

An Integrated Approach to Dementia Support: Sage House

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INTRODUCTION

Given the rising prevalence of dementia, it has become a pertinent concern to improve support for individuals living with dementia and their care partners. For this purpose, the concept of **living well with dementia** becomes particularly important (Quinn et al., 2022).

When considering living well with dementia or fostering quality of life for carers, research has demonstrated the importance of psychological support, social engagement, and the quality of the relationship between care partners (Clare et al., 2019; Farina et al., 2017; Nogueira et al., 2015; Quinn et al., 2020).

In order to promote living well with dementia, governmental guidelines have outlined the importance of **specialised, co-ordinated and personalised community-based services** that maximise independence, link to health care providers, support carers and ultimately improve health and social care outcomes (e.g., WHO, 2017; Department of Health, 2011).

Recently, a novel **Integrated Dementia Support Approach (IDSA)** has been created that demonstrates potential for effectively operationalising the concept of living well with dementia. This approach is exemplified by a center called Sage House (SH) which brings together multiple specialised services in one accessible and well-connected center.

The present study aims to understand the impact of attending a Sage House as an individual living with dementia or as a care partner.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1: Are users satisfied with the services?
- RQ2: Can accessing SH improve wellbeing outcomes?
- RQ3: Are there any financial benefits of an IDSA?
- RQ4: What is the lived experience of individuals attending Sage House?

METHOD

A two-part mixed methods study was run with individuals who had experience of attending Sage House as a Person Living With Dementia (PLWD) or as a Care Partner (CP).

Part 1 Survey: 10 questions regarding satisfaction levels, wellbeing outcomes and indirect financial impact.

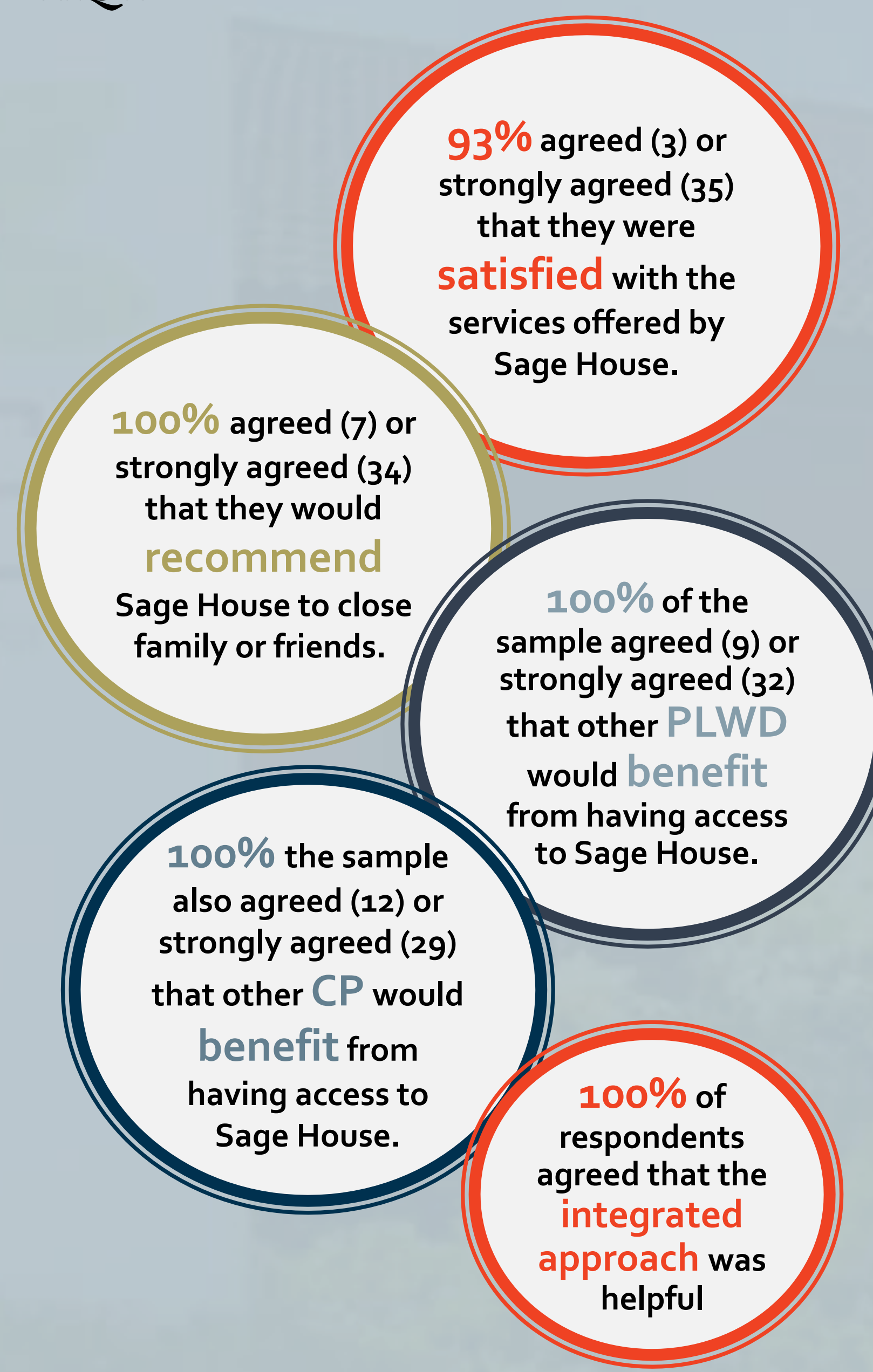
Participants: 41 responses were collected, including 33 CP and 8 PLWD (Age: $M = 67.87$, $SD = 12.99$). 90% of the sample had been attending SH for over six months.

Part 2 Semi Structured Interviews: 9 questions regarding their experience, impact and indirect financial benefit of using SH.

Participants: 9 SH users took part including 3 PLWD and 6 CP (Age: $M = 73$, $SD = 9.3$). The length of time attending SH ranged from one to five years.

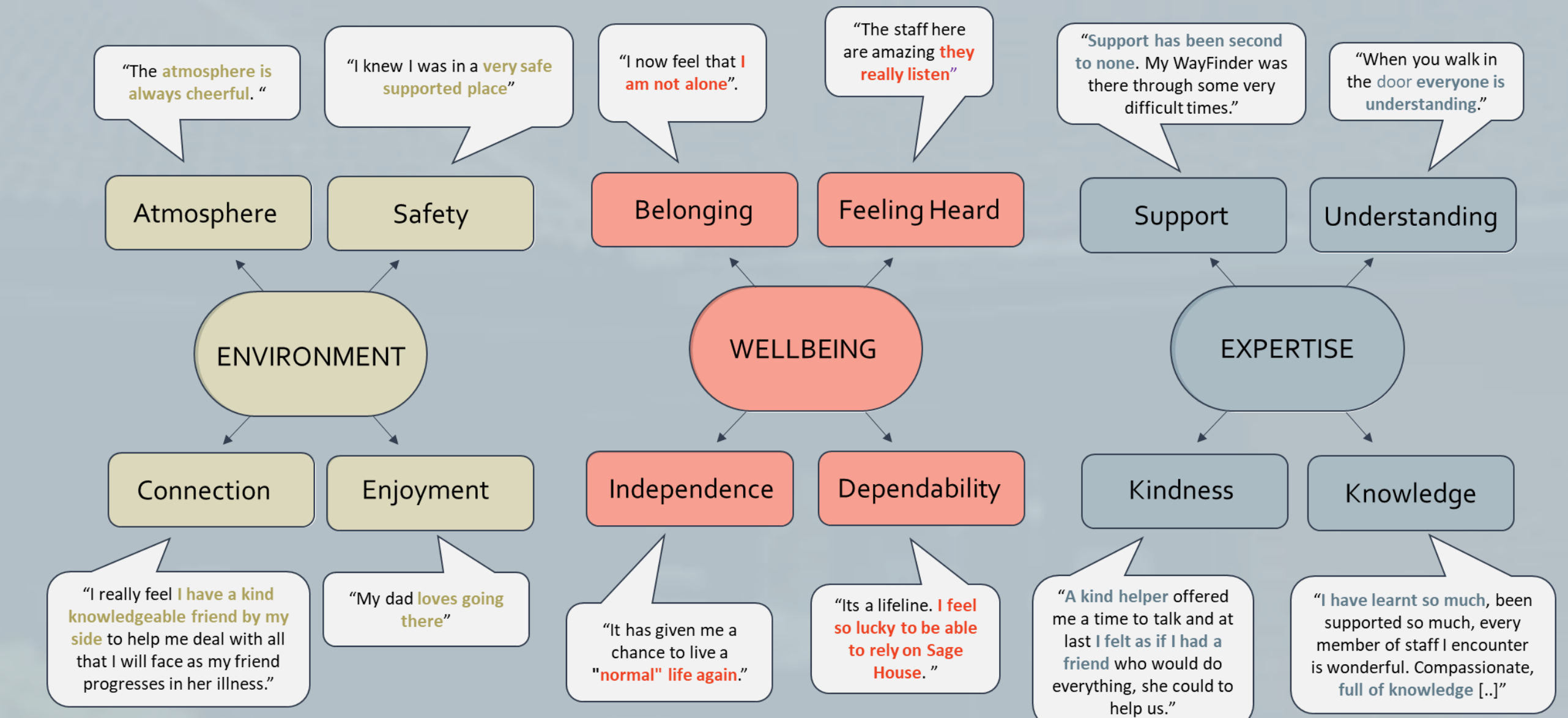
Analysis: Descriptives & Thematic Analysis

RQ1

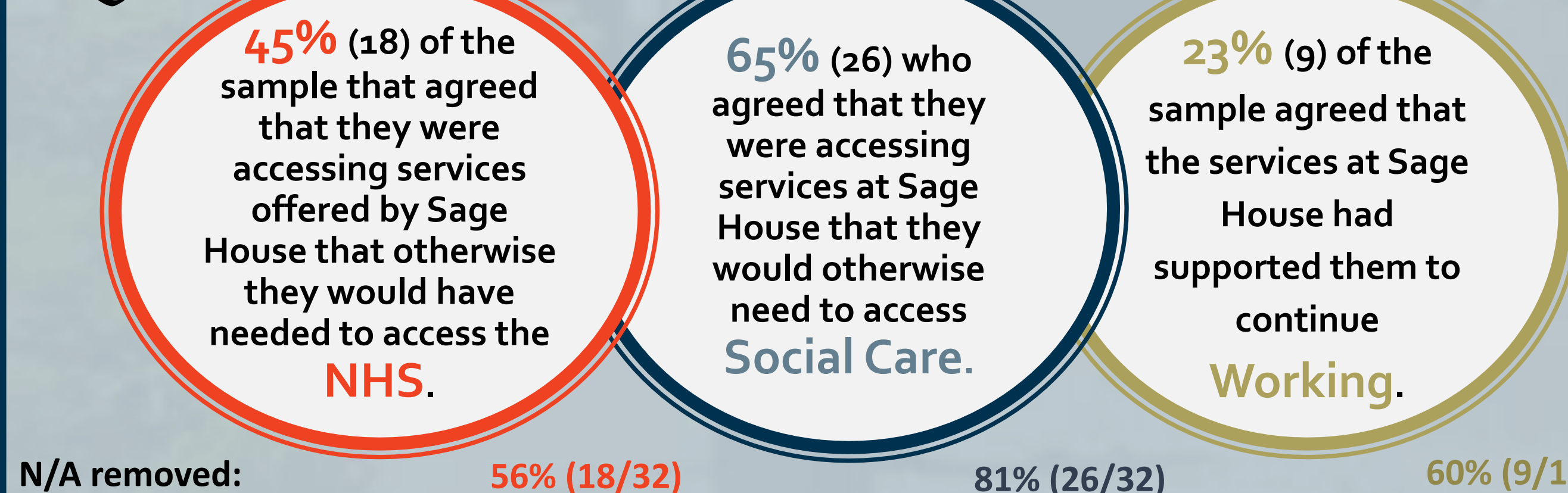


RQ2

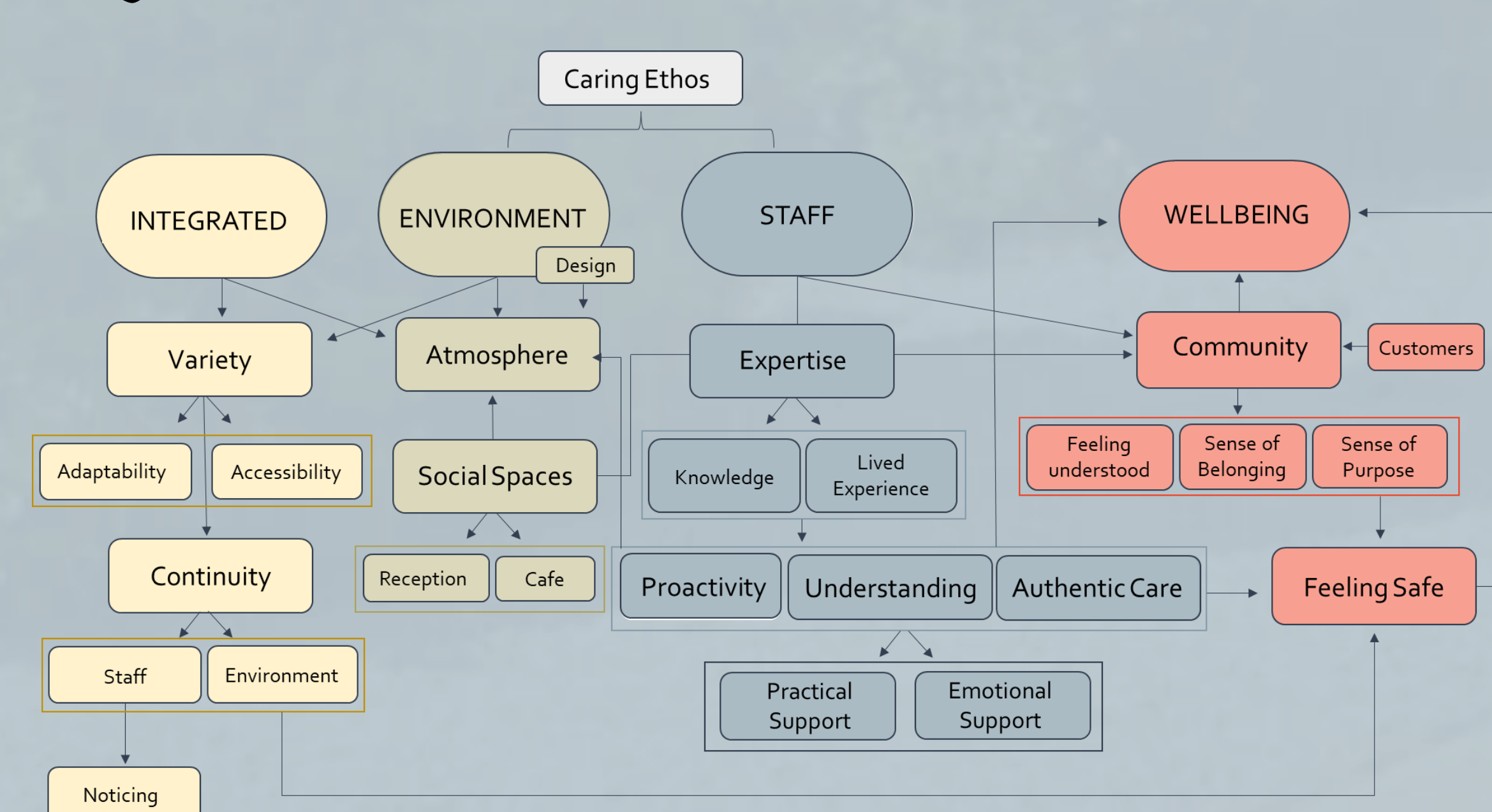
88% of respondents agreed (10) and strongly agreed (26) that accessing Sage House had positively impacted their **Quality of Life** and 81% agreed (13) or strongly agreed (20) that having access to Sage House had positively impacted their **Mental Health**.



RQ3



RQ4



Belonging: Participants expressed a sense of belonging, community and positive connections to the center itself. This was underpinned by authentic understanding that was generated through shared lived experience and expertise - *"But here at the coffee morning, it's like everybody understood."* (Jackie CP)

Benefit of IDSA: Participants highlighted some of benefits associated with the integrated approach. This included improved accessibility to services, the ability to personalise the services due to variety, the continuity of staff and environment and the impact on the style of support provided. - *"So that's why this place is just a haven, because it supplies all his needs and mine really."* (Jill CP)

Fostering Wellbeing: Care partners discussed the support they had received at Sage House, reflecting on the impact it had for them both regarding increased knowledge but also with regard to how they approached their own self-care. *"[...] they made me see that I was as important."* (Dave CP)

DISCUSSION

Overall participants expressed a positive opinion and experience of attending Sage House.

Some of the benefits of the IDSA discussed included increased practicality, access to a variety of enrichment, improved accessibility, development of relationships and enhanced support for PLWD and their CP facilitated by the provision and connectivity of the integrated hub.

Overall, the themes identified align closely with the concept of living well with dementia (Quinn et al., 2022) and practical guidelines which aim to support individuals to live well with dementia (WHO, 2017; Department of Health, 2011; NHS England, 2016).

Although these findings demonstrate promise, more voices of those living with dementia attending SH need to be captured before drawing final conclusions. Moreover, research would benefit from additional confirmatory analysis with validated measures of wellbeing to enable direct comparison of outcomes between those with and without access to SH.

CONCLUSION

The current research project has highlighted the potential of this innovative approach to dementia support and provided initial evidence of positive impact on wellbeing outcomes for PLWD and CPs. It has also revealed the possible indirect financial benefit of the IDSA.

In light of these findings, further research and consideration should be sought to examine whether IDSA can facilitate individuals to live well with dementia and provide a cost-effective alternative to current models of care.

REFERENCES