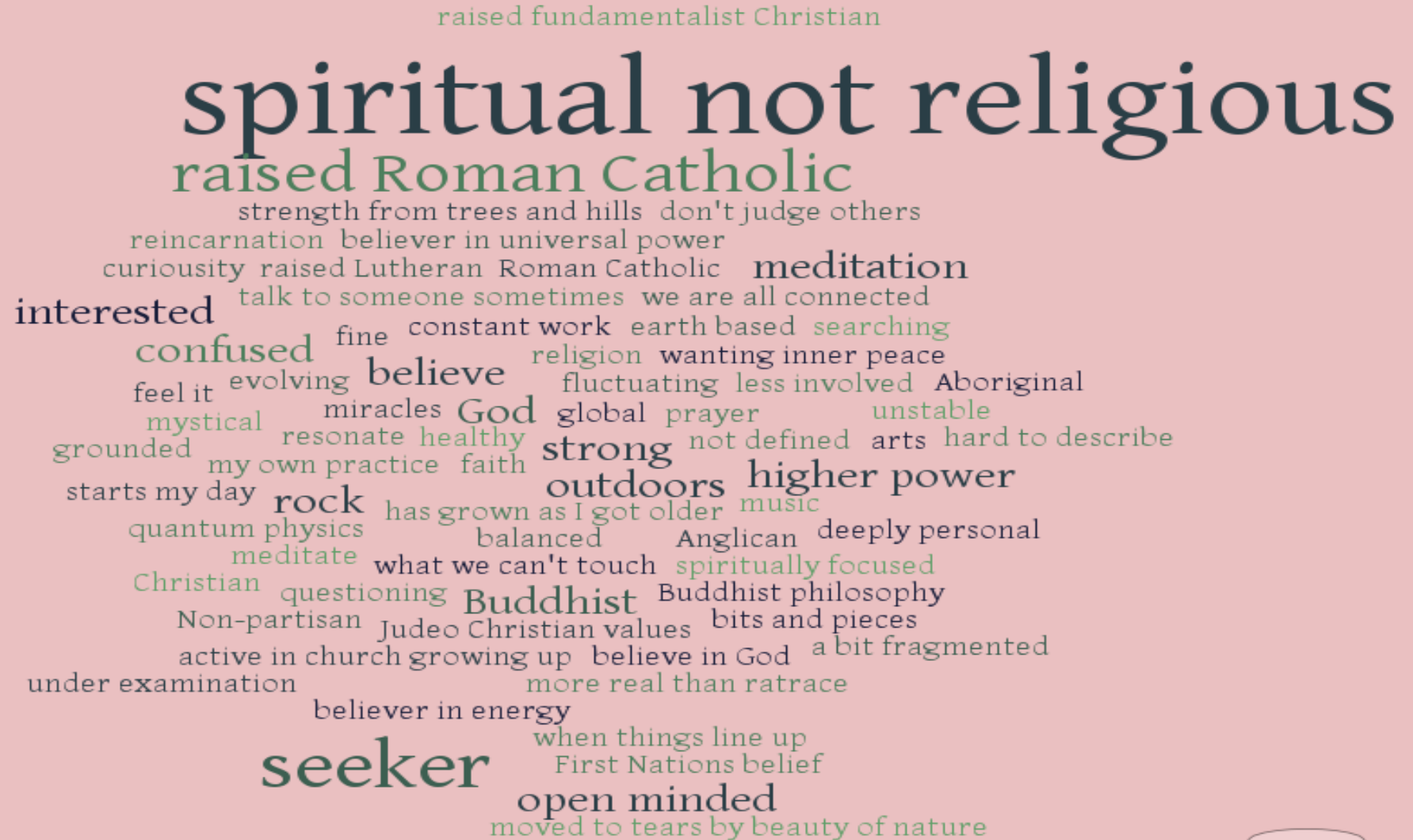
“Wow. Hel-lo God!”

WordMap 1: “What do you hope to gain from spiritual/energy healing today?  
Is there something you would like the healer to focus on?”





## WordMap 2: How would you describe your spirituality?







# WordMap 3: (Pre-) How are you feeling now: physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually?



### 3a: How are you feeling now? (without responses of fine/good/okay).

not entirely connected not disconnected either  
spiritually connected **overwhelming**  
awful thought slightly upset stomach  
sorting through issues  
looking forward **not well**  
**stress** moral distress open to session  
congested sinuses moderately low stressed content  
health issues relaxed after being in nature sense of well being  
healthiest sharp arthritic flare up right thumb joint  
lowish neutral not in balance  
anxious warm **tired** **rushed** angry  
**relaxed** little agitated  
not too bad discomfort busy tense muscles fairly well  
**drained** seeking experience pretty good fog irritable  
negative off a few days **tense** sore on a journey **sad**  
hopeful little preoccupied unpleasant mediocre  
trapped less little bit cluttered mindful **excited**  
stop recovering from a cold in the moment distracted  
happy with day connected detached tress  
something lacking headache  
**not connected** disconnected why me  
heart concern osteo in neck bothering me zoned out spiritually  
generall **stable** best in six years short of breath  
whirlwindy argument last night upset  
not fully present out of whack digestion excited about this  
getting over something  
would like to be challenged pit of stomach turning  
chronic ache in shoulder  
sore back hip knee better than yesterday

#### 4: (Post-) How are you feeling now: physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually?

still protective physically shoulder feels good appreciate quality of nurturing  
not too bad not pressured emotionally fragile not tired anymore  
centred like a good sleep don't know how I feel  
diffused in a good way head feels full chakras balanced released alignment  
I feel like me amazing comfortable like I could sleep wow **connected**  
feel completely different **excellent** **lighter** not long enough  
comforting atuned enthusiastic no thoughts fantastic present headache gone  
ears still a little clogged soothing more open **bliss** lovely communicating  
full of love free grounded hopeful same clarity **incredible**  
picks me up in touch headache better but not gone happy open flying difference  
beautiful fluid processing sleepy settled internal loving light  
more balanced crows nice sort of slack mentally hello God good all over  
same mentally more open minded hand is good **rested** fine  
good all way round energized bigger **peaceful** positive a little out of it  
more positive inspired to write **clear** content  
**good** I don't know not so contained awake serenity  
powerful in the moment like meditation  
brought back feelings pain gone  
not thinking anything more confused less confused focused  
negative energy released deep thoughts  
less burdened

**relaxed** **calm**  
quietness in my head and body



### Chart 1: Overall Change by Spiritual Health Indicator

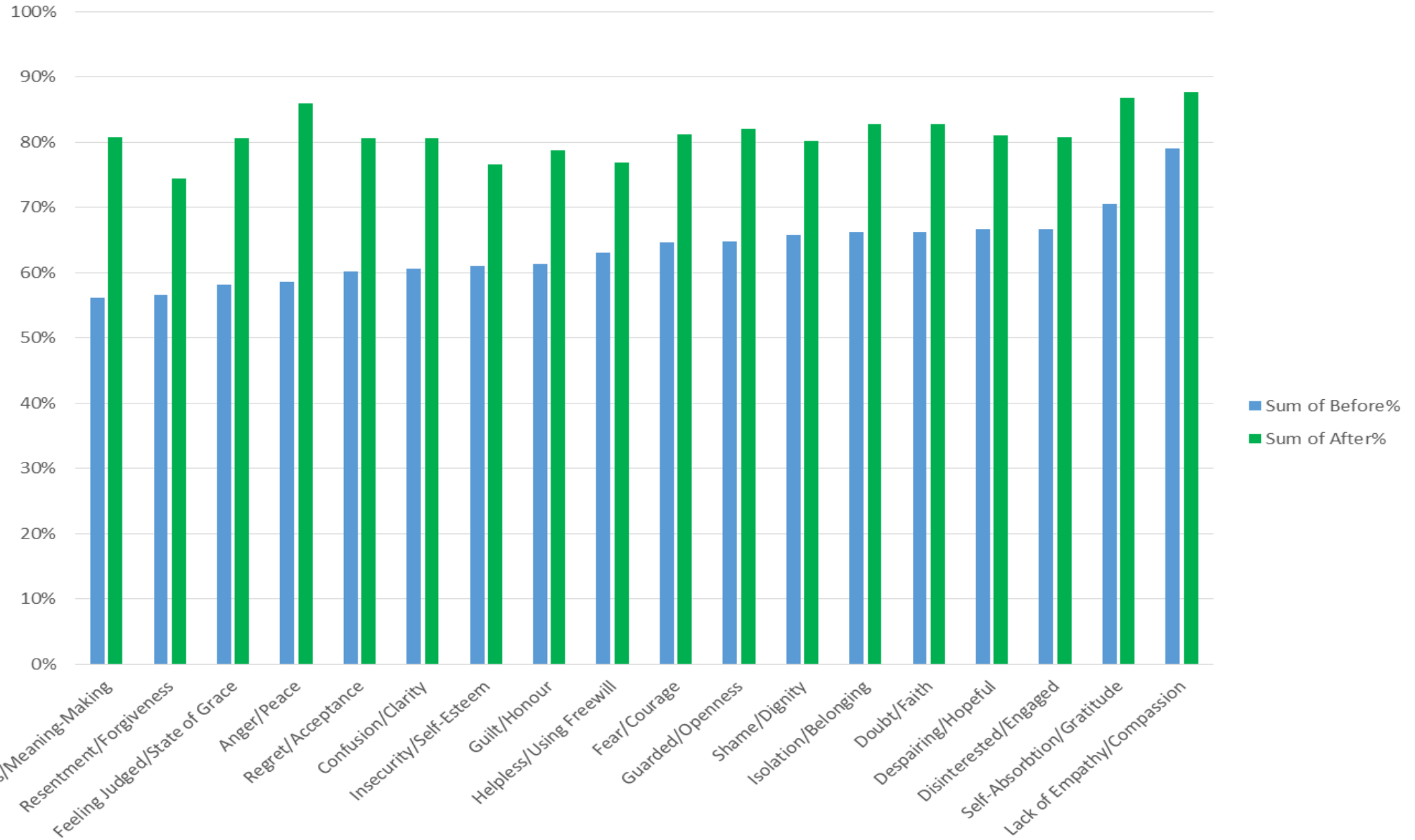
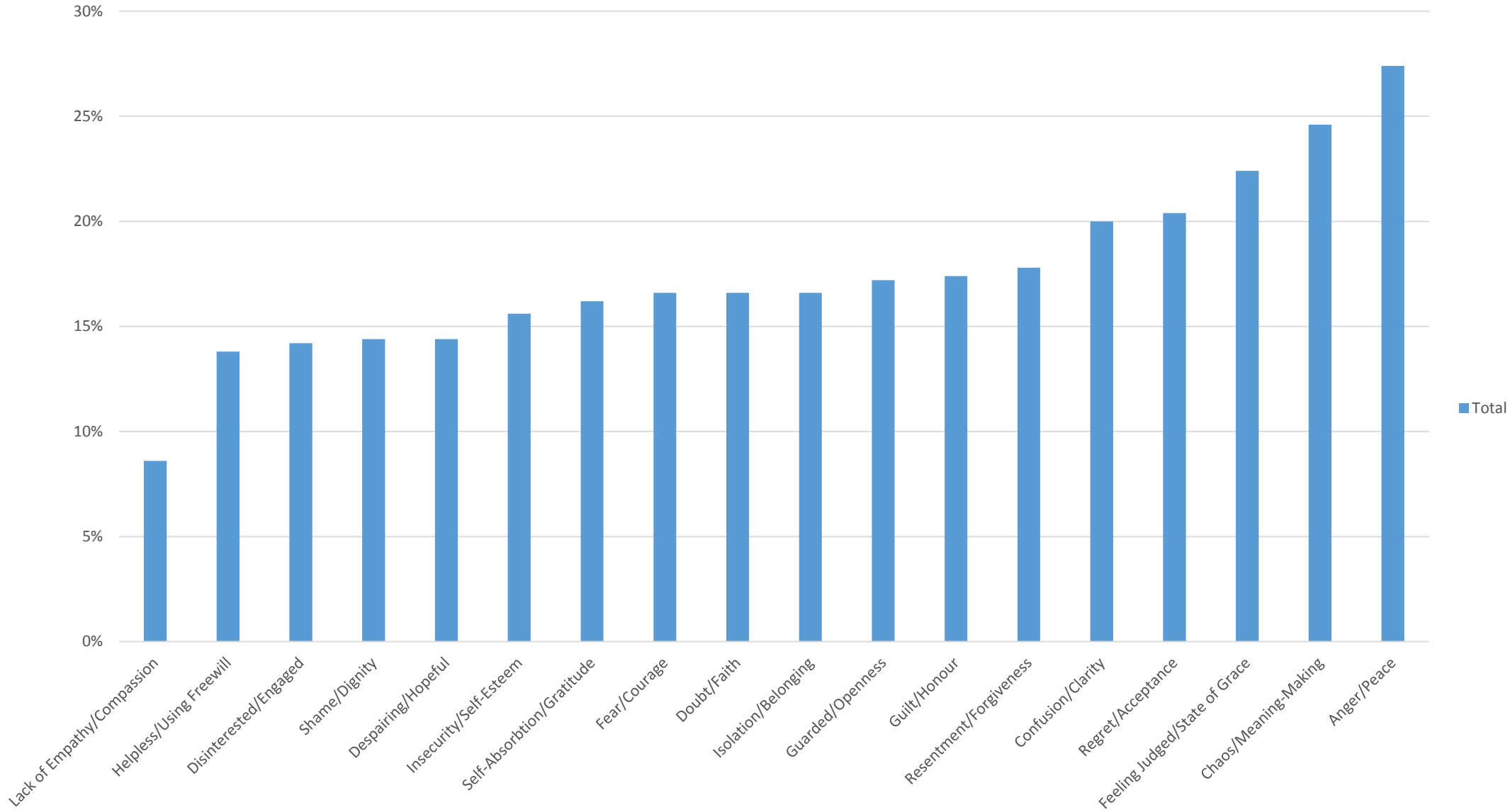




Chart 2: Overall Difference by Spiritual Health Indicator





### Chart 3: Overall Change by Research Participant

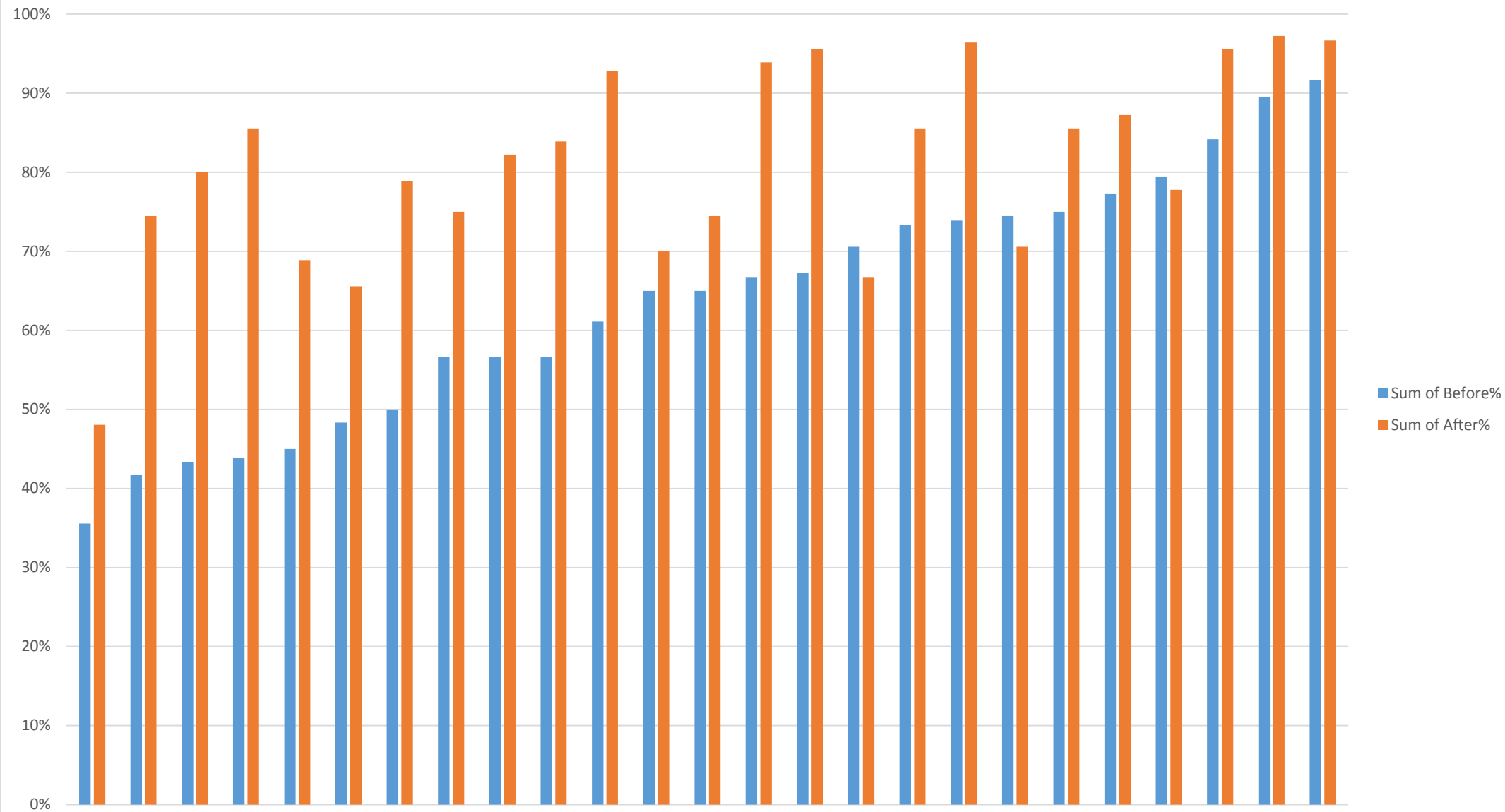




Chart 4: Overall Difference by Research Participant

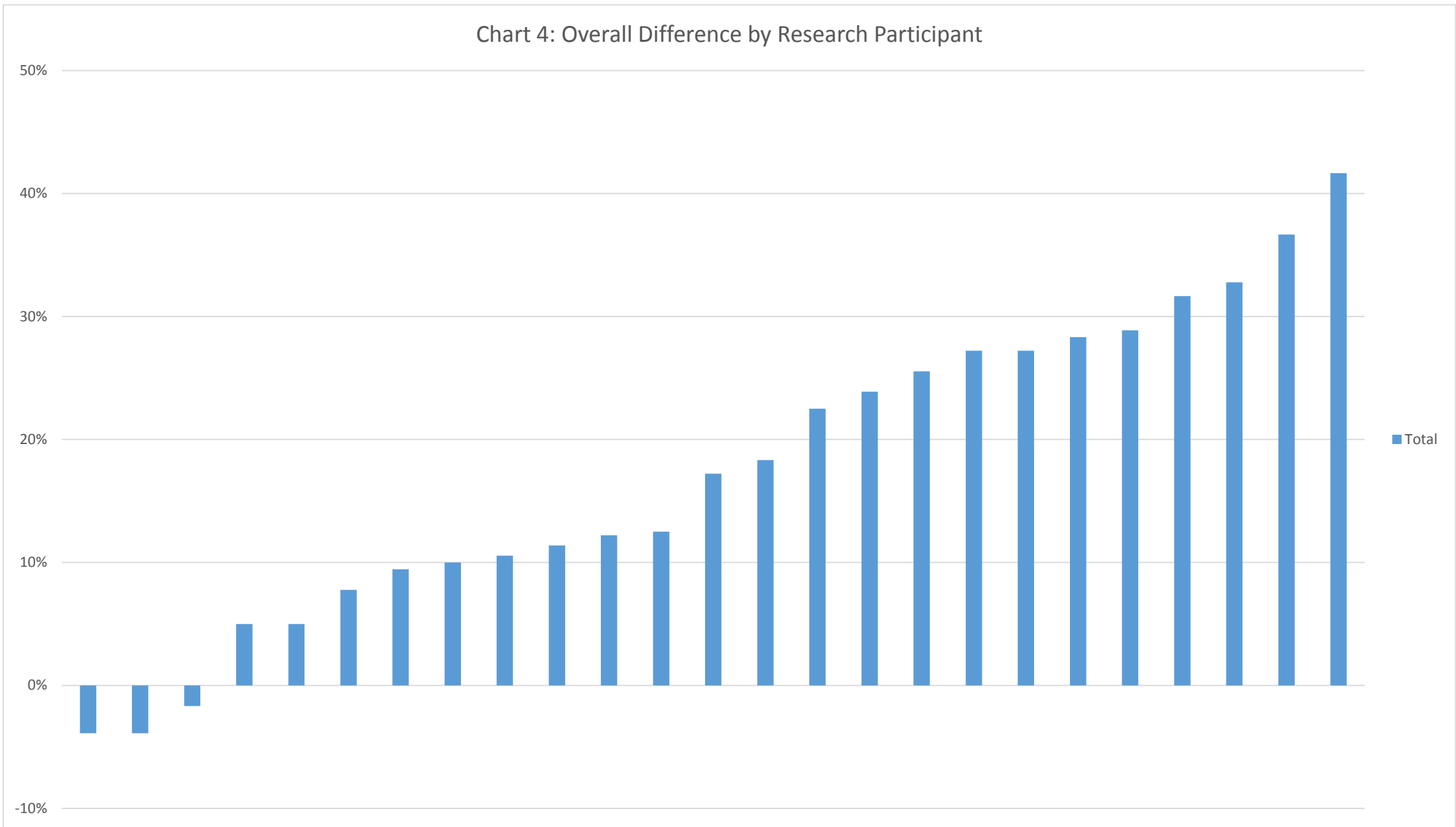
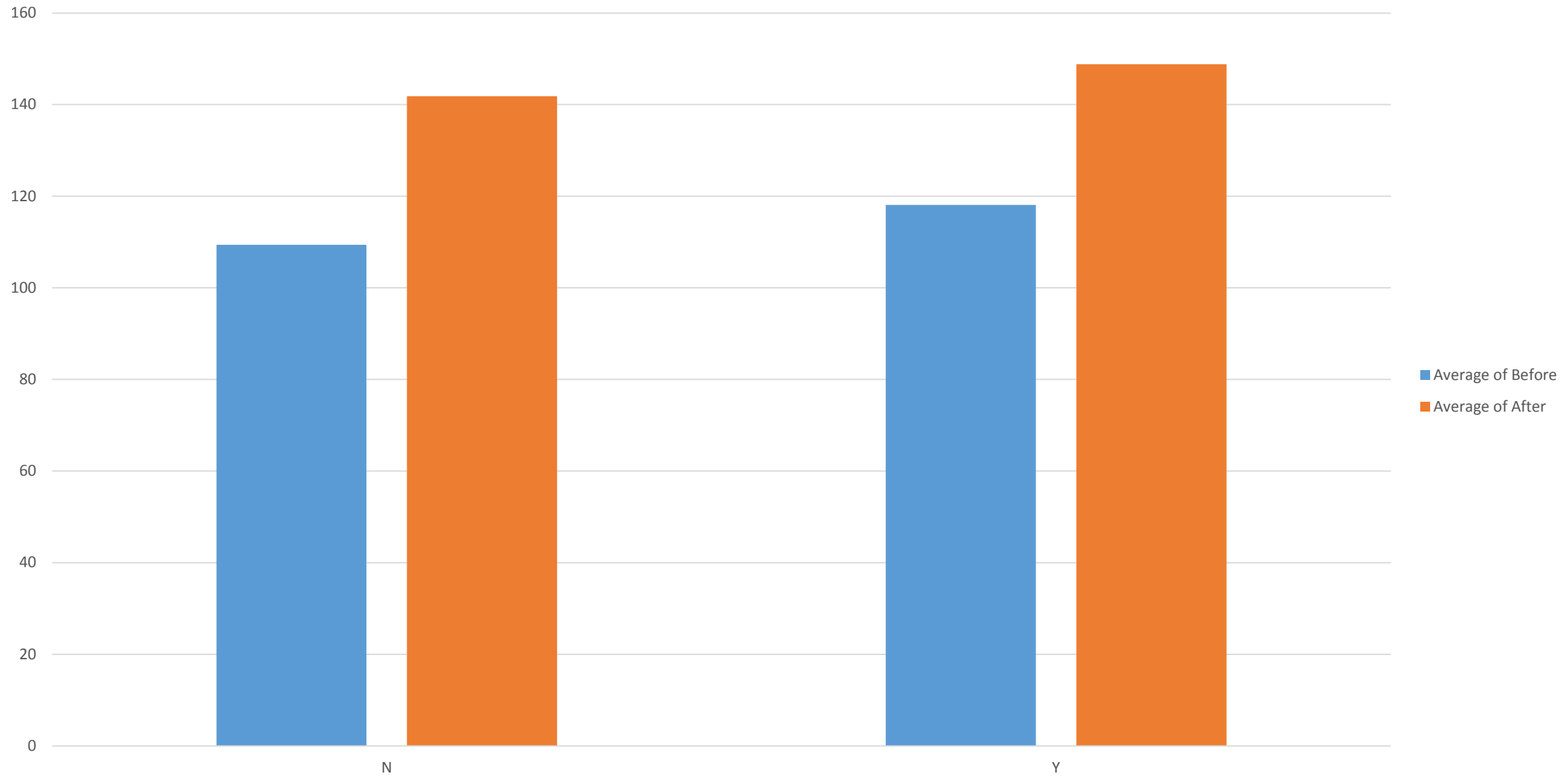




Chart 5: Overall by Prior Healing Experience  
No - 10, Yes - 15







## Healing and Christianity.

- As we know, Jesus was an exemplary healer, and commissioned the disciples to heal.
- For about 200 years, this continued in the church.
- As social thought moved toward “reason” over the mystical and intuitive, spiritual/energy healing moved out of favour.
- Indigenous healers in Europe and North America were persecuted to the point of death.

- For about 1700 years, holistic healing not done in the church.
- Movement toward “medicalization” of physical healing.
- Holistic healing practices continued underground.
- “By whose authority” argument continues today.



- We need to talk about “healing within Christianity” rather than “Christian healing”.
- History of adopting Indigenous and Hellenistic healing practices, even at the time of Christ.
- Resurgence of healing practices in the church from 1970s.

- Examples: Anglican order of St. Luke, UCC Healing Pathways.
- Healing is accessible to our up to 86% “spiritual not religious” community members.
- “All of the love” and “none of the dogma”.
- Interfaith, unique ecumenical opportunity.

## Future Research, Healing.

- With our data, may be able to secure research funding to pay healers.
- 3 month study, once weekly.
- Measure weekly, plot data, more reliable.
- More valid because variance within individual less of a problem, repeated measures.
- Control group, resting for 45 minutes.

## Future Research, Spiritual Health Indicators.

- Developing a spiritual health survey confidentially placed on-line.
- Accepting only a prescribed range of answers, problematic in the complex and highly individual area of defining spiritual belief.
- Potential of determining a normative value for aspects of spiritual health?

- Can our relationship with the Divine be quantified and is it relative to other human beings?
- Would it differ over a lifetime?
- Would it differ between faith groups? Faith traditions could be negatively judged if there is variation between groups.
- Benefit of measuring efficacy of interventions.
- Risk of incorporation into Mental Health and out of the domain of ministry.

## What is it Like to be a Healer?

The essence of all healing is to become so immersed in the Being of God that one forgets oneself entirely. And the most successful prayers are those in which the one who prays never thinks of himself at all. He immerses himself first in God and then in his patient.

~ Agnes Sandford, *The Healing Light* (1947)



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