



Canadian Research Initiative in Drug Misuse
First Annual CRISM Prairies Gathering
University of Calgary, Alberta, June 23-24 2016
Theme: Introducing ourselves & Learning together

SUMMARY MEETING REPORT & MEETING EVALUATION RESULTS

The first annual CRISM Prairie Node meeting was held at the Hotel Alma on the University of Calgary campus, June 23-24, 2016 and was attended by 68 Node members (52 from Alberta, 14 from Saskatchewan, 2 from Manitoba). Also in attendance were 9 invited guests, including 2 Indigenous Elders (one each from Alberta and Saskatchewan) as well as individuals with lived experience (3 from Alberta, 2 from Saskatchewan, 2 from Manitoba).

The meeting goals were:

- to provide opportunities for Node members to network and build collaborative relationships;
- to update members on Node activities and provide a forum for member input into existing and future Node projects

Specific objectives of the meeting were:

1. to provide opportunities for members (researchers, decision makers, service providers, and people with lived experience) to meet each other and to develop collaborative relationships and affiliations;
2. to provide learning opportunities for Node members about the state of addiction problems and interventions in our region, including Aboriginal perspectives;
3. to provide a forum for members to provide insights and guidance for existing Node projects;
4. to provide an opportunity for members to brainstorm about new Node projects, reacting to regional strategic directions being taken by the provinces and regional health authorities;
5. to provide a forum for member feedback on CRISM and Node functioning to date as well as ideas for Node sustainability.

June 23 Theme: Introducing ourselves and learning together

The meeting was held over two days, with a special pre-meeting event on June 22 - a Pipe Ceremony conducted by Elder Terry Daniels - that was attended by over 20 Node members and guests. On June 23, the first day of the meeting began with a welcome address by Colleen Dell and an opening prayer by Elder Joanne Saddleback. This was followed by an ice-breaker game of CRISM Bingo to introduce meeting attendees to each other.

The first presentation (by Cam Wild) was an overview of CRISM and its different Nodes and the unique challenges faced by the Prairie Node in the addiction/mental health field, including current low research capacity, few faculty positions and trainees, lack of history in working on addictions on a large scale, the high prevalence of substance misuse amongst the Indigenous population, and the growth of the Indigenous population in urban areas.

The rest of the CRISM meeting included planned sessions as follows:

10:00-11:00: *The 'official' state of addiction problems and interventions in the Node* (Cam Wild, Nick Etches, Peter Butt)

- Cam Wild provided an overview of the state of addiction using regional and national data sources from both mainstream and marginalized/vulnerable populations. For mainstream populations, alcohol is the most commonly used psychoactive drug among adults while cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug. When comparing genders, consumption is higher in men than in women. When considering age, 40% of children (grades 7-12) report using alcohol in the last year. Of youth who use alcohol, about three-quarters report binge drinking. While mainstream data is useful for examining the “big picture”, it often does not provide enough detail to examine causal factors. Data on local marginalized populations shows that there is a greater diversity of drug use across various drug types. Cocaine and cannabis use, as well as alcohol use, are extremely common.
- Nick Etches’s presentation was focused on opioid misuse in Alberta. The most recent data from Alberta Health Services shows that opioid overdose deaths are increasing dramatically. There has similarly been an increase in Emergency Room visits for overdose, with rates similar in both genders. Aboriginal women are more likely to present to the Emergency Room with opioid related issues than Aboriginal men. The USA and Canada are the top two opioid prescribing countries in the world and in these two countries, a phenomenon positively correlated with the opioid-use epidemics. Within Canada, Alberta is ranked second behind Ontario as the highest prescribing province. This suggests that opioid prescription may be a key point in addressing the epidemics.
- Peter Butt’s presentation focused on the state of addiction in Saskatchewan. Major concerns include increases in the use of methamphetamine and illicit fentanyl use. In Saskatoon, methadone is the primary treatment for opioid addiction, but it may be important to look at other drug options because methadone diversion has been linked to overdose deaths. It will be important to use harm-reduction strategies (i.e. naloxone kits) to engage individuals with mental health and addiction services. Saskatoon has the highest rate of HIV in Canada. The deaths that occur among this group are so high because of complications related to intravenous drug use and the stigma associated with HIV. This stigma has led to an unwillingness of people to participate in harm reduction strategies such as needle exchange programs in rural areas. Moving forward, it will be important to open the lines of communication among various communities. It will likely also be important to elevate addiction treatment to the level of national clinical care guidelines through evidence-based practices. This will require us to utilize implementation science – an area where we seem to be falling behind as of now. An interesting proposal is to shift screening into the waiting room, the results of doing is projected to be 95% screening, which means that targeted interventions can be implemented. What this demonstrates is that we need to shift current practices to the primary care model, and focus on a behavioral change. The Alaska primary care model does this (i.e. more behavioral specialists than nurses, and more nurses than physicians).

11:15-12:15: *Addiction problems and interventions in the Node: Front-line perspectives* (Stacey Swampy, Karen Turner, Dori Gaudet, Cynthia Shorting)

In this session, individuals with lived experience and service providers were invited to share their insights about the addiction problems and interventions in their communities. Points that were made included:

- The need to more efficiently focus government program funding for SM rather than dispersing to many overlapping programs;
- Need for longer treatment and follow up periods;
- Need for continuity of care beyond detox and rehab programs;
- The need to shift perspective from looking at people as “good or bad” to “healthy” and “hurt or needing help”;

- Emerging issues facing the Prince Albert Health Region include the use of crystal meth, prescription drug misuse, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis C;
- Changes in drug trends in Alberta include increases in opioid prescription misuse, fentanyl and alcohol;
- Need to empower people involved in treatment by including them in the decision making process;
- Parent perspective included that there is little to no information available from service providers to guide parents around harm reduction and safety strategies such as naloxone kits;
- Need for more treatment options or selection of options that fit the stage clients are at;
- Need for better education of nurses in pharmacology and addictions;
- Need for more collaboration between service providers and people with lived experience and between researchers and non-researchers;
- The benefit of research at a community level; and
- The need to document all clinical/research findings (not just those in formal research settings) in order to prevent replication and aid translation of results to different settings.

1:30-2:45: Indigenous voices, listening, and partnerships (Jo-Ann Saddleback, Jessica Daniels)

Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback gave an overview of what culture means to Indigenous peoples. She explained how culture is a state of being and how culture may be used as a method of rehabilitation and rebuilding health. The four Cree philosophies of Sharing, Caring, Honesty and Respect were also explained in detail.

Jessica Daniels spoke about colonialism and its effects (including loss of language and culture) and how this contributed to the development of addictions. She spoke of how the land, language and other aspects of Indigenous culture can be used as a form of harm reduction and should be a part of the treatment process.

3:00-4:30: Taking stock of funded CRISM projects

In this section of the meeting, members were brought up to date on funded CRISM projects.

- OPTIMA Trial update (Ron Lim)
- Client retention (David Hodgins)
- On-line screening and brief interventions (Cam Wild)
- Couples congruence therapy (Bonnie Lee)
- Animal assisted interventions (Darlene Chalmers)
- Harm reduction (Elaine Hyshka)

Ron Lim gave a brief presentation on the national OPTIMA study and its aim, which is to increase the uptake of Suboxone for prescription opioid abuse.

The Demonstration projects were briefly described by David Hodgins and Cam Wild. David Hodgins is leading the first project, which is *“Motivating client engagement in Substance Misuse treatment”*. This project aims to reduce treatment dropout rates and increase client engagement. The second demonstration project, led by Cam Wild, is *“Building Capacity for Community-based screening and brief interventions”* and aims to identify and develop screening and brief intervention tools for substance misuse.

Three funded Node development grant projects were described. The recipients of these grants gave a brief overview of their projects. Bonnie Lee (University of Lethbridge) presented on her project *“Training Addiction and Mental Health Counsellors in Couples Intervention”*. Darlene Chalmers (University of Regina) presented on her project *“Applying Animal Assisted Therapy in the Treatment of Addictions”*. Elaine Hyshka (University of Alberta) presented on her project *“Implementing harm reduction services in acute care: patient and health provider experiences”*.

4:30-5:00 – Wrap up: Day 1

Elder Terry Daniels closed the first day of the meeting by sharing his reflections.

7:00-9:00 - Evening public documentary presentation and panel discussion (Host: David Hodgins)

In this session a documentary film titled “Cycles” was shown. The film, developed at the University of British Columbia, depicted youth marijuana use based on lived experiences of youth and was designed to stimulate dialogue. The documentary can be accessed through this site:

<http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/carbc/publications/helping-schools/cycles/index.php>

The film presentation was followed by a panel discussion with:

- Cheryl Houtekamer (Alberta Health Services prevention specialist)
- Rebecca Saah (University of Calgary researcher)
- Petra Schulz (Parent advocate)
- Kristina Brache (University of Calgary researcher and clinician)

The panel included Petra Schulz - a parent advocate from Edmonton, Cheryl Houtekamer – an AHS prevention specialist in Calgary, Kristina Brache - a clinician in adolescent addiction services in Calgary, and Rebecca Saah - a researcher at the University of Calgary and part of the team that developed “Cycles”. The audience consisted of both CRISM and community members. The movie was praised as being well made, realistic and very effective in facilitating discussions and engaging teenagers. The audience highlighted several important points that the movie touched on including:

- The influence of peer pressure in drug use and the ability of some teenagers to know when to use drugs and when not to use, while other teenagers cannot make this distinction;
- The influence of significant others such as sibling use and the subsequent availability of substances to younger teenagers causing early initiation, the place of drug use in romantic relationships and recreational activities;
- The intervention of adults when they notice that a teenager is using drugs and the struggle on if and how to intervene;
- The legalization of marijuana and its possible effects were also discussed
- It was also stated that more study needs to be carried out on the relationship between gender and substance misuse.

June 24 Theme: Supporting research and growing the Node

9:00-9:15: Welcome and orientation to Day 2

- Opening reflections (Elder Terry Daniels)

9:15-10:15: Conversation café: Funded CRISM projects

- Small group discussions on each of the 6 existing CRISM projects, hosted by the presenters from day 1.

The Second day of the meeting began with a conversation café. This session consisted of three conversations where participants were encouraged to change groups every 20 minutes. Members were encouraged to spend a session at tables with projects of interests and ask for information on the planning, implementation, objectives and time lines of these projects. Discussion on how the projects could enhance their work and ideas for spin-off CRISM projects was also encouraged.

10:30-11:00 Strategic directions in Provincial governments

- Barry Andres, Martina Matthewson

In this session government representatives from Alberta and Saskatchewan presented on strategic directions regarding substance misuse.

Barry Andres from Alberta Health Services gave an overview of the action plan that Alberta Health Services is developing. The addictions related issues that AHS wishes to address include fentanyl overdose, provision of counselling services at the community level as well as initiatives geared towards external factors that affect patients outside of the hospital such as housing.

Martina Matthewson from the government of Saskatchewan shared the Saskatchewan 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan. The action plan is an accumulation of work across the province and included consultation with individuals with lived experience and their families. Some of the highlights of the plan include the launch of the take-home naloxone program and specialized training offered to health care professionals such as police officers, EMTs, teachers and community living staff.

11:00-12:00 *Node operations*

Denise Adams, the Research manager of CRISM, gave a brief overview of the Node, including membership, growth and next steps. Discussion was invited on functioning of the Node.

1:00 – 3:00 *Collaboration session: Enhancing Node impact and sustainability*

Final comments from the audience included potential areas of research focus, a more formal role in the Node for people with lived experience, ways to make CRISM a repository for questionnaires and other tools and possibility of CRISM as a potential data linkage source.

3:00 – 3:30 *Wrap up and closing reflections*

Elder Terry Daniels and Elder Jo-Anne Saddleback closed the meeting by passing a talking stick around the room. Each person was invited to say a word that represented how they felt about the meeting as the stick was passed to them.

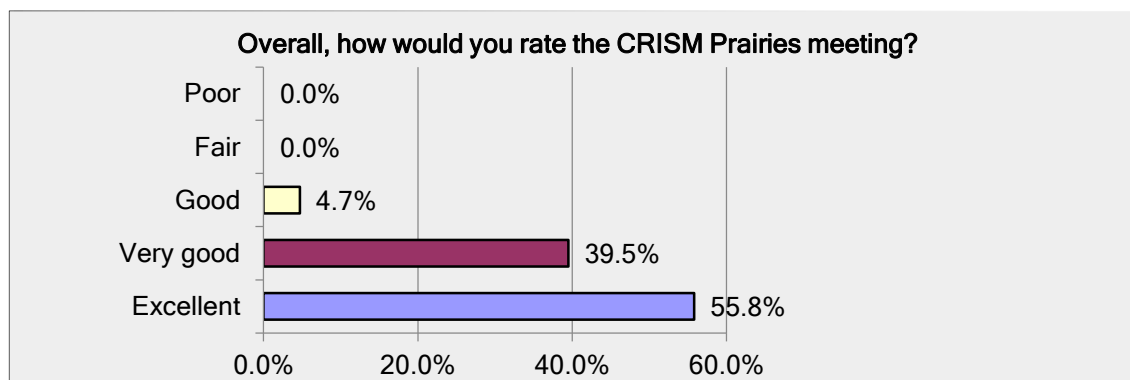
First Annual CRISM Prairie Node: Post-Meeting Evaluation Results

Meeting attendees surveyed: 63
Complete Responses: 43
Date survey was created: June 26, 2016
Date survey was sent out: July 3, 2016
Date responses were analyzed: July 15, 2016

Note: open ended comments were not reported, in order to avoid revealing the identity of respondents.

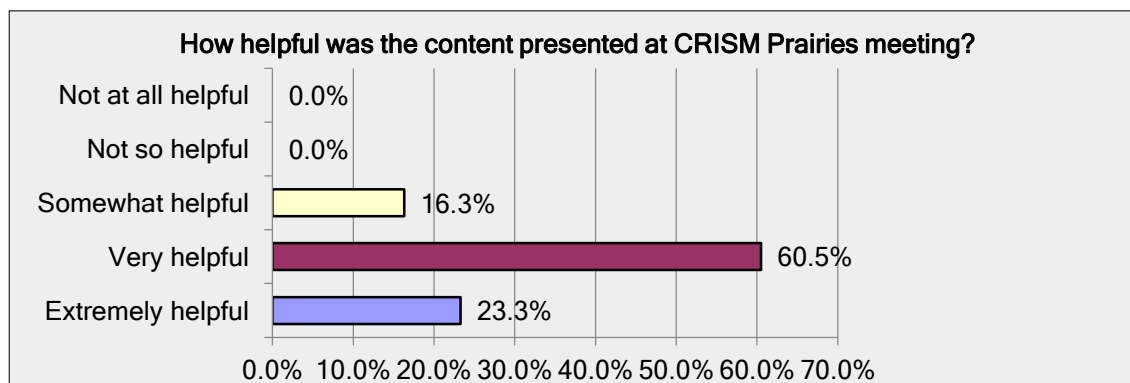
Q1: Overall, how would you rate the CRISM Prairies meeting?

- 56% Excellent;
- 40% Very good



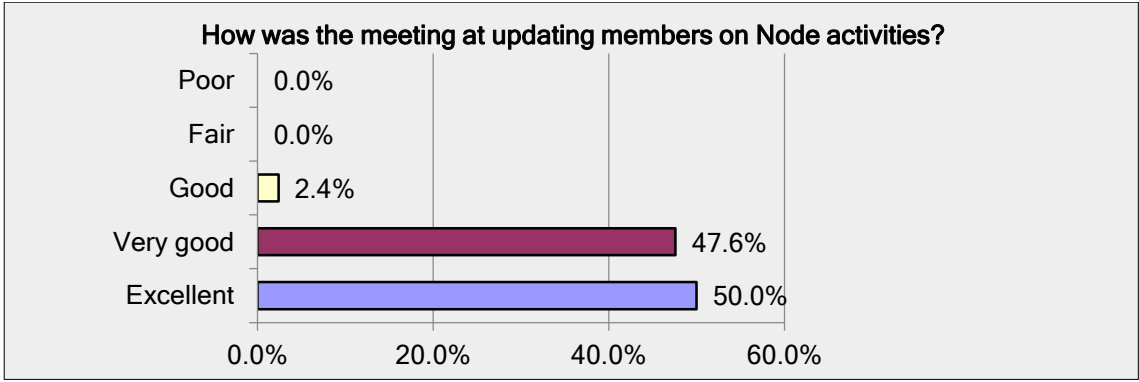
Q2: How helpful was the content presented at CRISM Prairies meeting?

- 23% Extremely helpful;
- 61% Very helpful



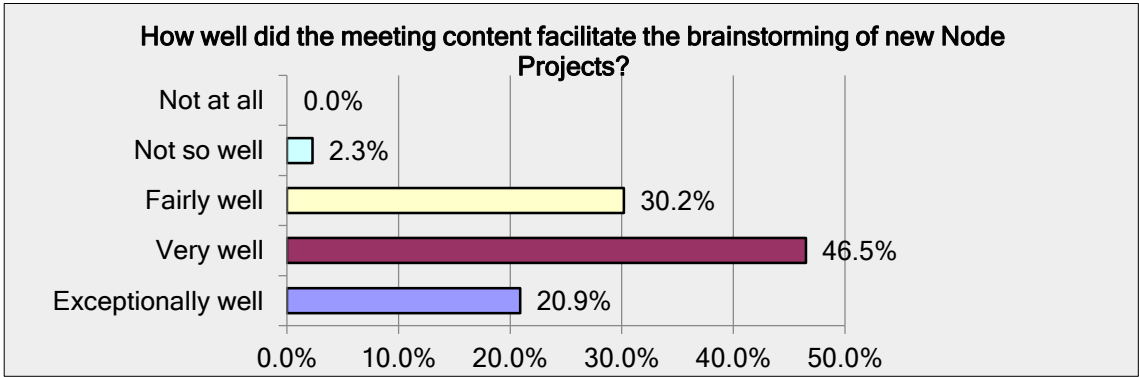
Q3: How was the meeting at updating members on Node activities?

- 50% Excellent;
- 48% Very good



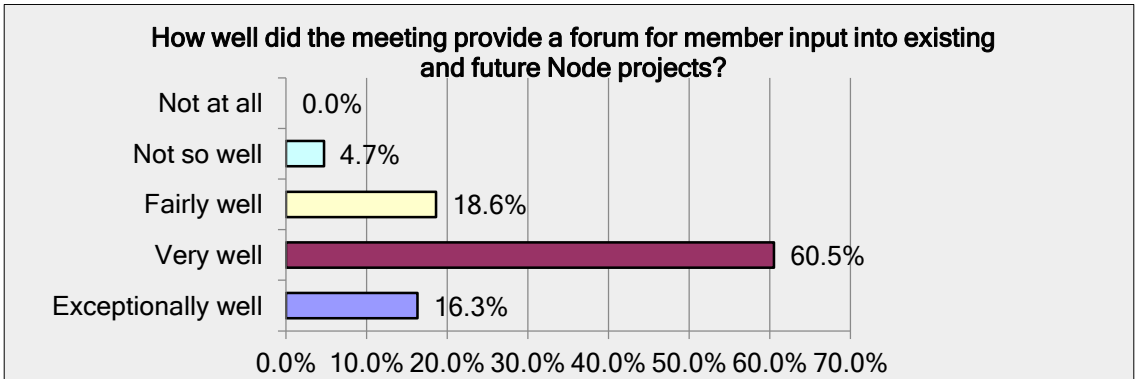
Q4: How well did the meeting content facilitate the brainstorming of new Node Projects?

- 21% Exceptionally well;
- 47% Very well



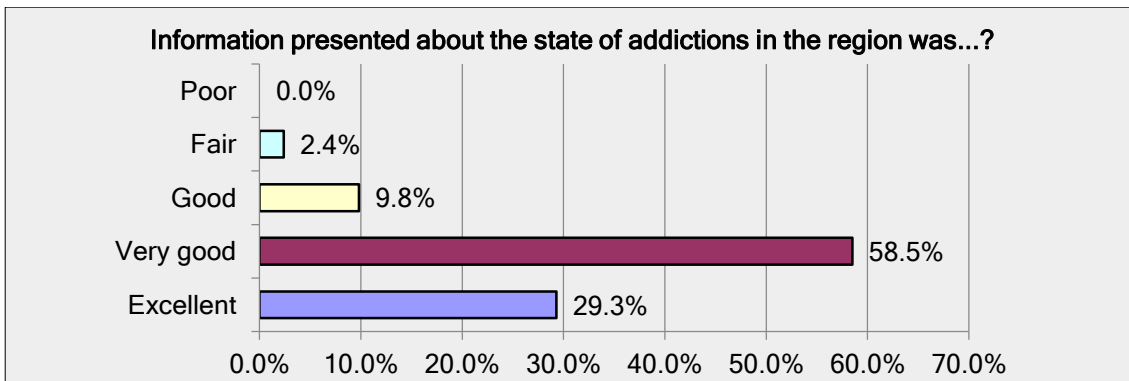
Q5: How well did the meeting provide a forum for member input into existing and future Node projects?

- 16% Exceptionally well;
- 61% Very well



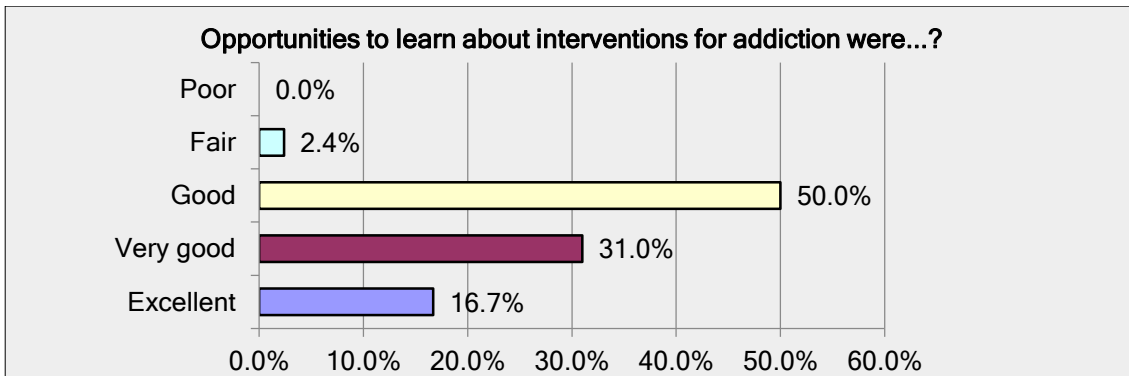
Q6: Information presented about the state of addictions in the region was...?

- 29% Excellent;
- 59% Very good



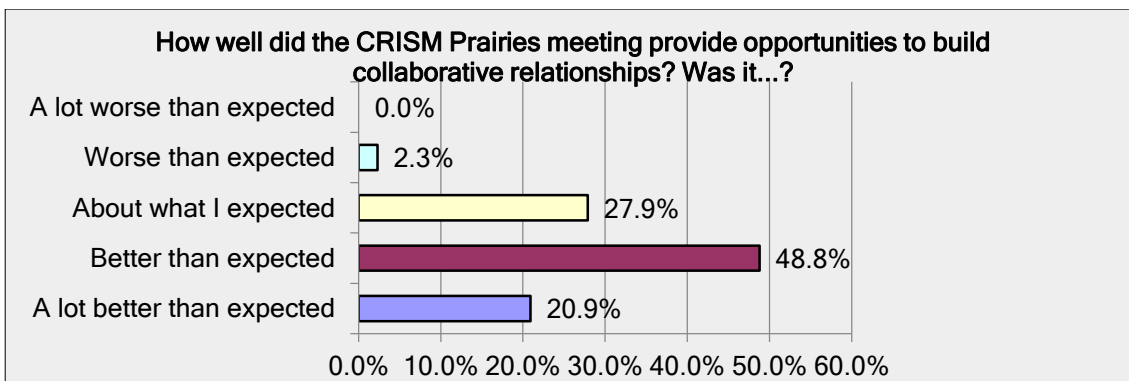
Q7: Opportunities to learn about interventions for addiction were...?

- 17% Excellent;
- 31% Very good



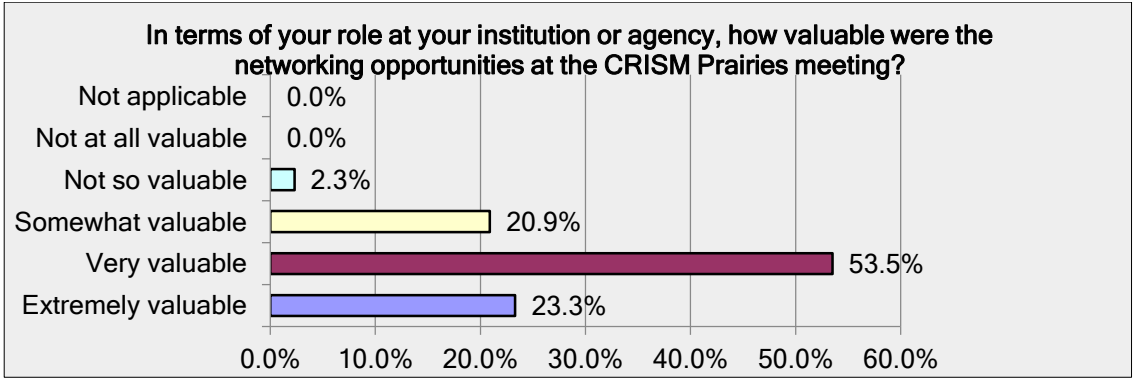
Q8: How well did the CRISM Prairies meeting provide opportunities to build collaborative relationships? Was it...?

- 21% A lot better than expected;
- 49% Better than expected



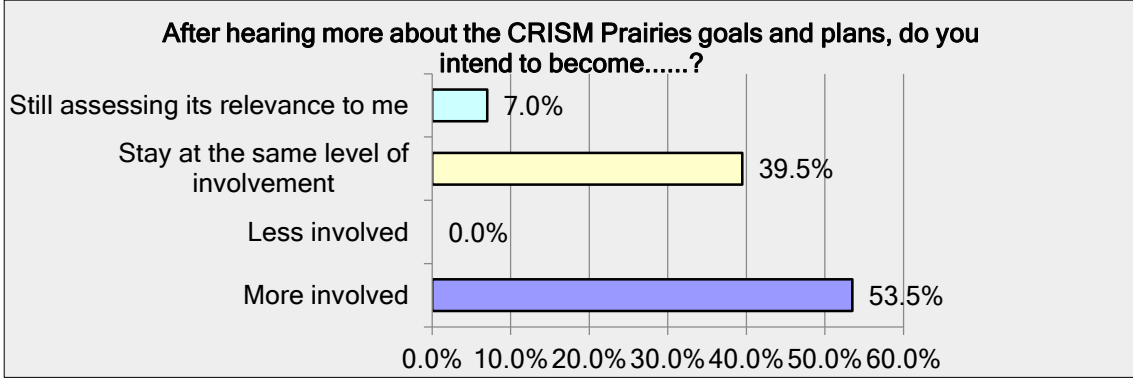
Q9: In terms of your role at your institution or agency, how valuable were the networking opportunities at the CRISM Prairies meeting?

- 23% Extremely valuable;
- 54% Very valuable



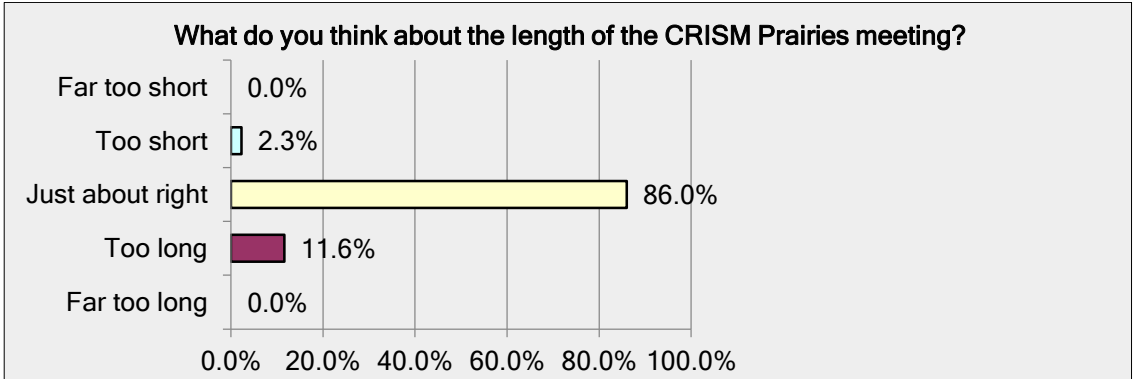
Q10: After hearing more about the CRISM Prairies goals and plans, do you intend to become.....?

- 54% More involved
- 40% Stay at same level of involvement



Q11: What do you think about the length of the CRISM Prairies meeting?

- 86% Just about right

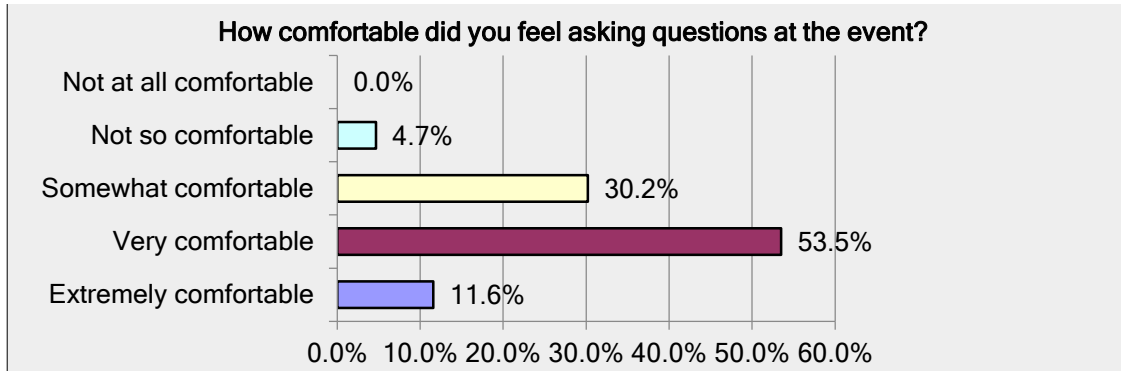


Q12: What was the single most valuable thing you learned at the CRISM Prairies meeting?

- Open-ended Question – Thank you for your comments!

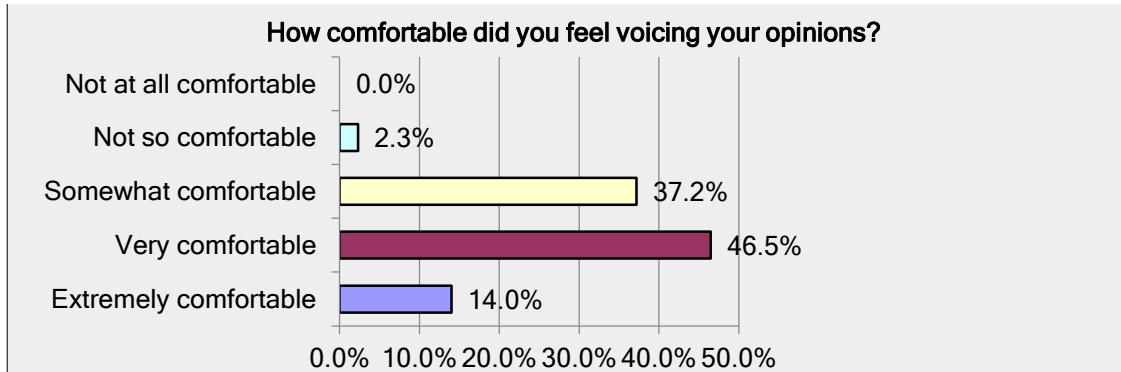
Q13: How comfortable did you feel asking questions at the event?

- 12% Extremely comfortable;
- 54% Very comfortable



Q14: How comfortable did you feel voicing your opinions?

- 14% Extremely comfortable
- 47% Very comfortable

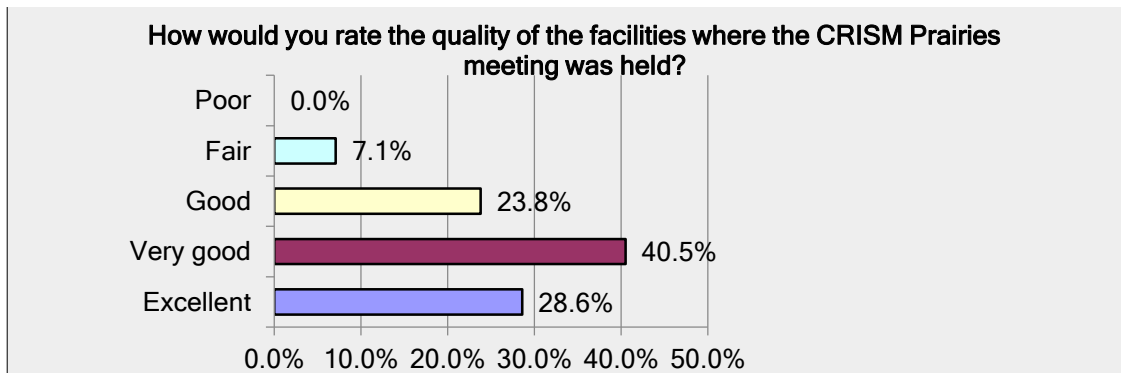


Q15: How could future CRISM events be improved? Select all that apply.

- Open-ended Question – Thank you for your comments!

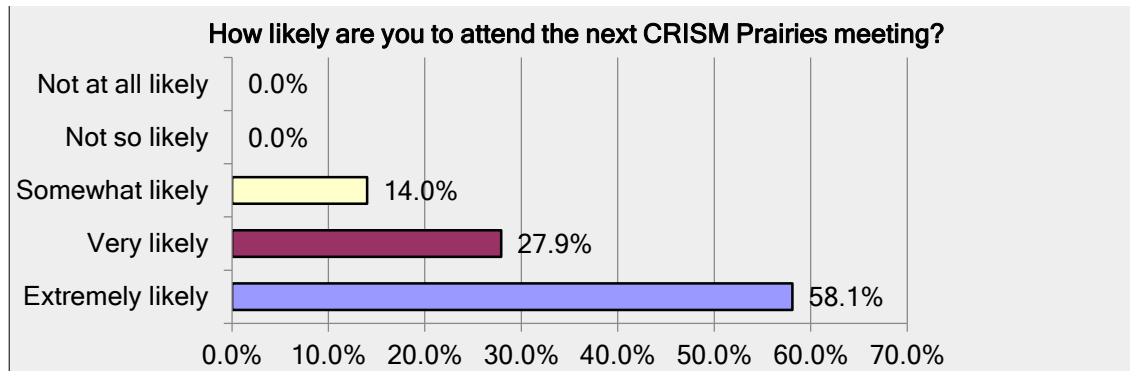
Q16: How would you rate the quality of the facilities where the CRISM Prairies meeting was held?

- 29% Excellent;
- 41% Very good



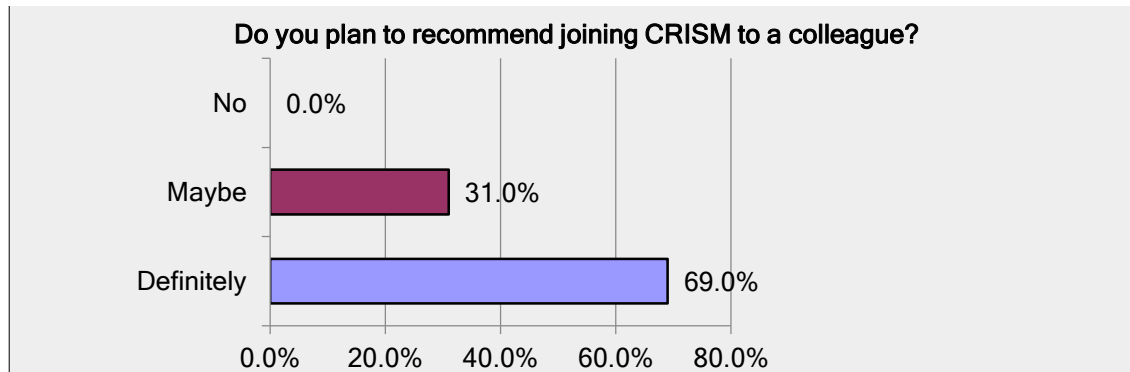
Q17: How likely are you to attend the next CRISM Prairies meeting?

- 58% Extremely likely;
- 28% Very likely



Q18: Do you plan to recommend joining CRISM to a colleague?

- 69% Definitely;
- 31% Maybe



Q19: Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

- Open-ended Question – Thank you for your comments!